

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

Philosophy 1020: Introduction to Philosophy

Fall Term 2016
Tues and Thurs 9.30- 10.30, plus one-hour
tutorial per week
Middlesex College 110

Instructor: Dennis Klimchuck
STVH 3138
Office Hour: Tues, Thurs 11:00- 12:00,
or by appointment
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DESCRIPTION

A survey of a number of the central questions of philosophy. We will focus on two topics in the first term:

1. *Epistemology* (What does knowledge consist in, and how can we know that we know something? What sort of things can be true or false, and what does their truth or falsity consist in?)
2. *Metaphysics* (Is the world made up of particular things only? Does the world come sorted into categories or are the distinctions we draw among kinds of things and persons socially constructed? Are there minds, or just bodies? Do we have free will?)

And two others in the second term:

3. *Ethics* (What makes an action good or bad, permissible or impermissible? To whom do we owe moral obligations?)
4. *Political philosophy* (What justifies political authority? What role ought the state to play in ensuring the material well-being of its citizens?)

In both terms we will also consider, as they are invited by our main topics, questions in three other areas of philosophy:

5. *Philosophy of religion* (Does God exist? Is God's existence compatible with the existence of evil in the world?)
6. *Aesthetics* (What kind of thing is a work of art? A musical composition? In what sense can art represent?)
7. *Philosophy of law* (What does criminal responsibility consist in? What justifies punishment?)

OBJECTIVES

This course has two main objectives. The first is to introduce students to a number of core issues in philosophy and to some historically and conceptually significant answers to enduring philosophical questions concerning, for example, the existence of God, the principles of morality and justice, and the nature of reality and of knowledge. The second is to help students develop the skills philosophy requires: careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

TEXTS

All the reading material will be available on-line, either on the course webpage, through the library, or on the web (instructions for accessing all of these will be provided).

EVALUATION

Participation in tutorials: 10% (5% per term)

4 short (750 word) essays (2 per term), each worth 10% of the final grade, so: $4 \times 10\% = 40\%$

There will be three essay topics per term, each with its own due date. You may choose to write any two of the three. You may also write all three, in which case the two best grades will count.

Mid-year exam (in December, 2 hours): 20%

Final exam (in April, 3 hours): 30%

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.

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

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.