

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011-2012**

**Philosophy 4991G: Seminar in the Philosophy of Time**

Winter Term 2012  
Friday 9.30-12.30  
UCC 67

Instructor: John Thorp, StH 4141  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10.30-11.30  
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**DESCRIPTION**

There is perhaps no subject more liable to make the familiar seem strange, the everyday bizarre, the humdrum unearthly, than the study of time. Some or other aspect of it has fascinated philosophy throughout its history; it runs like an artery through physics, cosmology, metaphysics, psychology, ethics and theology. Kant's three great questions – the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the existence of after-life – are permeated with issues about the nature of time. Time is everywhere.

This seminar will investigate a fairly comprehensive list of questions about time: fatalism, reductionism, the topology of time, temporal becoming, the reality of the past, the direction of time, the nature of the present, eternity, temporal infinity. The readings will be drawn from both classical and contemporary thinkers, including, among others, Zeno of Elea, Aristotle, Augustine, Philoponus, Aquinas, Kant, McTaggart, Bergson, Russell, Einstein, Reichenbach, Weyl, Bondi, Grünbaum, Prior, Velleman, Seager.

**OBJECTIVE**

To give students at the senior undergraduate level a solid acquaintance with principal issues and texts in the philosophy of time.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

Weekly seminars which will presuppose that students have read the assigned texts. The schedule of seminars will be thematically, rather than historically, organized.

### **TEXTS**

The required readings will be made available on WebCT.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

One short paper (4000 words) due in the final week of class 50%

Final examination 50%

### **AUDIT**

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

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.