

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18**

**Philosophy 2021A: Oppositions and Paradoxes**

**Fall Term 2017**  
**M 12.30-2.30 W 12.30-1.30**  
**NCB293**

**Instructor: Professor John L. Bell**  
**St H 4130, Office hours: MW 11.30-12.30**  
**jbell@uwo.ca**

**DESCRIPTION**

In this course we will investigate the role played in philosophical and scientific thought by *basic oppositions*, such as the Continuous and the Discrete, the One and the Many, the Finite and the Infinite. We shall also analyze the many paradoxes that have arisen in the history of philosophy and science – e. g Zeno’s paradoxes, the Liar Paradox, Russell’s paradox, paradoxes of the infinite, and paradoxes arising in relativity theory, quantum theory and time travel.

**TEXTS**

*Oppositions and Paradoxes: Philosophical Perplexities in Science and Mathematics*. Broadview Press, 2016. Book available for purchase in bookstore. or online

<https://broadviewpress.com/product/opposition-and-paradoxes/#tab-description>

**OBJECTIVES**

The principal objective of this course is as to convey to students the importance of basic oppositions and paradoxes in scientific and philosophical thought.

**REQUIREMENTS**

The final grade for the course will be evaluated on the basis of two essays and a final exam, weighted equally. The first essay will be due half-way through the semester on a date to be announced, and the second essay will be due on the last day of classes. Essays may only be submitted late if a good reason, acceptable to the instructor, is provided.

A good essay for this course should:

- (i) contain some discussion of an opposition or a paradox; it should *not* be just a list of dates, or purely biographical;
- (ii) be interesting and comprehensible to the reader (and of course the writer); in particular, unnecessary technical jargon should be avoided;
- (iii) give some indication that the writer understands the ideas involved;
- (iv) be written essentially in the writer’s own words – quotations from other sources should be clearly indicated and referenced;
- (v) be 3000-4000 words in length.

The final examination will be of two hours' duration. Students will be asked to write on an opposition or paradox of their choice and to provide brief answers to a few general questions arising from material discussed in the course.

### **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](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](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**

Registrar 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.