

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2021–22**

Philosophy 3730G: Research ethics

**Winter Term
Tuesday 1:30-3:30 and Thursday 1:30-2:30
Instructor: Charles Weijer**

**Office: WIRB 7160
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: cweijer@uwo.ca**

DESCRIPTION

The course will provide students in science, health science and the humanities with an introduction to ethical issues in human experimentation. The course will review relevant history, an ethical framework for research ethics, and cover core topics, including informed consent, confidentiality, benefit-harm analysis, participant selection, vulnerable participants and communities. Special topics, such as randomized controlled trials, Covid-19 human challenge studies, gene therapy trials, cluster randomized trials, social science research, and health policy and systems research may also be covered.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 2715F/G Health Care Ethics is recommended but not required.

TEXTS

Readings are made available through the Course Readings tab on the OWL website.

OBJECTIVES

The course has three main objectives. First, it will familiarize students with the history of research involving human participants and the development of major ethical codes and regulations. Second, it will expose them to a variety of key ethical issues and concepts raised by research involving human participants. Third, it will give students an opportunity to apply key ethical concepts to real cases selected from the scientific literature.

ASSESSMENTS

Your grade for the course will be based on quizzes, case analyses, and a final exam.

1. Quizzes

When: Five quizzes are given during the term

Format: Multiple choice, definitions, and short answer questions based on the lectures and assigned readings. You will be asked about key concepts and arguments.

Value: 20% of final grade

Late penalty: If you miss a quiz, you cannot take it at a later date. If an academic consideration is received, the missed quiz will be removed from your grade and the remaining will be reweighted

accordingly. If no academic consideration is received, you will receive a grade of 0% on the quiz.

2. Case analyses

When: Two case analyses are assigned during the term

Length: No more than 1250 words

Format: Write an ethical analysis of an assigned scientific case, drawing on course readings.

Value: 50% of final grade (25% each)

Submission instructions: Please submit BOTH a digital copy to the OWL website AND a hardcopy in class. There is a late penalty of 5% per day.

3. Final exam

When: During exam period

Format: Similar format to the quiz and case analysis questions.

Value: 30% of the final grade

AUDIT

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. Students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty's academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf.

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.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. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- For exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams);
- Absence of a duration greater than 48 hours;
- Assignments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade;
- If a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

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>.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS AND/OR EXAMS

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

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 Health and Wellness <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.