

WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Graduate Course Outline 2020-21

Philosophy Course Number: Phil XXXX

**Survey in Philosophy of Mind: Mental Representation**

Summer Course  
Time TBA  
Class meetings via teleconference

Instructor: Angela Mendelovici  
Office Hours: TBA  
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**DESCRIPTION**

Some mental states seem to represent or “say” something. For example, a perceptual experience of a cup on a table might represent that there is a cup on a table, and a belief that grass is green might represent the fact or proposition that grass is green. *This* is mental representation. This course examines the nature of this phenomenon. We will address questions such as the following:

- What is a theory of mental representation a theory *of*?
- What is the correct theory of mental representation?
- Can mental representation be explained in terms of physical phenomena?
- Does what a subject represents depend solely on how the subject is from the skin-in, or do environmental factors also play a role?
- Is mental representation a relation to a represented content, and, if so, what kinds of things are contents?
- What is the relationship between mental representation and phenomenal consciousness, the subjective, qualitative, or felt aspect of mental life? Can mental representation explain phenomenal consciousness? Can phenomenal consciousness explain mental representation?

We will invite some of the authors we discuss to join us for some class sessions.

This course is an online course. It has both synchronous components (i.e., occurring at a particular time) and asynchronous components (i.e., completed on your own time). **It is possible to take this course entirely asynchronously, but it is recommended that you attend class meetings if you can.**

Synchronous components:

- 12 three-hour class meetings via teleconference (optional but recommended, not recorded)

Asynchronous components:

- Readings
- 10 reading responses
- 1 presentation during class meeting (or equivalent if you can't attend class)

- 1 term paper

## **TEXTS**

- Available online for free through a university connection

## **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, skills involved in effective oral and written communication, and fruitful engagement with peers.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Final paper (3500–5000 words) or take-home exam	80%
Presentation (graded pass/fail)	10%
10 responses (graded pass/fail, 200–500 words)	10%

Students who are unable to complete the presentation because they cannot make it to the course meeting time should contact the instructor for an alternative assignment.

## **AUDIT**

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

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

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.

## **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](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM**

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

[http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_322](http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322)

### **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.

### **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](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.