

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Outline 2025-26

PHILOSOP 2700G 650
Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

This course has no prerequisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will study the nature and justification of ethical and value judgements, the analysis of key moral concepts (duty and good), and a variety of contemporary ethical and value theories and their application to moral issues of social concern, for example, abortion, our treatment of non-human animals, and obligations to the global poor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, (assuming you have completed the readings and lessons, completed the assignments, and participated in the required activities/discussions) you should be able to:

- **Explain**, orally and in writing, multiple theories in normative ethics, metaethics, and value theory
- **Identify and evaluate** arguments expressing diverse points of view in normative ethics, metaethics, and value theory
- **Synthesize and consolidate** complex philosophical perspectives, arguments, and ideas in ethics and value theory
- **Construct** strong arguments in support of well-reasoned conclusions
- **Demonstrate respectful and charitable engagement** with different points of view on issues in ethics and value theory, even when they challenge or oppose your own perspective.

COURSE SCHEDULE

A detailed week-by-week schedule of readings and assignments, and a checklist to keep track, will be posted in Brightspace.

TEXTS

Assigned readings will include a combination of scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and other internet resources to be made available to you digitally **at no cost** through the course website in Brightspace. Some of the readings may require that you be logged into the Western Libraries system for access.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

The course grade will be based on participation in online small-group discussion, one midterm test, one digital project, and a final examination.

1. **Group discussion (10%)—weekly, throughout the term.** Each of you will be a member of a small group discussion board where you will be asked to start a discussion thread in at least five different weeks (in response to a question the instructor will post at the beginning of each week) and to participate in a co-member's thread in at least five different weeks. Which weeks you choose to take part are entirely up to you. The forum questions will be posted by Monday at noon each week and will remain open for new threads and comments on threads until the following Sunday at midnight. Recommended length per post (whether new thread or comment on someone else's): 150-250 words.
2. **Midterm Test (25%)—A 60-minute timed, online midterm that will be available for 24-hours from 9 a.m. February 25th to 9 a.m. February 26th, Eastern Time.** The midterm will consist of a mix of very short, short, and longer answer questions.
3. **Digital Media Project (25%)—Due Thursday, April 9 (submit before midnight).** A digital media philosophical project from among the following options: 10-minute video or video presentation; infographic; 10-minute audio podcast or audio presentation. Your project will require you to consider and respond to a philosophical question in a way that demonstrates your understanding of course content and your development of philosophical skills (such as exposition of philosophical texts; analysis of philosophical arguments; articulation and defence of a philosophical position in response to a question; consideration of an objection and reply). More detailed guidelines that outline the topics to choose from and the required components will be posted in Brightspace Assignments.
4. **Final Examination (40%).** A three-hour online examination to be scheduled during the official examination period (April 12-30). It will consist of a mix of very short, short, and longer answer questions. Further details about the final examination will be made available in late March. NOTE: the examination will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar and could take place anytime between.
5. **Optional weekly online quizzes for self-assessment and consolidation of course material (0%).** These will be very short quizzes with a small number of questions (true/false; multiple choice; short answer) that help you to gauge and consolidate your learning from week to week. They are entirely optional and do not count towards your final grade.

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.

AUDIT

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

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No aids are permitted for tests and exams. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative AI (such as, but not limited to, Chat GPT, Microsoft Co-Pilot, Google Gemini products, Anthropic's Claude products) are powerful and exciting, but their misuse will undermine academic values and learning outcomes of this course.

Prohibited uses and the rationale: Because this course aims to develop your philosophical skills of exposition, critical analysis and argument, creative thinking, and writing, you **may NOT use Generative AI tools for brainstorming or for drafting / writing any essays, assignments, test/exam answers, or discussion posts unless the assignment instructions specifically ask you to do so.**

Permitted uses: You may use AI tools for grammar-checking and spell-checking. If you do so, you must indicate that you have used AI in that way (as a footnote/endnote or part of your references), identify the tool, and retain the version of your paper that you ran through the tool for grammar and spell-checking.

If unauthorized use is suspected: Unauthorized use of AI will be treated as a scholastic offence and handled through Western's Scholastic Discipline Policy. In any case where your submitted work is suspected of such unauthorized use, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts and outlines of assignments, and other materials used in preparing any assessments until after the assessment has been submitted. Students must keep all notes, outlines, and first drafts until after the release of final grades for the course.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION 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/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.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/accessibleeducation/index.html>

SPECIAL EXAMINATIONS

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

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

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

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be “given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test”.

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.

SCHOLASTIC 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

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF PLAGIARISM-CHECKING SOFTWARE

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>).

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

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF REMOTE PROCTORING SOFTWARE

Tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

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. 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 (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html) (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.