

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Graduate Course Outline 2024-25

PHILOSOP 9704
Research Ethics

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Prof. Charles Weijer (cweijer@uwo.ca)
Office hours by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will provide students with an overview of ethical issues in human experimentation. The course will review relevant history, an ethical framework for research ethics, and cover core topics, including informed consent, confidentiality, benefit-harm analysis, participant selection, vulnerable participants and communities. Special topics, such as randomized controlled trials, human challenge studies, gene therapy trials, cluster randomized trials, social science research, and health policy and systems research may also be covered.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

First, it will familiarize students with the history of research involving human participants. Second, it will expose them to a variety of key ethical issues, concepts, and debates raised by research involving human participants. Third, it will give students an opportunity to apply key ethical concepts and relevant literature to real cases selected from the scientific literature.

COURSE SCHEDULE (tentative)

Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: What is human subjects research?
Week 3: Independent review, data safety monitoring, and research
Week 4: Research that engages community and patient partners
Week 5: Respect for persons
Week 6: Social value of research and health-priority setting
Week 7: Equipoise
Week 8: Fair subject selection in clinical and social scientific research
Week 9: Old and New Trial Designs: Individually Randomized Controlled Trials, Cluster Randomized Trials, Biomarker-Stratified Trials, and Multi-Arm Platform Trials
Week 10: Decolonizing Research Ethics: Best Practices for the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples
Week 11: People with Disabilities in Human Subjects Research: A History of Exploitation, a Problem of Exclusion
Week 12: Research on the newly dead

TEXTS

Mackay D, Iltis A (eds.). *Oxford Handbook of Research Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2024.

All chapters are available online at <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190947750.001.0001>

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Weekly responses: 10%

In-class participation: 15%

Three short papers on different course topics of your choice. Due one week after the relevant class or the last day of class, whichever is sooner: 75%

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.

AUDIT

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

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

“If plagiarism or unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts of assignments after the assignment has been submitted. Students must keep all notes and first drafts until the assignment is returned to them.”

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for **research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines**, and other materials used in **preparing assignments**. Students are expected to **retain** these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

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 https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Western’s Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be “given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test”.

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.

SCHOLASTIC 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.p

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ACADEMIC ADVISING

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) 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 (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.