

Huron University College
Fall 2021
Philosophy 2665F Section 550
Introduction to Jewish Philosophy I: From the Beginnings to the Italian Renaissance

Tuesday 8:30 AM-10:30 AM; Thursday 8:30 AM-9:30 AM
Huron-HC-W108

Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. D. Conter

Office: V 131

Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday – 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

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Description:

A course on earlier periods in the history of Jewish philosophy.

There is no presumption that students have studied philosophy before, or that they have any knowledge or experience of the Jewish religion.

One way of thinking about the philosophy associated with Judaism is to see it as involving an attempt to provide a reasoned defense for certain central religious practices and beliefs. In this course, the focus will be on historical defenses of some kinds of

- ritual observance
- ethical conduct
- beliefs concerning the nature of the universe
- beliefs concerning the nature of human beings
- beliefs concerning the nature and existence of an everlasting supreme being thought to be the creator and ruler of everything.

In 2021, the course will cover both less and more than its official title indicates. It will start not with the very beginnings in Jewish philosophy, but with early Jewish philosophical writing of the medieval period, which had a profound effect on the nature of a kind of Jewish religious thinking that remains influential today. Most of the course will be given over to the original presentation during the medieval periods of arguments offered on behalf of particular religious ideas. A wide range of views will be considered, but one philosopher more than any other will be focused upon – the great 12th century figure Maimonides (the Rambam – 1138 CE-1204 CE). The course will also extend beyond the Renaissance to include the early modern philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632 CE-1677 CE) – certainly the greatest Jewish philosopher in the Western philosophical tradition.

Objectives:

The aim of the course will be to familiarize students with unfamiliar styles of philosophical argument, and to enable students to set these styles of argument in their differing historical contexts, so that they themselves can develop reasoned assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of competing philosophical views of a certain kind of religious life and thought.

Method of Instruction:

Lecture, with student/instructor question and answer.

Texts:

Medieval Jewish Philosophical Writings, edited by Charles Manekin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Benedict De Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, edited by Jonathan Israel, translated by Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

These texts are available in both hardcopy and electronic versions from the University bookstore.

Assessment:

Students' grades will be determined on the basis of **two very short essays for which no outside research is required** – each 3-4 pages in length, and **each worth 33 %** – for a total of **66 %**.

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

1. The due dates for the essays are Friday October 1 and Friday November 5.

The essays **MUST** be submitted in hard copy at the Huron University College essay dropbox by noon on the relevant due dates. The essays **MUST** be uploaded as a PDF file to **OWL** by noon on the relevant due dates. For each essay, the topic will appear on **OWL** at approximately 10 AM, 48 hours preceding the due date. **Note that you have 48 hours in which to complete each assignment. Obviously, you need to arrange your work schedule appropriately.**

Under no circumstances will extensions be granted by me acting alone. Students who fail to submit an essay on time must consult the Academic Counsellor. In such a case, if there is a recommendation from the Academic Counsellor, students who get such a recommendation from the academic Counsellor must submit their assignments within 48 hours of the Academic Counsellor's recommendation. Notwithstanding the above, students who FOR ANY REASON AT ALL fail to submit the two essays at the appropriate time will not be permitted to write the final exam.

2. The final exam will be written during the final exam period at a date and time specified by the University. More information about the format will be provided on the last day of class

Students who for any reason at all miss the scheduled final exam and are granted permission to write the special final on the date specified by the College must understand that both the content and the format of the special final may be different from the regularly scheduled final exam.

Syllabus

Week 1 September 8-10

Medieval Philosophical Writings, pages 1-22

Week 2 September 13-17 – class September 16 cancelled due to the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur.

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 23-63

Week 3 September 20-24

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 63-108

Week 4 September 27-October 1

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 108-139

Week 5, October 4-8

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 140-191

Week 6 October 11-15

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 192-235

Week 7 October 18-22

Medieval Philosophical Writings, 236-260

Theological-Political Treatise, 1-12

Week 8 October 25-29

Theological-Political Treatise, 13-67

Week 9 November 1-5

No classes: Reading Week

Week 10 November 8-12

Theological-Political Treatise, 67-129

Week 11 November 15-19

Theological-Political Treatise, 129-194

Week 12 November 22-26

Theological-Political Treatise, 195-229

Week 13 November 29-December 3

Theological-Political Treatise, 230 -258

Week 14 December 6-8

Review; examination issues

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.

Pandemic Contingency

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, typically using a combination of synchronous instruction (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) and asynchronous material (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. In the unlikely event that changes to the grading scheme are necessary, these changes will be clearly communicated as soon as possible.

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>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

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/>.