

Philosophy of Risk Phil 2263G, 2021 (Intersession)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Lucien Lamoureux, LL.B., Ph.D.
Phone or Text: 519-702-6517 (cell)
E-mail: llamour2@uwo.ca

CLASS INFORMATION

Webinar Day and Time: Mon –
Thu: 1:30 – 4:30 (Webinars are
live lectures. These will be
recorded and made available for 48
hours.)
Course Location: Online
Website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Drawing on probability and decision theory, ethics, justice, and legal philosophy, the course will deal with personal choice and the perception of risk, the moral and social acceptability of risks, and the legal management of risk.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe philosophical theories concerning risk.
2. Apply these theories to concrete situations.
3. Discuss competing points of view on issues in philosophy of risk.
4. Evaluate conflicting philosophical arguments related to these issues.
5. Formulate well-reasoned solutions to practical dilemmas.
6. Persuade others of a well-reasoned stance or action.
7. Demonstrate effective writing and skillful critical and reflective thinking.

Students may vary in their competency levels on these outcomes. They can expect to achieve these outcomes if they honour course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of them as students.

ANTIREQUISITE(S)

None. Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.



PREREQUISITE(S)

None.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

3 lecture hours/week; 0.5 course.

Lectures will be integrated with reading materials, visual presentations, and group discussions.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required texts:

Risk: Philosophical Perspectives, Tim Lewens ed., Routledge (2007). E-book that can be purchased from: <https://lb.ca/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/additem.bbx?/I9781134100279/Z109991@@c29163672.p16843666.t1588707654G>

Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle, Sunstein, Carl, Cambridge (2005). E-book that can be purchased from: <https://www.cambridge.org/ca/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/political-theory/laws-fear-beyond-precautionary-principle?format=AR>

Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students, Vaughn, Lewis and Scott McIntosh, Jillian. E-book that can be purchased from: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/writing-philosophy-lewis-vaughn-jillian-scott-v9780190161170>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation	10%
Assignment	19%
Essay	31%
Final Essay Exam (TBA)	40%

EVALUATION

Class Attendance

Students are expected to discuss and debate the readings and lecture material in online forums that have been set-up in OWL.

Assignment

An exercise in decision theory and questions concerning assigned readings for an upcoming lecture will be assigned as noted in the reading syllabus below. Further details, including grading criteria, will be posted on OWL.

Essay

Format: 5 double-spaced pages, i.e. approximately 1250 words. Hardcopy to be submitted in class on the due date. Electronic submissions will not be accepted without prior approval.

Plagiarism Check: Essays must also be submitted electronically to OWL on the due date to be evaluated through turnitin. Essays not submitted to OWL will not receive a grade.

Marking Criteria: Each paper will be graded out of 50 according to the following criteria:

Understanding: How well does the author understand and make judicious use of the relevant course material? How well does s/he understand the complexity of the issues involved? [15 marks]

Argument: Does the author use cogent arguments to support his or her position? Do the claims made in different parts of the paper follow from one another and are they consistent? [15 marks]

Clarity: Is the author's position clear, with an explicitly articulated thesis, and is the paper clearly written overall? Does the paper answer the questions asked? Could another student at the same level who is not enrolled in the course understand the paper? [10 marks]

Organization: Does the author reveal a plan for the paper at the outset and does s/he follow that plan? Does the paper have an explicit overall direction? [5 marks]

Style: Does the author's paper use correct grammar and syntax? Have the guidelines for proper format been followed? Has the author cited sources where necessary, following a recognized style? [5 marks]

Final Essay Exam

The format will be a take-home essay graded like essay. Further details will be provided to the class later in the term.

Proposed Reading Syllabus (subject to revision)

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
May 31	Introduction	Hansson, <i>Fallacies of Risk</i> (OWL)	
June 1	Risk Perception	<i>Laws of Fear</i> , Chapters 2 (35-49), 3, 4	
June 2	Decisions Under Risk	<i>An Introduction to Decision Theory</i> : Chapters 2 (17-30), 4 (65-84), 14 (OWL)	
June 3	Consequences	Morton, <i>Great Expectations</i> (Lewens) <i>Laws of Fear</i> , Chapter 6 Wolff, <i>What is the Value of Preventing a Fatality?</i> (Lewens)	
June 7	Decisions Under Ignorance	<i>An Introduction to Decision Theory</i> : Chapter 3 (OWL) <i>Laws of Fear</i> , Chapters 1, 2 (49-63), 5 (109-122) Sandin, <i>Common Sense Precaution</i> (Lewens)	Assignment (20%)
June 8	Overview of Ethics	Maitland, <i>The Human Face of Self-Interest</i> (OWL) Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (OWL) Kant, <i>Metaphysics of Morals</i> (OWL)	
June 9	Issues in Ethics a. Heuristics	Gigerenzer, <i>Moral Satisficing</i> (OWL) Sunstein, <i>Moral Heuristics and Risk</i> (Lewens)	
June 10	b. Extension of Ethics to Risk	Hansson, <i>The Harmful Influence of Decision Theory on Ethics</i> (OWL) Hansson, <i>Ethical Criteria of Risk Acceptance</i> (OWL) Hansson, <i>Risk and Ethics</i> (Lewens)	
June 14		Cranor, <i>Toward a Non-Consequential Approach to Acceptable Risks</i> (Lewens) Perry, <i>Risk, Harm, Interests and Rights</i> (Lewens)	
June 15	Overview of Justice	Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> (OWL) Rawls, <i>Theory of Justice</i> (OWL)	

June 16	Issues in Political Philosophy a. Liberty, Paternalism and Participation	<i>Laws of Fear</i> , Chapters 5 (122-128), 7, 8 Kusch, <i>Towards A Political Philosophy of Risk</i> (Lewens)	
June 17	b. Terrorism	<i>Laws of Fear</i> , Chapter 9 Ryan, <i>Risk and Terrorism</i> (Lewens)	Essay (30%)

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://academic.support.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://academicssupport.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/>.