

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy 9900B: Prospectus Course
Winter 2023

Winter Term 2022

Classroom: Online & In-Person

Thursdays: 2:30-5:30 p.m.

Room: TBD

Instructor: Dr. Jackie Sullivan

Office Number: 7170 WIRB

Office Hours: By appointment

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DESCRIPTION

The primary aim of the Prospectus Course is to assist PhD students in philosophy in the successful completion of the prospectus for their dissertation. To this end, the course will feature analyses of model prospectuses, discussion of research methods and writing strategies, as well as the presentation and peer-led discussion of drafts of the prospectus or of parts of it. It will be incumbent on presenters to make their materials accessible to a broad philosophical audience, and on each audience member to comment constructively on the work of their peers. ******You must have a supervisor with whom you are working to be permitted to enroll in this course.** It is expected that students will have met regularly with their supervisors prior to taking the course and will continue to meet regularly with them while taking the course to discuss drafts of their prospectus chapters. They should begin the course in a position where they could produce an initial draft of the prospectus by about a third of the way through the term.

In addition to its primary aim, the Prospectus course will serve to promote the professional development of students and prepare them for the academic and non-academic job markets. Students will hear presentations on topics such as academic and non-academic CVs, job interviews, publication, and the translation of philosophical skills for non-academic employment.

Assignments and Activities:

Prospectus: the main assignment for the course is to produce a prospectus that should pass the prospectus defence. A prospectus gives a general outline of the student's dissertation project and summaries of individual chapters (in a maximum of 4500 words, including notes, but excluding a bibliography) (https://uwo.ca/philosophy/graduate/phd_program/prospectus.html). Students will work on the chapter summaries one by one, write an introduction to the prospectus, and then merge all this material together into a defensible prospectus.

Short assignments:

- 1) Chapter summaries: Students in the Prospectus Course will begin their work on the prospectus by producing summaries for each of the proposed chapters of their dissertation. Each summary will raise a difficult question (i.e., about how to solve a philosophical problem or interpret a philosophical text) and explain how the question is difficult and why philosophers have therefore disagreed about how to answer it. These summaries will end with a brief description of what stance the student will take in

response to this difficult question and why. The maximum length for these papers/summaries is four pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins), not including a bibliography.*

For the classes in which they have a chapter summary due, students will need to upload their summary to Dropbox on our OWL site by 6pm the day before the class. They will then work in class with a partner or a group to improve their assignment, annotating it with suggestions made by their peers. Finally, they will upload the annotated version to Dropbox for Prof. Sullivan to review.

- 2) Introduction to the prospectus: students will write an introduction to their prospectus before completing a full draft of it, and will follow the same procedure outlined above (i.e., for chapter summaries) for submitting this assignment, subjecting it to peer review, etc.

Presentations:

- Students will do a 3-minute presentation of their prospectus in class near the end of the course and a longer presentation to which all members of the department will be invited to come and provide helpful feedback.
- In early May 2023, a 3-minute thesis event will be scheduled and all students in the prospectus course this term and all PhD students in the department will be invited to present their 3-minute theses to the whole department. (This is intended to be a proper in-person event with refreshments.) More details will be provided in early to mid-February.

Course evaluation: The course is graded on a pass/fail basis. Regular attendance, participation in class activities, and successful and timely completion of assignments will suffice for a pass.

* This format for chapters is based on Dr. Carolyn McLeod's format for her "reflection paper" assignments that she uses in her courses. This is an excellent framework for constructing chapter summaries.

Tentative Schedule
(Subject to change during course of term)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment/Activity</i>
January 12	Student Introductions Introduction to the Course and to the prospectus	Analyses of sample prospectuses (available on OWL under Resources)
January 19	The Academic Job Market – Part 1	TBA
January 26	Prospectus	Chapter summary
February 2	Prospectus	Chapter summary
February 9	The Academic Job Market – Part 2	TBA
February 16	Prospectus	Chapter summary
Feb 23 Reading Week		
March 2	Prospectus	Chapter summary
March 9	Prospectus	The Introduction
March 16	The Non-Academic Job Market	Activity TBA
March 23	Prospectus	*Full draft of the prospectus due Activity of explaining your thesis to a non-philosophical audience
March 30	Prospectus	3-minute thesis presentations: to the class
April 6	Conferences	End-of-term conference presentations: members from the department will be invited to come and provide feedback
April 13	Conferences	End-of-term conference presentations: members from the department will be invited to come and provide feedback
May (Date TBD)	3-min Thesis presentation (all PhD students will be invited to present) and entire department will be invited to attend	