

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2019-20  
Philosophy 1020  
Introduction to Philosophy

Term: Autumn & Spring  
Class Hours: M/W, 12:30-1:30  
Class Location: SSC 2050  
Tutorials: One hour per week

Instructor: Anthony Skelton  
Office Location: WIRB 7178  
Office Hours: M, 3:30-4:30 & W, 9:30-10:30  
E-mail: askelto4@uwo.ca  
Phone: 519-661-2111, 87953

## Description

This course will be devoted to a selection of problems in the following areas of philosophy:

1. Epistemology or the theory of knowledge. We shall consider such questions as: Is knowledge possible? How, if at all, is it possible to justify one's beliefs?
2. Metaphysics or the theory of what exists. We shall consider such questions as: Does God exist? What is the nature of the mind? Do we possess freedom of the will?
3. Ethics or the study of the nature of right and wrong, good and bad. We shall consider such questions as: What makes an action right or wrong, permissible or impermissible? What makes something good or bad?
4. Practical Ethics or the study of how one ought to live. We shall consider such questions as: Is existence a benefit? Is abortion permissible? Is there an obligation to alleviate poverty in developing nations? Is it permissible to eat non-human animals? Is paternalism justified?

## Objectives

This course has four main objectives.

1. To introduce students to some important problems in philosophy, their articulation and their attempted resolution.
2. To equip students with the ability to identify, formulate, and evaluate an argument.
3. To equip students with some of the skills required for writing clearly and economically and for conversing knowledgeably about philosophical topics.
4. To provide students with a deeper appreciation of the ways in which philosophy matters to daily life.

## Texts

1. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, edited by Andrew Bailey (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2013). (Available at UWO Bookstore.)
2. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Lorne Falkenstein (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2011). (Available at UWO Bookstore.)
3. All other readings found on-line through the OWL site for this course.

## Course Schedule (Autumn)

Week One (Sept 9): **Organization and Introduction**

Reading: None

Week Two (Sept 16): **Epistemology**

Readings:

1. Descartes, *First Meditation*
2. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.1-5

Week Three (Sept 23): **Epistemology**

Readings:

1. Descartes, **Second Meditation**
2. Descartes, **Principles of Philosophy, 1.7-12**

Week Four (Sept 30): **Metaphysics**

Readings:

1. Descartes and Elizabeth of Bohemia, **Letters**
2. Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind"

Week Five (Oct 7): **Epistemology / Metaphysics**

Reading:

1. Descartes, **Third Meditation**

Week Six (Oct 14): **Metaphysics**

Reading:

1. Hume, **Dialogues, X**

Week Seven (Oct 21): **Metaphysics**

Reading:

1. Hume, **Dialogues, XI**

**NOTE: First Assignment is due on Monday 21 October 2019**

Week Eight (Oct 28): **Metaphysics / Epistemology**

Readings:

1. Descartes, **Fourth Meditation**

2. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.6

Week Nine (Nov 4): **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Ten (Nov 11): **Metaphysics**

Readings:

1. Strawson, "Your Move: The Maze of Free Will"
2. Hume, *Enquiry*, section 8

Week Eleven (Nov 18): **Metaphysics / Epistemology**

Readings:

1. Hume, *Enquiry*, section 8
2. Pascal, *Penses*, paragraphs 233-234

**NOTE: Second Assignment is due on Friday 22 November 2019**

Week Twelve (Nov 25): **Epistemology**

Readings:

1. Hume, *Enquiry*, sections 4-5, part 1.

Week Thirteen (Dec 2): **Metaphysics / Epistemology**

Reading:

1. Hume, *Enquiry*, sections 2-3, & 5, part 2.

## Course Schedule (Winter/Spring)

Week One (Jan 6): **Ethics**

Reading:

1. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 411-417

Week Two (Jan 13): **Ethics**

Reading:

1. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 9-15, 40-42

Week Three (Jan 20): **Ethics**

Readings:

1. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 9-15, 40-42
2. Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right?," 17-47

Week Four (Jan 27): **Ethics**

Reading: No new readings

Week Five (Feb 3): **Ethics**

Reading:

1. Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?"

Week Six (Feb 10): **Ethics**

Reading:

1. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 229-241

Week Seven (Feb 17): **Reading Week: No Classes**

**NOTE: Third Assignment is due on Monday 24 February 2020**

Week Eight (Feb 24): **Practical Ethics**

Reading:

1. Benatar, “Why it is Better Never to Come into Existence”

Week Nine (Mar 2): **Practical Ethics**

Readings:

1. Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”
2. Little, “Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate”

Week Ten (Mar 9): **Practical Ethics**

Readings:

1. Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
2. McGinn, “Our Duties to Animals and the Poor”

Week Eleven (Mar 16): **Practical Ethics**

Readings:

1. Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
2. Regan, “The Rights of Humans and Other Animals”

Week Twelve (Mar 23): **Practical Ethics**

Reading:

1. Conly, *Against Autonomy*, 16-46

**NOTE: Fourth Essay Assignment is due on Tuesday 24 March 2020**

Week Thirteen (Mar 30): **Review**

Reading:

1. No new readings

# Requirements

## 1. Tutorial Participation

Point: Each student is required to sign up for and attend a weekly tutorial; it is an opportunity to reflect on and to discuss course material with peers and a teaching assistant.

Value: 10 percent of final grade (5 percent per term)

## 2. Essay 1

Due date: 21 October 2019

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

## 3. Essay 2

Due date: 22 November 2019

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

## 4. Mid-term Examination

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Length: Two Hours

Value: 20 percent of final grade

## 5. Essay 3

Due date: 24 February 2020

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

## 6. Essay 4

Due date: 24 March 2020

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

## 7. Final Examination

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Length: Three Hours

Value: 30 percent of final grade

# Regulations

## 1. Classroom Etiquette

In order for our course to run effectively and to everyone's benefit it is important that each student adheres to some basic norms respecting classroom behaviour. Accordingly, please do not:

- (a) During the lecture carry on private conversations with your peers.
- (b) During the lecture use electronic devices for purposes unrelated to the course (e.g., shopping, watching Netflix, Facebooking, etc).
- (c) During the lecture get up and walk out.
- (d) During the lecture bark out commands or questions. If you have a question, please raise your hand.

## 2. Audit

Students wishing to audit a course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

## 3. Submission of essays

Please submit your assignments electronically. Do not submit a paper copy.

In order to submit your assignment, visit the OWL site for this course. On the left-hand navigation menu you will find the assignment tool. Click on this tool and you will find the assignment guidelines and basic instructions for submitting your assignment. To submit your assignment upload it and click on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

A corrected version of your paper will be returned to you through the OWL site.

## 4. Turnitin.com

All required papers will 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 will be included as course 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>

## 5. 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 the 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).

#### 6. 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.

#### 7. Late essays and penalties

An essay will be considered late if it is handed in after the due date without a prearranged extension (or after the extended date, in the case of an extension). Late essays will be penalized at the rate of three percentage points per day late. Essays more than ten days late will not be accepted.

#### 8. 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.

#### 9. 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.

#### 10. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is unacknowledged copying or paraphrasing of the words or ideas of another person. In general, anyone who learns something from a source (other than course lectures or general background knowledge any student of the course could reasonably be expected to have) and then presents that knowledge as their own discovery is considered to have plagiarized, even if the words used to express the ideas are not exactly the same.

Examples of plagiarism include: misrepresenting co-authored or group work as individually done, cutting and pasting copied or paraphrased work by others in with your own work, paraphrasing or otherwise altering the order of words or phrases and/or substituting words or phrases of similar meaning without acknowledgement that you are doing so, aiding and abetting such offences, among others.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Scholastic offences are taken very seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence: [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).

11. E-mail policy

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over email. These are to be dealt with in my office hours only. Use email only if you have some brief business or administrative item that you would like to communicate to me. When you write an email please make sure to include your name, student number, and tutorial section and tutorial leader in the email message.

12. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Feel free to use electronic devices in class but please use them for academic purposes only.

13. Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

14. 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://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.

15. Mental Health

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 and holidays).

The policy on Accommodation for Mental Illness is here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical\\_accomodation.html](https://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical_accomodation.html)

16. Support Services

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services: <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by USC: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>