

PHILOSOPHY 9622B

CONSCIOUSNESS AND THOUGHT

The University of Western Ontario, Department of Philosophy
Course Outline 2020–2021

Winter term 2021
Th 8:30–11:30pm
Meetings: Using Collaborate on OWL

Instructor: Prof. David Bourget
OH: Online on request
dbourget@uwo.ca

Description

This seminar will explore the relationship between consciousness (the felt, subjective aspect of the mind) and rational thought. We will mainly focus on the role of consciousness in understanding or "grasping" propositions. We will read my draft manuscript *Grasping: The Cognitive Role of Consciousness* along with important background pieces by Frege, Russell, Bealer, Peacocke, Chalmers, and contemporary philosophers of understanding.

Online format

This seminar will be wholly conducted online. Unless this proves impractical, we will use our assigned time slot (above) for synchronous meetings following the usual seminar format (but online). We will meet using Collaborate UE on OWL (go to the course's OWL site and click the "Collaborate" tab, then find the "Seminar" meeting and join).

Office hours will be on an appointment basis. You can request meetings by following a link that will be provided via OWL. Then we will meet in the Collaborate session called "Office hours".

It may be that some course participants will not be able to attend the live seminars. If this is the case, we will record the seminars for their benefit. The recordings will be made available to registered participants via OWL/Collaborate. By attending a seminar, you consent to being recorded.

Texts

- Readings will be made available on OWL.

Requirements

- 80% Paper (3500–4500 words), due at the end of term
- 10% Class presentation
- 10% 10 responses (200–400 words)

Class presentations present one of the readings, raise questions for discussion, and may present some critical commentary.

Your **papers** should be an original research contribution on one of the topics we will cover. Your aim is to produce a paper that could be submitted to a conference. Depending on your paper topic, you may be required to do research beyond the assigned readers, but this is not expected as a baseline. Your paper can be on the same topic as your class presentation.

Responses must be submitted by email prior to each class. Responses should briefly explain and react to a central point in the week's readings. Each response you complete is worth 1% of your final grade, up to a maximum of 10%. This means you can miss 2 responses without penalty. Late responses will not be accepted except in extraordinary and properly documented circumstances in which you miss more than two days of class. Responses may be used as a basis for class activities, and can form the basis of your midterm or final papers.

You are expected to attend class, be attentive, and respectfully and constructively engage with peers during class activities and discussions. If this proves challenging, or, for whatever reason, you feel uncomfortable in class, please talk to your instructor.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to explain and evaluate the main philosophical arguments and positions discussed in this course both orally and in writing. You should acquire and/or improve upon general skills useful for critically engaging with philosophical ideas as well as other pursuits, including analyzing, and critically evaluating arguments, communicating orally and in writing, and fruitfully engaging with peers.

Department policies

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/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.

Mental health

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.

July 20, 2020