



# Western University

## Department of Philosophy

### Philosophy 1020 (001): Introduction to Philosophy



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

**Full year, asynchronous with synchronous tutorials**

**Prof. Dennis Klimchuk**

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**Office hours: Wednesdays 10-12.**

**(By Zoom; book through Sign-up on the course OWL page.)**

#### **Description**

A look at some central questions in philosophy, including: Does God exist? What is knowledge? Truth? How do we distinguish between right and wrong? What justifies political authority? Punishment? Specific topics will include: race and racism, fake news, the justification and limits of rights in property, and reparations for historical injustices. Examples and case studies will be drawn from a wide range of disciplines and areas, from the natural and social sciences to art and music.

#### **Format**

This course will have (1) an asynchronous component (ie a component in which you engage on your own, at a time of your choosing) and (2) a synchronous component (ie a component in which you engage with others, at a scheduled time).

(1) In place of traditional, live lectures, I will provide 2-4 narrated slide shows per week. These will be organized in weekly “lessons” on the course OWL page. Each lesson will also include some readings. These will be released on a weekly basis, by noon Monday.

(2) In place of traditional, live tutorials, you will meet weekly on Zoom as one of up to thirty students in a tutorial section led by the teaching assistant (T.A.). Your TA will also grade your papers and exams. Each tutorial will have an online forum, to which students will be expected to contribute.

## **Texts**

All readings will be available online, on the course OWL page.

## **Requirements and evaluation**

- 1) Four short papers (700 words each):  $10\% \times 4 = 40\%$
- 2) Two non-cumulative exams, one at the end of each term:  $20\% \times 2 = 40\%$
- 3) Ten (very) short on-line quizzes\* (multiple choice or true or false):  $10\% \times 1 = 10\%$
- 4) Participation in tutorials:  $5\%/term \times 2 = 10\%$

\* You will write six quizzes a term; the top five will count to your grade.

## **Objectives**

This course has three 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 show how philosophical questions are inescapable, and raised throughout our lives. The third is to help students develop the skills philosophy requires: careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

## **Communication**

We will communicate in a few ways:

- 1) I will occasionally post announcements on the course OWL page. These will also be sent as e-mails to your uwo e-mail accounts. They will stay on the OWL page until the course is over).
- 2) There will be a forum on the OWL page on which you can post questions about procedure (eg, accessing readings) and another on which you can ask questions about the readings or the narrated slide shows. I'll monitor both and reply to your questions.
- 3) If you prefer, you can e-mail me directly with questions, at [klimchuk@uwo.ca](mailto:klimchuk@uwo.ca)

## **Office Hours**

I will hold office hours Wednesdays, 10-12 in which you can schedule yourself for a 15-minute meeting on Zoom, using the “Sign-up” tool on the OWL page. If you can’t meet that time, send me an e-mail and we’ll set something up.

## **Auditing**

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).

## **Self-reported absences**

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.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: [http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_322](http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322)

## **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.

## **Course assignments: final deadlines**

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.

## **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](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.