

Philoso 1305 G:
Questions of the Day

Course Outline 202 2–23

Dr. Benjamin Hill

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Hill (he/him/his)
Voicemail: 519.661.2111 (x80143)
Student Hours:
x MW 09:30 -10:00 (at Einstein's)
x T 13:00 -14:00 (3140 STVH)
x By appointment
Contact: OWL Messages

Winter Term 20 23
Lecture (001)
[WL 258](#)
Mon 12:30 – 13:20 Eastern
Wed 12:30 – 14:20 Eastern

COURSE GOAL

The goal of this course is to empower students to think and converse philosophically about issues currently facing Canadian society and being publicly discussed in the media and by Canadians.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional ODQGV RI WKH \$QLVKLQDDEHN +DX and Q P Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g.,) L U V W 1 D W L and V n i t p e n d u l e in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and community service.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is philosophy and how can it help us to grapple with “questions of the day,” important questions that are being publicly debated today. As a class, we will decide which pressing questions are most important to us, and we will then explore them philosophically to determine how a philosophical mindset can contribute to the public conversation about them.

This course approaches philosophy as a way of life rather than as an academic discipline. It is a course in practical philosophy rather than theoretical or applied philosophy. For more information about this see the [Mellon Philosophy as a Way of Life project](#). This course is



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structured as an [“active learning” course](#), rather than a straight-up lecture course. This means that it is structured around in -



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COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

See [Appendix 1](#) for the alignment of the course learning outcomes with the program and Western degree learning outcomes.

By the end of this course, successful students will



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Essays (40%) [Summative Assessment][Learning Outcomes: 3, 4, 5]

Students are required to write TWO (2) 1250-word (minimum) essays philosophically defending a position on the issues studied in the course. The essays are eligible for the automatic 48-



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to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Essay Course Word Count

As a course that satisfies the senior level essay course requirement, student enrolled in this course should expect to submit a minimum of 2500 words of written work.

Department Target Average Policy

The Philosophy Department has a policy requiring a 72 average for each 4th year course. The grades I assign will be in the OWL “Gradebook”. Should there be any discrepancy between the grade I recorded for you in OWL and your “official” grade reported by the Registrar, you should contact the Philosophy Department Undergraduate Chair for clarification and explanation. Western’s current policies and procedures for undergraduate student academic appeals can be found [here](#)

REQUIRED TEXTS

All required readings and source material will be made available through OWL.

OWL

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) 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.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

COURSE SOCIAL MEDIA

~~In addition to our official OWL site, we have a course website and blog as well as social media presence.~~

~~Website and blog:~~

~~Facebook public page: <http://www.facebook.com/WEModPhil>~~

~~Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DrBenjaminHill1>~~

~~To receive credit for any public event or social media challenge, your posting must include the official course tags. Students without any social media presence or who wish not to post anything that might compromise their personal privacy to social media should~~



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the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Western Policy on



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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](https://www.turnitin.com).

SUPPORT SERVICES

[Registrarial Services](#)



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Appendix 1 (Aligned Learning Outcomes)

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Course Learning Outcomes	Aligned Philosophy Program Learning Outcomes	Aligned Western Degree Learning Outcomes
Engage in philosophical reflection and conversation in oral and written contexts.	HSp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 MajP 1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3
Appreciate the nuance and depth that philosophical reflection brings to our engagement with difficult contemporary public issues.	HSp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 MajP 1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3
Analyze philosophically the questions and concepts involved in four pressing issues currently being debated publically.	HSp 2, 4, 5, 6 MajP 2, 4	6, 7
Articulate some of the considerations and arguments that contemporary philosophers contribute to the public discussions of four pressing contemporary issues.	HSp 2, 4 MajP 2, 4	1, 3, 5, 6
Construct coherent and plausible defenses of their own analyses and positions on four pressing public issues in oral and written contexts.	HSp 4, 7, 8, 10 MajP 4, 6, 7, 8	4, 6
Engage in philosophically deep and respectful discussions about four heated questions of the day.	HSp 7, 8, 10 MajP 6, 7, 8	4, 6, 7

