

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEREK DE HIBY  
COURSE 2022-2023

PHI 2500G:

Introduction to Philosophy

Winter Term 2023

M 10:30-12:30; W 11:30-12:30

SSG2020

Instructor: Prof. Robert DiSalle

Office Hours: M 12:30-2:30

(and by appointment)

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### DESCRIPTION

All areas of philosophy, and of human knowledge in general, depend on assumptions about the nature of knowledge: assumptions about how we come to know what we know, what we can know about the world, and how we come to trust the knowledge claims of other people as well as our own. The theory of knowledge thus has metaphysical, psychological, and social dimensions as well as directly epistemological ones. This course considers some of the most important problems in the theory of knowledge, from a selection of classical and contemporary viewpoints. In this way we will gain some insight into the origins, motivations and evolution of these problems as well as their implications for contemporary thought. Topics will include the nature of perception, the relation between sense and reason, scepticism and certainty, trust in the testimony of others, deductive and non-deductive inference, and the role of a priori principles in our common sense and scientific knowledge. Although there are no formal prerequisites, some prior familiarity with philosophical texts will be assumed.

### TEXTS

Text: Huemer, ed. *Epistemology: Contemporary Readings* (Routledge, 2002)

Supplementary texts to be posted on OWL

### ASSESSMENT

2 short essays (each 25% of final mark)

Final exam (40% of final mark)

Regular participation in class discussion (10% of final mark)

### OBJECTIVES

1. To study classic and contemporary texts in the theory of knowledge
2. To understand the role of epistemological questions in knowledge generally
3. To understand and critically evaluate knowledge claims
4. To develop competence in critical analysis by careful reading and discussion
5. To develop skills of oral expression and argument through class discussion
6. To develop writing skills through written assignments

### AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first

week of classes.

### **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.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation should be submitted as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **EXTENDING ACADEMIC PENALTY**

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 20% of the course grade. If a student is unable to complete the course by the deadline, they may request an extension of the deadline. The deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty is 30 days before the end of the semester. If a student is unable to complete the course by the deadline, they may request an extension of the deadline. The deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty is 30 days before the end of the semester.

**ERCES**

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Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/help/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the UJC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [erc@uwo.ca](mailto:erc@uwo.ca) or call (519) 261-6161 (ext. 6161) for assistance.