

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-23

PHIL 4901G
Honours Capstone:
Community Engaged Learning (CEL)

Winter Term Tues. 9:30-12:30 UCC 41	Instructor: Prof. Carolyn McLeod Stevenson Hall 3145 cmcLeod2@uwo.ca
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PREREQUISITE

Third or fourth year standing in the Honours Specialization in Philosophy. Students completing the Specialization or Major in Philosophy may be admitted with permission from the instructor.

DESCRIPTION

There are two versions of the Honours Capstone course: a regular seminar (Phil 4900F/G) and a community-engaged learning course (Phil 4901F/G). One of these is available each year and students enrolled in the Honours Specialization in Philosophy must take at least one. This year we are offering the CEL version, in which students “apply their philosophical skills [and knowledge] outside the classroom through ... project-based partnerships with community groups selected by or for students” (Academic Calendar). They could choose either a community group they’ve worked with in the past or from among a list of groups that will made available to them. Through this experience, they will learn about the practical value of philosophical skills and knowledge.

On top of having a CEL component, the course will have a theme that focuses on the instructor (Prof. McLeod’s) current research. That theme is *Trust and Belonging*. Community organizations need people to trust them, and for that to happen, they usually need people to feel a sense of belonging to the community or to the organization itself. These days, however, trust and belonging are in short supply, and that is particularly true among people who are members of socially marginalized groups. Many community organizations struggle with trust and belonging, and our goal will be to help them overcome or cope with this problem. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of trust and belonging—and of contraries to them, including distrust, Othering, alienation—by reading what philosophers and other scholars have written on these topics. They will choose a CEL project that concerns trust, belonging, or related issues so that they can apply the scholarly knowledge they gain to the real world and understand its relevance to communities and community organizations.

TEXTS

All course material will be available on our OWL site. There is nothing you need to purchase for this course.

Here is some background reading: McLeod, C. "Trust," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, substantial revision 2020, originally published 2006, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trust/>.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, the students should be able to:

- Appreciate the practical relevance of philosophical knowledge and skills, especially to community organizations
- Comprehend philosophical and other theories about trust, belonging, and related topics
- Apply these theories well to practical moral problems
- Assess and stimulate discussion about arguments that appear in this literature

In addition, through their assignments (see below under Method of Evaluation), students will develop or hone the following skills:

- Translation of philosophical knowledge for a public audience (through the community project and blog piece)
- Problem solving about practical moral or political issues (mainly through the community project)
- Philosophical writing and critical analysis of philosophical theories (through the research project)
- Confident public speaking (through the in-class activities)
- Synthesis and consolidation of significant amounts of material (through the research and community projects and the blog piece)

METHOD OF EVALUATION

- 1) Research project (a philosophical essay; 3000-3500 words), worth 35%
- 2) Community project (a report for the chosen community organization; 1500-2000 words), worth 25%
- 3) Blog piece (800 words), worth 15%
- 4) In-class activities (including a class presentation), worth 25%

A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT

In this course, we will be dealing with some controversial moral and political issues. While rigorous debate across differing perspectives is expected and encouraged, it is crucial that all members of the class participate respectfully and in a non-dogmatic way. In other words, you will need to be charitable toward others and their views, be open to the fact that your own views may be mistaken, and never express hatred or prejudice. If, at any point, you find that our discussion are distressing to you, then I encourage you to speak with me. Should your needs exceed my professional capacities, then I will do my best to help you find the support you need.

ETIQUETTE FOR EMAIL AND CLASSES

Please be sure to be professional when sending emails and when participating in class. When emailing, put the course number in the subject line (Phil 2062F), include an appropriate greeting (e.g., “Dear Professor McLeod” or “Dear Carolyn”), and sign your name at the end so that I know who is emailing me (!). Please also avoid emailing on Saturdays.

The expectation for our classes is that you will be alert, prepared, and actively participating. To that end, you should minimize distractions (e.g., from your cell phone—silence it and keep it out of sight—and from your computer—turn off alerts that might pop up on your screen). You should have copies of the readings and lecture slides at hand and be prepared to ask and/or answer questions about them.

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 that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <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.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an 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.