

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016-17

Philosophy 2370G: Science and Values

Winter Term 2017
M 3:30-5:30, W 3:30-4:30
Classroom: WSC 240

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This course outline is tentative and subject to change.

OVERVIEW

Most people believe that good science is “value-free” science. There are, however, some pretty compelling reasons to think that values play a significant role in science—not just in its technological applications but also in its direction and content. We shall examine arguments on both sides of this issue, with an eye to figuring out whether the presence of values must always compromise the integrity of science. Some of the course material will be fairly theoretical so that students gain a good grasp of the philosophical issues at stake (as well the debate’s historical context). Much of the material, however, will focus on specific case studies. These will include scientific representations of race and gender, military research, eugenics, and the commercialization of research. (Student presentations will greatly enlarge the range of topics.)

OBJECTIVES

In addition to becoming familiar with important aspects of the burgeoning literature on the relationship between science and values, students will be expected to develop their ability to:

- Read carefully and with attention to context.
- Pursue research using both traditional and web-based resources.
- Represent opposing arguments fairly.
- Communicate these effectively.
- Argue respectfully with one another.
- Critically assess complex arguments (both orally and in writing).
- Work collaboratively on class presentations.
- Develop their own positions and a better understanding of sometimes controversial issues.

TEXTS

M. Angell, *The Truth About the Drug Companies*
D. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*

Both books are available in paperback. Additional material will be made available through Owl.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, participation, an oral presentation (20%); two five-page essays (15% each→30% total); a mid-term exam (20%), and a final exam (30%).

For both the mid-term and final exams, study questions will be provided in advance. The questions on each exam will be a proper subset of the study questions.

Note: 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>).

AUDIT

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.

SUPPORT SERVICES

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.