

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2020-21
Philosophy 2073G:
Death

Winter 2021
Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Ryan Robb
Office: Zoom
Office Hours: Thurs 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
e-mail: rrobb@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

This course is focused on understanding and engaging the arguments that scholars have made about death. The specific arguments we consider attempt to answer the following questions: What does it mean to say that a person is dead? What, if anything, survives beyond death? Is death bad? Conversely, is immortality good? Are there any circumstances in which it is morally permissible to bring about the death of another and if so, why?

TEXTS

Samantha Brennan and Robert J. Stainton eds., *Philosophy and Death: Introductory Readings* (Broadview Press: 2009)

OBJECTIVES

This course seeks to achieve two goals. The first, and most important, is to introduce students to and/or build upon a set of standard philosophical skills. Using the readings, lectures, and assignments this course will help students to identify what it is that makes the set of reasons that support the conclusions of an argument either convincing or implausible by requiring them to formulate well-reasoned responses.

The second goal of this course is to introduce students to the ways in which the aforementioned philosophical skills have been applied by classical and contemporary philosophers to one of the most intriguing elements of human life, i.e., death. This goal is accomplished on the two course exams.

REQUIREMENTS

20% - Mid-Term Exam

50% - two 1200 – 1400 word essays, worth 25% each

30% - Final Exam (scheduled by the registrar during the April 2021 final examination period, i.e., April 14th – 30th, 2021)

AUDIT

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

COURSE POLICIES

1. Submission of essays:

You will need to submit an electronic copy of your two essays to OWL.

In order to submit your assignment electronically, simply 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 instructions for submitting your assignment. To submit your assignment upload it and click on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

2. Extensions:

If you fail to meet the submission dates for the two essays, extensions may be granted only as a result of a petition to the Academic Counselor of the student's faculty (barring a student's use of the 48 hour 'Self-Reported Absence Form', outlined below). **Instructors have no authority to waive this requirement, and any unofficial arrangements they make with students will not be respected by the administration.**

All course work must be submitted by the last day of classes, i.e., Monday April 12th, 2021.

Academic policies on examinations, appeals, absences due to illness, etc. may be found in the 2020-21 Academic Calendar. For further information, contact your Faculty's Academic Counselor.

3. Late Penalties:

Essays – An essay will be considered late if it is not submitted to OWL by the time specified on below/on the assignment description. Late essays will be penalized at a rate of **five** percentage points per day (weekends included), to a maximum of 10 days (or 50%), at which point a grade of 0 will be entered.

Exams – The two exams will all take place using the 'Tests and Quizzes' function on OWL. If an exam is only partially completed by the time specified, the completed portion will be graded, and the incomplete portion will receive 0. If an exam is missed, a grade of 0 will automatically be recorded.

4. E-mail policy:

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail (i.e., I won't discuss concepts/arguments covered in the materials by e-mail). I will address those concerns or questions during my Zoom office hours (or by appointment) **only**. If you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you would like to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my Zoom office hours (or make an appointment).

DUE DATES

Essays – 1. Friday February 12th, 2021 at 11:55 p.m.
2. Thursday April 1st, 2021 at 11:55 p.m.

Exams – 1. Monday February 22nd from 9 a.m. – Friday Feb 26th at 11:55 p.m.
2. April Exam Period, to be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.