

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

Undergraduate Course Outline 2016-2017

Philosophy 3993F/Arts and Humanities 3392F: The Ethics of Science/The Science of Ethics

Winter Term 2016-2017 M 2:30-5:30 TC 203	Professor Gillian Barker Stevenson Hall 2136 gbarker5@uwo.ca 519-661-2111, ext. 87747
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

It has often been thought that ethics and science inhabit separate realms and have little to say to one another. This course challenges that assumption by exploring the many ways in which ethical thought both informs and is informed by science. We begin by investigating the nature of both ethical and scientific reasoning. We then apply this understanding in examining a range of questions about ethics that arise in the pursuit and application of scientific knowledge. Particular issues to be addressed include the ethics of using animals and embryos in medical research; the implications of human evolutionary science and brain science for our understanding of ethics; what ecological science can teach us about our ethical relationship to natural ecosystems and other species; ethical issues that emerge as we apply new technologies in procreation and in food production; and the place of science in a democratic society. We apply the understanding we gain in real-world projects with community partners.

OBJECTIVES

This course has five main objectives.

- To acquaint students with the various ways in which ethics and science interact.
- To provide students with a deeper appreciation of both scientific and ethical reasoning.
- To help students understand the importance of philosophical analysis and dispassionate and secular argument to the resolution of practical problems.
- To help students develop the ability to read thoughtfully and write clearly and effectively about complex philosophical issues.
- To give students practice in applying their academic knowledge and skills to practical problems in collaboration with other students and non-academic partners.

TEXTS

All readings are available online through OWL.

Topics

- Week 1: **Organization and Introduction**
Week 2: **The Ethics of Research on Non-Human Animals**
Week 3: **The Ethics of Research on Human Embryos**

Week 4:	Ethics and Ecology
Week 5:	Ethics and Conservation
Week 6:	Ethics of Procreation
Week 7:	Ethics and Agriculture
Week 8:	Ethics and Evolution
Week 9:	Ethics and Evolution
Week 10:	Ethics and Psychology
Week 11:	Moral Psychology
Week 12:	Science and Democracy

REQUIREMENTS

Classes will combine lecture, group work, community engagement, and class discussion, with an emphasis on student participation. Students will keep journals throughout the semester, contributing excerpts from the journal and additional posts to an online discussion weekly. Two **short** papers will be assigned (one about midterm, one close to the end of term). Each student will also participate in a community-engaged group project and a presentation of the project to the class.

These elements will be weighted as follows:

Journal:	15%
Online Discussion	15%
Paper I:	15%
Paper II:	15%
Group Project:	30%
Participation:	10%

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://www.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.

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.

Students are directed to view the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

Policy on 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.”

Statement on Use of Plagiarism Software

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>).”

Additional Links

- Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
- Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)