

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2021-22

Philosophy 9408B/4410G: The puzzle of consciousness

Winter Term F 10:30-13:30 Room TBA	Instructor: David Bourget Office hours using online booking (details TBA) Contact: https://www.dbourget.com
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DESCRIPTION

Consciousness ---the felt aspect of mental life--- is widely thought to pose a special challenge to scientific explanation. In this course, we will ask whether that is really the case or not, what explaining consciousness would involve, and whether there is any satisfactory explanation of consciousness in the offing.

TEXTS

We will read seminal articles by authors such as Nagel, Chalmers, Block, Jackson, Churchland, and others.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should:

- be able to explain and evaluate the main philosophical arguments and positions discussed in this course both orally and in writing;
- be able to appreciate the relevance of the topics discussed in this course to philosophy in general and bring to bear considerations in philosophy of mind to other topics;
- have acquired and/or improved upon general skills useful for critically engaging with philosophical ideas as well as other pursuits: skills involved in analyzing and critically evaluating arguments, skills involved in effective oral and written communication, and skill involved in fruitful engagement with peers.

REQUIREMENTS

- Weekly responses (10%).

- Participation (5%).
- Final paper-related activities (85%).^[1]_[SEP]
 - Length is 2500-3300 words.
 - A first version of the paper is due 14 days before the last class. This version will be graded and returned to you the following week. The grade you receive then sets a **ceiling** on your final essay grade: your final essay grade cannot be greater than this grade plus 25%. So long as you get 75% or more, you can have 100% for your final essay grade.
 - The second lass week of class will be a paper workshop during which you will work in teams to improve your papers. You are expected to share drafts of your papers and the comments you received, and to try to figure out how you can improve each others' papers.
 - Your final copy is due on OWL on the last day of classes.
 - Late papers will be penalized by 3% per day late, including weekends, up to a maximum of 50%.
 - More specific expectations for papers will be provided in class.

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. 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.

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

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.