

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2018-19

**Philosophy 2720G: Ethics of Professional Relationships**

**W 12:30-2:30; F 12:30-1:30**  
**FIMS Nursing Building (FNB) 1220**

**Instructor: Prof. Carolyn McLeod**

Office: 2137 Stevenson Hall

Email: [cmcleod2@uwo.ca](mailto:cmcleod2@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: TBA

Website: <http://carolynmcleod.com>

**Graduate TA and Co-Instructor: Austin Horn**

Office: TBA

Email: [ahorn5@uwo.ca](mailto:ahorn5@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: TBA

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Professionals have special duties and privileges that attach to their occupational roles. This course will focus on the special ethical obligations of professionals, including those that they have to themselves, to their clients or patients, to third parties, to their professions, and to society at large. Among the more specific topics we will cover are the meaning of professionalism, the demands of truth-telling for professionals, the fiduciary nature of the professional-client/patient relationship, client or patient confidentiality, the nature and demands of professional integrity, whether professionals should heed their conscience when it conflicts with their professional duties, and whistleblowing. Our discussion will extend to ethical issues in different professions, including the health care professions (e.g., medicine, nursing, pharmacy), law, engineering, and journalism.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, students will be able to,

- Discuss what it means to be a professional or part of a profession, and for the professional-client/patient relationship to be *fiduciary*
- Describe what many philosophers believe to be the special ethical duties of professionals, including fiduciary duties
- Think critically about core topics in professional ethics and appreciate their complexity
- Provide ethical analyzes of actual cases involving professionals

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

- Critical analysis and writing (through the online forum, quizzes, and essays)
- Thoughtful engagement with others on controversial topics (through the online forum and class discussion)

- Confident public speaking (through class discussion, which will occur in large and small groups)
- Synthesis and consolidation of significant amounts of material (through the quizzes and papers)

### **COURSE WEBSITE**

All course information, including assignments, will be posted on our OWL site at <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

- Martin, C., W. Vaught, and R. C. Solomon. *Ethics Across the Professions: A Reader for Professional Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (Available at the UWO bookstore)
- Some online readings available on our OWL site

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

- 1) **Participation** in an online forum and in class: **20%**
  - Students will post summaries of our readings and questions or comments about them in an online forum on OWL, where they will be able to respond to one another
  - Classes will be discussion-based and the discussion will be prompted in part by what is happening in the online forum
- 2) **In-class quizzes: 30%**
  - Material for the course will be divided into four sections and students will write a quiz on each section
  - Only the *best three* quizzes will count, although students will be required to write all four
  - Each quiz that counts will be worth 10%
- 3) **Two essays** (each ~1500 words and worth 25%): **50%**
  - Students will have the opportunity with this assignment to apply their knowledge of theories in professional ethics to actual cases involving professionals

More information about assignments will be available on our website and provided in class.