

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-24**

**PHILOSOP 2700F (650):
An Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory**

**Summer Distance Studies 2024
Asynchronous**

**Instructor: Dr. Ryan Robb
Office: Zoom
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30 – 4:30 and
Thursdays 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. on Zoom, or by
appointment**

DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the attempts by scholars to understand whether, and the degree to which, humans can/should be held responsible for their actions. Do humans have ethical duties and responsibilities toward one another or themselves? If so, what are the foundations of those ethical duties, and what do they demand? Our survey of the scholarly responses to these questions will be separated in two parts: First a review of prominent positions on meta-ethics, followed by a survey of the five dominant ethical theories.

TEXTS

Wilfrid J. Waluchow, *The Dimensions of Ethics; An Introduction to Ethical Theory*. (Broadview Press, 2003).

H. Geirsson and M.R. Holmgren, *Ethical Theory: A Concise Anthology*. 3rd ed. (Broadview Press, 2018).

OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to and/or build upon a set of standard philosophical skills. The combination of readings, lectures, and essay assignments in this course will help students develop their ability to identify what it is that makes the set of reasons that support the conclusions of an argument either convincing or implausible by requiring them to formulate well-reasoned responses to the arguments engaged throughout the course.

The secondary goal of this course is to introduce students to the historically dominant discussions of ethical concerns undertaken by philosophers. Student understanding of those discussions will be assessed on the mid-term and final exams.

REQUIREMENTS

20% - Mid-Term Exam

30% - Final Exam

50% - two 1100 – 1300 word essays, worth 25% each

AUDIT

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

LATE PENALTIES

Essays – An essay will be considered late if it is not submitted to OWL Brightspace by the time specified on the assignment description. Late essays will be penalized at a rate of **five** percentage points per day (weekends included), to a maximum of 10 days (or 50%), at which point a grade of 0 will be entered. No essays will be accepted after the last day of the term, i.e., June 14th, 2024.

Exams – Both exams will take place on OWL Brightspace. If an exam is only partially completed by the time specified, the completed portion will be graded, and the incomplete portion will receive 0. If an exam is missed, a grade of 0 will automatically be recorded.

DUE DATES

- Essays – 1. Tuesday May 28th by 11:55 p.m. EDT
2. Friday June 14th by 11:55 p.m. EDT

Mid-Term Exam – opens on Thursday May 23rd at 9 a.m. and must be taken by Monday May 27th at 9 a.m. EDT.

Final Exam – To be scheduled by the Registrar during the Intersession Final Exam period.

E-MAIL POLICY

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail (i.e., I don't have the time to discuss concepts/arguments covered in the course materials by e-mail). I will address those concerns or questions during my Zoom office hours (or by appointment) **only**. If you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you would like to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my Zoom office hours (or make an appointment).

GENERATIVE AI

The use of any generative AI software (e.g., ChatGPT), for any element of this course (the exams or essays), is **prohibited**. Evidence that a student has relied on generative AI for any submission of work for the course will yield 0 on that submission.

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.

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.