



Western University

Department of Philosophy

Philosophy 1020 (200): Introduction to Philosophy 2021-22

Full year, asynchronous lectures with weekly synchronous (in person and online) tutorials

Prof. Dennis Klimchuk

klimchuk@uwo.ca || StvH 4150 || (519) 661-2111 x 85758

Office hours: TBA

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? Does morality ever permit or require us to break the law? Specific topics will include: race and racism, fake news, and the justification and limits of rights in property. 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

(1) In place of traditional, live lectures, I will provide two 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, at noon Monday.

(2) You will meet for an hour a week in a tutorial. Most tutorial sections will meet on campus. Two sections will meet over Zoom. **Students in all sections will be expected to write their exams in person, on campus.**

Texts

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

Requirements and evaluation

- 1) Four short papers (750 words each): $10\% \times 4 = 40\%$
- 2) Two non-cumulative exams, one at the end of each term: $20\% \times 2 = 40\%$
- 3) Participation in on-line forum discussions: $5\%/term \times 2 = 10\%$
- 4) Participation in tutorials (may include short in-class writing exercises): $5\%/term \times 2 = 10\%$

There will also be optional weekly online quizzes (very short: 4 multiple choice questions) with which you can test your understanding of the week's readings and lectures.

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 regularly 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). I will monitor it and reply to your questions.
- 3) If you prefer, you can e-mail me directly with questions, at klimchuk@uwo.ca

Office Hours

I will hold office hours in person and on Zoom, time TBA.

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.

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

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

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.