

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2020-21**

**Phil 2700F (001):
An Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory**

**Fall 2020
Asynchronous**

**Instructor: Dr. Ryan Robb
Office: Zoom
Office Hours: Thurs 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
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DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the attempts by scholars to understand whether, and the degree to which, humans can/should be held responsible for their actions. Do humans have ethical duties and responsibilities toward one another or themselves? If so, what are the foundations of those ethical duties, and what do they demand? Our survey of the scholarly responses to these questions will be separated in two parts: First a review of prominent positions on meta-ethics, followed by a survey of the five dominant ethical theories.

TEXTS

Wilfrid J. Waluchow, *The Dimensions of Ethics; An Introduction to Ethical Theory*. (Broadview Press, 2003).

H. Geirsson and M.R. Holmgren, *Ethical Theory: A Concise Anthology*. 3rd ed. (Broadview Press, 2018).

OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to and/or build upon a set of standard philosophical skills. Using the readings, lectures, and essay 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 in their two essays.

The secondary goal of this course is to introduce students to the historically dominant discussions of ethical concerns undertaken by philosophers. Their grasp of those discussions will be assessed on the mid-term and final exams.

REQUIREMENTS

45% - three exams, worth 15% each

55% - two 1100 – 1300 word essays, worth 27.5% each

AUDIT

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

LATE PENALTIES

Essays – An essay will be considered late if it is not submitted to OWL by the time specified 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 three 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.

DUE DATES

Essays – 1. Friday Oct. 23rd at 11:55 p.m.
2. Friday Nov. 27th at 11:55 p.m.

Exams – 1. Thursday Oct. 1st from 9 a.m. – Tuesday Oct 6th at 11:55 p.m.
2. Thursday Nov 12th from 9 a.m. – Tuesday Nov 17th at 11:55 p.m.
3. December 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.