

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2021-22

Course Number: PHIL 2355/650

Sustainability: Philosophical Perspectives

Fall Term Online Course – <i>Asynchronous</i>	Instructor: Eric Desjardins WIRB 7138, Office Hours: TBA edesjar3@uwo.ca
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DESCRIPTION

From governments to transnational corporations to radical environmental organizations, everyone agrees that we should pursue the ideal of sustainability. But what exactly does this mean? What ought to be sustained, and what is required to make that possible? Is sustainability a mere trendy ideology? Is it a justified ethical ideal? Is aiming for sustainability scientifically sound or have we overused the planetary resources to a point of no return? Some experts now suggest that sustainability is feasible, but it requires transformative changes. Inspired by the model-based analysis developed in the *Limits to Growth*, they look at various scenarios and assess what is needed to meet the *United Nations 17 Goals for Sustainable Development* while remaining within the *9 Planetary Boundaries*. This course explores this proposal and fosters reflection on the philosophical issues it raises.

TEXTS

Articles, book chapters, and online documents available on OWL

OBJECTIVES

Students taking this course should: 1) acquire a deeper and more reflective understanding of the topic of sustainability and the various practical and ethical dimensions shaping it; 2) be aware of the historical roots of sustainability and 3) be knowledgeable of the different philosophical principles supporting it; 4) be able to critically assess some of the challenges that sustainability raises for the individual and for humanity as a whole; 5) be able to evaluate the adequacy and limitations of the various actions that have been undertaken during the last decades; 6) develop skills for writing and discussing reflectively and effectively about various philosophical issues surrounding the topic of sustainability.

REQUIREMENTS

The final grade will be based upon the following scheme:

1. Essay 1 (35%) - By the end of Week 6
2. Essay 2 (35%) - By the end of Week 12
3. Voice Thread Assignment (Sustainability in the News, 10%) – Over weeks 8-10

4. By-weekly short assignments (10% total)
5. By-weekly forum discussions (10% total)

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.

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

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive 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.