

Western University

Department of Philosophy

Philosophy 1020 (200): Introduction to Philosophy 2022-23

Full year, asynchronous on-line lectures with weekly synchronous in person tutorials

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Office hours: In person and over Zoom, time TBA

Description

A look at some central questions in philosophy, including: Does God exist? What is knowledge? Truth? How do we distinguish between right and wrong? What justifies political authority? Does morality ever permit or require us to break the law? Specific topics will include: race and racism, fake news, and the justification and limits of rights in property. Examples and case studies will be drawn from a wide range of disciplines and areas, from the natural and social sciences to art and music.

Objectives

This course has three main objectives. The first is to introduce students to a number of core issues in philosophy and to some historically and conceptually significant answers to enduring philosophical questions concerning, for example, the existence of God, the principles of morality and justice, and the nature of reality and of knowledge. The second is to show how philosophical questions are inescapable, and raised throughout our lives. The third is to help students develop the skills philosophy requires: careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

Format

In place of traditional, live lectures, I will provide two narrated slide shows per week. These will be organized in weekly “lessons” on the course OWL page. Each lesson will also include some readings. These will be released on a weekly basis, at noon Monday. You will meet for an hour a week in a tutorial led by a teaching assistant, in person on campus.

Texts

All readings will be available online, on the course OWL page.

Requirements and evaluation

1) Four short papers (750 words each):

More details on each of these requirements will be made available on the course OWL page.

There will also be optional weekly online quizzes (very short: 4 multiple choice questions) with which you can test your understanding of the week's readings and lectures.

Late papers

Late paper will be subject to a penalty of 2%/day, to a maximum of 10% of the

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 assignments: final deadlines

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