

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011**

**Philosophy 2073F section 002: Death**

**Fall 2011  
Mondays 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Talbot College (TC), 304**

**Instructor: Aviva Shiller  
Office: Stevenson Hall, 3122  
Office Hours: Monday 4:30-5:30  
Email: [ashiller@uwo.ca](mailto:ashiller@uwo.ca)**

**DESCRIPTION**

This course is intended as an introduction to the philosophy of death and dying. The topic of death will be approached in a number of different ways. In the first unit the metaphysical conceptions of what it means to live a good life will inform the nature of death and dying. We will look at some of the most influential views on death from Plato to Kant. In the second unit we will consider questions of how to determine when life begins and ends with a particular focus on ethical problems related to: abortion, fertility treatments, genetic testing of embryos, euthanasia, medical definitions of death. In the third unit we will examine whether there can ever be a right to kill. In examining this political question we will consider such questions of whether the state has a right to inflict capital punishment, whether the state can require military service, whether killing in war is ever justifiable and on what grounds, whether suicide ought to be legal or illegal?

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course has two objectives. First, it is designed to introduce students to a broad range of important and influential philosophical debates with the aim of generating discussion. The second aim is to develop research and writing skills.

**TEXTS**

All course material is available online through the library website or other sources.

**REQUIREMENTS**

20% Argument analysis (3 pages)  
70% Two argumentative essays (5 pages each)  
10% Participation

**AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

Incompletes are granted at the *exclusive* discretion of the Undergraduate Program Chair, and only on the basis of documented medical or compassionate grounds. If, during the course, you envisage any difficulty completing all the required work by the completion deadline, consult immediately with the instructor *and* the Undergraduate Program Chair.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus cannot be used as grounds of appeal.