

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2024-25**

**PHILOSOPHY 3555F
Continental Philosophy**

Winter Term Wednesday 11:30-1:30, Friday 12:30-1:30 TC 341 Instructor: Helen Fielding hfieldin@uwo.ca Office Hours : Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 StvH 3138 Thursdays 12:30-1:30 Lawson Hall 3237

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Neutral peoples, on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who are recognized as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.

DESCRIPTION

In this course we explore what it means to think and to be in this modern age following a trajectory established by the important 20th Century philosopher, Martin Heidegger. We will follow our reading of some of his key texts with essays and lectures by philosophers influenced by his work: Jacques Derrida, Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault. The question of what it means to think in this age is one we will pose as a contemporary problem within the context of coloniality, environmental destruction, and contemporary political upheaval. How can these thinkers help us to better understand why we are here and where we need to go. With Heidegger, we will explore the being of this age as one of systematicity, efficiency, speeding up, and indifference to particularity and place, but also consider alternatives to what it means to dwell on this earth.

Note: students who have taken 3555F/G in the past may be able to take this course with its alternate course content under another course number. Special permission is required.

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

« Third or Fourth year standing in a Philosophy module or permission of the Instructor.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the prerequisites for this course or have special permission to take the course without the prerequisites. [Student Responsibility for Course Selection](#)



TEXTS

Readings will be provided digitally through Weldon library and through OWL Brightspace.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

« This course will enable students to:

- formulate meaningful questions
- gain familiarity with issues that are important within the continental tradition
- read texts closely
- analyze some ways of thinking that shape contemporary global events.
- understand the ways in which we are shaped by forces that exceed individuals but belong to the being of our age, even as this understanding does not absolve us of responsibility or deprive us of agency.



OWL Brightspace

Students are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/> For IT related issues, they may contact Western Technology Services Helpdesk directly: <https://wts.uwo.ca/helpdesk/>.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Short Essay: 5 double-spaced pages	20% (due Jan. 29)
Long Essay: 7-9 double-spaced pages	30% (due March 21)
Participation: See below	10%
Group Presentation	10%
Final Essay Exam:	30%

Participation: During the second hour of the Wednesday Class, we will break the class into small groups. Everyone will sign up to be responsible for leading a small group discussion twice over the semester. On your designated week, you will come to class with a question that you can of course modify during the discussion. You will have 20 minutes to discuss your question with 3 or 4 other classmates. After class you will post your question and a 200-word synopsis of your group's conclusion to your question on the Owl Forum under the designated week. You will post your synopsis within 48 hours after the end of class. Questions should be open questions that invite discussion. Each of the two posted questions and synopses are worth 5%.

Group Presentations: in the final classes there will be small group presentations. Students leading small groups from each week will form a group. Since students will each lead two small group discussions over the course of the semester, I will organize the group presentations with each student presenting on just one of their two weeks. Students will together sift through the insights gathered from their small group discussions in order to present a coherent account. Group discussion insights may be augmented by thinking them through the course structure, that is, perhaps linking them to other themes in the course, and by drawing on multimedia. Each group will present for 15 minutes and there will be 5 minutes for discussion. The presentations will help to prepare students for the final exam.

Electronic Devices: No electronic aids (including smart phones and smart watches) will be permitted for the exam.

Use of Generated Artificial Intelligence:

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Absences at Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf

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

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

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

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.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Academic Accommodation is "a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program."

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible**

Education at the earliest opportunity. "Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students"

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

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

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

SCHEDULE

Jan. 8 – 10 Introduction

Martin Heidegger, "Discourse on Thinking".

In Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper, 1966), 43-57.

<https://ia600209.us.archive.org/34/items/discourseonthink00heid/discourseonth>

[ink00heid.pdf](#)

Jan. 15-17 Heidegger on Humanism

Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism." In Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 239-276.
<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~freeman/courses/phil360/17.%20Heidegger's%20Letter%20On%20Humanism.pdf>

Jan. 22-24 Heidegger and Technology

Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology." In Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper, 1977), 3-35.
https://monoskop.org/images/4/44/Heidegger_Martin_The_Question_Concerning_Technology_and_Other_Essays.pdf

Jan. 29-31 Heidegger on Thinking

Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, lectures VIII and XI.
Trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper, 1968), 208-216, 229-244.
https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Heidegger_What_Is_Called_Thinking.pdf

Feb. 5-7 Heidegger and Language

Heidegger, "The Way to Language." In *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper, 1971), 111-136.
<https://epdf.pub/queue/on-the-way-to-languageae871a0b6a49e989003a2c612fa7e2b947002.html>

Feb. 12-14 Derrida and Language

Jacques Derrida, "Différance." In *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3-27.

Feb. 19-21 Reading Week

Feb. 26-28 Arendt on Reason and Meaning

Hannah Arendt, "Science and common sense: Kant's distinction between intellect and reason; truth and meaning." In *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1978), 53-65.

Arendt, Excerpt from "The Vita Activa and the Modern Age".
In Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958),

280-294.

https://monoskop.org/images/e/e2/Arendt_Hannah_The_Human_Condition_2nd_1998.pdf

March 5-7 Arendt and the Public Realm

Arendt, “The Rise of the social,” “The Public Realm: The Common”, “The Private Realm: Property”, “A Consumer’s Society”, “The Exchange Market,” and “The Permanence of the World and the Work of Art”.

In *The Human Condition*, 38-58, 126-135, 159-174.

https://monoskop.org/images/e/e2/Arendt_Hannah_The_Human_Condition_2nd_1998.pdf

March 12-14 Foucault on Truth and Power

Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power”. In *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 109-133.

https://monoskop.org/images/5/5d/Foucault_Michel_Power_Knowledge_Selected_Interviews_and_Other_Writings_1972-1977.pdf

March 19-21 Foucault and the Political Technology of Individuals

Foucault, “19th January, 1983: Second Hour”.

In *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France 1982-1983*. (trans. Graham Burchell (London, Palgrave, 2008), 97-112.

Foucault, “The Political Technology of Individuals”.

In Luther H. Martin et. al, eds. *Technologies of the Self* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1988), 145-162.

https://monoskop.org/images/0/03/Technologies_of_the_Self_A_Seminar_with_Michel_Foucault.pdf

March 26 – 28 Group Presentations

April 2-4 Group Presentations and Review

THIS OUTLINE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, GIVEN SUFFICIENT PRIOR NOTICE