

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Reality & What We Can Know of It

Course Number and Section

PHILOSOP

1350F 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

In this age of fake news, attention economies, LLM content swamping social media spaces, and our political and social leaders becoming ever-more willing to stretch the truth or deny facts outright, the study of epistemology and metaphysics is important as ever. Many of these issues, and much of what we take ourselves to “know” about reality in general, depend upon fundamental but often unexamined philosophical assumptions. Should we trust an expert’s testimony or predictions? Can we trust our own memories, perceptions, and intuitions? What about logic and mathematics, science or faith? From where do logical and ethical truths even arise? Can we be sure beliefs formed by these methods correspond to reality? And just what is “real”. . . perhaps we’re in a simulation? We assume we have free will, that there are other minds, scientific facts, an external world—but how can we be sure? Such assumptions help us to make sense of our lives, but can be questioned. Learning to believe and act based upon the best arguments and evidence available, while also being comfortable with—and recognizing the value of—the ambiguity of different perspectives, can make us more understanding, empathetic, and flourishing human beings.

So in this course we will examine some of these questions and the philosophical issues at their foundations. Our goal is to equip ourselves with tools and conceptual frameworks useful for navigating these issues, that we may attentively confront the realities of our modern age.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Better appreciate of how much our daily affairs are underpinned by philosophical convictions and concerns.

Means to critically evaluate those convictions.

Practice and improve your writing, critical analysis, and argumentative abilities.

Practice being an active participant in your education.

The student with the highest overall grade in this course will be publicly recognized with The Philosophy 1350 Prize during Huron’s annual Awards Day!

Textbooks and Course Materials:

All course readings will be posted on OWL. Students will also be provided with a notebook/journal for composing Discussion Responses. If it is misplaced, it must be replaced

out-of-pocket.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Discussion Responses	Weekly	30
Analysis Assignment	10/22/26	20
Research Assignment	11/26/26	20
Final Exam	Fall Exam Period	30

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

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In-course Costs \$000.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.