

Huron University College
Intersession 2021
Philosophy 1250F Section 550 – Right and Wrong
M, T, W, Th 9:30 AM-12:30 PM – ONLINE
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. D. Conter

E-mail: dconter@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 8:30 AM-9:30 AM. Office hour consultations will take place using the Zoom platform. Students requesting such individual Zoom consultations must email a request at least 24 hours prior to their desired timeslot

Antirequisite(s): Philosophy 1100E, Philosophy 1300E

Delivery

This course will be taught online, making use of the interactive Zoom platform. Classes will run live on the days and at the times indicated. For those who for one reason or another have no access to the live sessions, each day's Zoom audiovisual files will be posted in the resources section of the OWL site for this course, so that they will be available for students to view and listen to at their own convenience.

Description

An introductory course about moral philosophy, presupposing no prior knowledge of either morals or philosophy. A variety of issues will be raised, including the following: the meaning of life, human nature, the existence of altruism, the importance of happiness, the relation between morality and religion in the contemporary world and in the past; moral relativism (the view that different groups have different moral opinions and there is no choosing among these opinions); the idea that our actions ought to be governed by strictly universal rules; the notion that our actions are to be chosen because they produce the best or most pleasurable consequences; and, finally, the relations between morality and law.

Students will read 30 very short essays by distinguished philosophers that were originally published as newspaper articles in the New York Times.

Objectives

Students will learn to assess the seriousness of the philosophical problems that arise in connection with these issues. In addition, they will develop the skills to make comparative assessments of various treatments to these problems offered by a variety of philosophers working in the Western tradition. By doing so, students should gain a basic knowledge of many of the central themes that have emerged in specialized and informed thinking about ethical issues. They will also learn to apply ethical ideals and principles to specific fact scenarios.

Course Method

Lecture; with professor/student and student/professor question/answer exchanges.

Text

Peter Catapano and Simon Critchley, *Modern Ethics in the 77 Arguments* (New York: WW Norton, 2017).

An electronic version of this text is available for immediate download from amazon.ca for \$14.27. It is possible that other e-versions of the text are also available. If so, however, their page numbers may not match those of the Amazon e-version.

Assessment:

Students' grades will be determined based in part on **two short essays short essays** – 4-5 double-spaced pages in length, and **each worth 33 %** – for a total of **66 %**.

There will also be a **two-hour final examination** worth **34 %**.

1. **The due dates for the essays are Tuesday May 18 and Tuesday, May 25.**
2. The essays **MUST** be submitted electronically on **OWL** by 3:30 PM on the relevant due dates. Since this is an online course, obviously no hard copies are required. For each essay, the topic will appear on **OWL** on the Friday preceding the due date. The topic will not be handed out in class. **Late essays will not be graded, except on the recommendation of the Academic Counselor. Extensions will not be granted for any reason, except upon the recommendation of the Academic Counselor.**
3. The **final exam questions** will be posted on the OWL site for this course on **Friday, May 28** – the day after the last class in the course. Students will have to write two short essay answers – 1 ½-2 single-spaced pages each. Students will have to upload their exams on OWL by 9 AM, Monday, May 31. In normal circumstances, I would set a two-hour time limit for exactly the kind of exam that will be given in this course. In order to make allowances for the extraordinary difficulties caused by Covid-19, students will be given more than three days to complete the exam.

Syllabus

(All titles are chapter titles in Catapano and Critchley. We'll read the chapters sequentially; but, given the large number of chapters in the book, we'll leave many out.)

Week 1

May 10

"The Meaningfulness of Lives", "There Is No Theory of Everything". "Against Invulnerability".

May 11

"A Life Beyond 'Do What You Love'", "Evolution and Our Inner Conflict", "Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene".

May 12

"Is Pure Altruism Possible?", "Moral Camouflage or Moral Monkeys?", "How Should We Respond to 'Evil'?"

May 13 so when you found me please his reign

"The Moral Logic of Survivor Guilt", "How to Live Without Irony", "Deluded Individualism".

Week 2

May 17

“The Dangers of Happiness”, “Are We Ready for a ‘Morality Pill?’”, “Why Our Children Don’t Think There Are Moral Facts”.

May 18

“Morals Without God”, “The Dangers of Certainty: A Lesson from Auschwitz”, “Confessions of an Ex-Moralist”.

May 19

“The Maze of Moral Relativism”. “Can Moral Disputes Be Resolved?”, “Moral Dispute or Cultural Difference?”.

May 20

“Navigating Past Nihilism”, “Does It Matter Whether God Exists?”, “Good Minus God”.

Week 3

May 24

Victoria Day – no class

May 25

“Pascal’s Wager 2.0”, “Why God Is Moral Issue”, “Is Voting Out of Self-Interest Wrong?”.

May 26

“Questions for Free-Market Moralists”, “Spinoza’s Vision of Freedom, and Ours”, “If War Can Have Ethics, Wall Street Can, Too”.

May 27

“A Crack in the Stoic’s Armour”, “Getting Past the Outrage on Race”, “The Disappearing Women”



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students

are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Statement on 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 website:

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

The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

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>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf. Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Learning Development and Success: <https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

Accessible Education: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca

Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Chaplaincy: gthorne@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.