

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-24

PHILOSOPY 3555F
Continental Philosophy

Winter Term

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Neutral peoples, on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who are recognized as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.

DESCRIPTION

We will begin with Frantz Fanon’s critical chapter on the experience of being black in a colonial world, which will set up the course that follows. Fanon’s work will allow us to explore some central texts in continental philosophy from a critical decolonial lens. Rather than asking these questions at the end, we will begin with them. Several of the readings will take up Fanon’s work explicitly. Other texts will help us to understand the significance of Fanon’s critical perspective, not only for decolonial thinking, but also for critiquing western philosophical structures more generally. We will explore what it means to live in this modern world where the gap between appearance and reality seems to ever widen. To do so we will turn to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of embodied perception and consider how ideologies become imposed, taken up in the ways we perceive, move, and relate to others. Sylvia Wynter will help us to understand the connections among Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological insights and Fanon’s brilliant analysis of the colonial social context. She shows us how this gap between appearance and reality is given in the colonial “Standard of Right Perception” that denies the world we live and perceive. As Hannah Arendt points out, “the ‘truths’ of the modern scientific world view” can be “demonstrated in mathematical formulas and proved technologically,” but they cannot be talked about in everyday expression. What does this mean for our lived existence on this earth as embodied perceivers? We will turn to Arendt’s phenomenological consideration of truth in a world split by this gap. We will begin with her writings on power and ideology and then turn to her work on science, technology, and the modern world. In short, we are looking for some insights into the world we are living today.

TEXTS

Readings will be provided digitally through Weldon library and through OWL.

OBJECTIVES

☞ This course will enable students to:

- gain familiarity with issues that are important within the continental tradition

- provide some decolonial critiques of philosophy
- formulate meaningful questions
- read texts closely
- analyze some ways of thinking that shape contemporary global events.
- understand the ways in which we are shaped by forces that exceed individuals but belong to the being of our age, even as this understanding does not absolve us of responsibility or deprive us of agency.



METHOD OF EVALUATION

◀ (List of assignments and examination breakdown/scheduling as applicable) ▶

Short Essay: 5 pages double-spaced	20% Due Feb. 16, 2023
Long Essay: 7-8 pages double-spaced	30% Due April 6, 2023
Participation: See below	10%
Group Presentation	10% March 28-April 4
Final Essay Exam:	30% (During exam period)

Participation: During the second hour of the Thursday Class, we will break the class into small groups. Everyone will sign up to be responsible for leading a small group twice in discussion. On your designated week, you will come to class with a question that you can of course modify during the discussion. You will have 20 minutes to discuss your question with 3 or 4 other classmates. After class you will post your question and a 200-word synopsis of your group's conclusion to your question on the Owl Forum under the designated week. You will post your synopsis within 48 hours after the end of class. Questions should be open questions that invite discussion. Each of the two posted questions and synopses are worth 5%.

Group Presentations: in the final classes there will be small group presentations. Students leading small groups from each week will form a group. Since students will each lead two small group discussions over the course of the semester, I will organize the group presentations with each student presenting on just one of their two weeks. Students will together sift through the insights gathered from their small group discussions in order to present a coherent account. Group discussion insights may be augmented by thinking them through the course structure, that is, perhaps linking them to other themes in the course, and by drawing on multimedia. Each group will present for 15 minutes and there will be 5 minutes for discussion. The presentations will help to prepare students for the final exam.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

◀ Third or Fourth year standing in a Philosophy module or permission of the Instructor.



“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

THIS OUTLINE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, GIVEN SUFFICIENT PRIOR NOTICE