

HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-2023

**Phil2700F: Introduction to Ethics
& Value Theory** (section 551)

Tues 3:30–5:30, Thurs 2:30-3:30
Classroom: V208 (Huron)
Office: Lucas House Annex

Instructor: Emerson Doyle
email: edoyle9@uwo.ca
Hours: Wed 1:00–3:30 or anytime via Zoom

Course Description

Value Theory is the study of how, why, and to what degree human beings value certain things or ideals over others. Traditionally this study has focused upon an understanding of “The Good” and our access to it (whatever *it* is) in the most abstract or broadest sense. More recent work focuses upon understanding our use of *evaluative* language in many contexts: What makes something *better* than something else, or the *worst*? Is *Knowledge* valuable for its own sake, or only for what consequences it brings about? Similarly for *Beauty*, *Truth*, or *Pleasure*? What about *Money* and *Popularity*? Is there a difference in kind between the uses of ‘good’ when I say “*You’re a good person*” versus when I say “*This ice cream is good*”?

Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned to study and recommend principles of right action. What *should* we do in such-and-such a situation? What would be the *moral* thing to do? Many have argued that such principles should have some objective foundation. Others argue that our attitudes toward how to act rightly are determined mainly by circumstance—our cultures, intuitions, evolution, etc.—so that the principles by which we judge action are not absolute. Presumably in either case, such principles will be somehow related to the values people hold in highest regard.

In this course we will examine such issues by considering some of the premier theories of value and of obligation in the Western philosophical tradition. We will also consider more carefully the relationship between ethics and value theory, as well as exploring applications of our analyses to some of the difficult moral questions facing humanity today.

Anti-Requisite(s): GLE2002F/G

Western Foot Patrol: 519-661-3650

Course Objectives & Methods

Students should finish the course with an understanding of some of the most influential and prominent positions on the questions and topics outlined above. This exposure will better equip us to confront and critically evaluate our own attitudes or intuitions toward morality in general and on some difficult practical moral questions in particular. Alongside these reflective efforts, you will have the opportunity to improve your writing, critical analysis, and argumentative abilities.

Important Note: *In this course we will often discuss ideas and scenarios that are difficult, sensitive, disturbing, or otherwise controversial.* Although the course will consist primarily of lectures, class discussion will be of key importance in working through this material. In my experience courses are successful when everyone is engaged and comfortable making contributions—thus you must be an active participant in your education. I commit to doing my best to facilitate a safe and positive atmosphere in the classroom, but it is up to each student to engage our classroom community in good-faith, with an attitude of tolerance, patience, and consideration for classmates.

Texts

- Course readings will be posted on OWL.

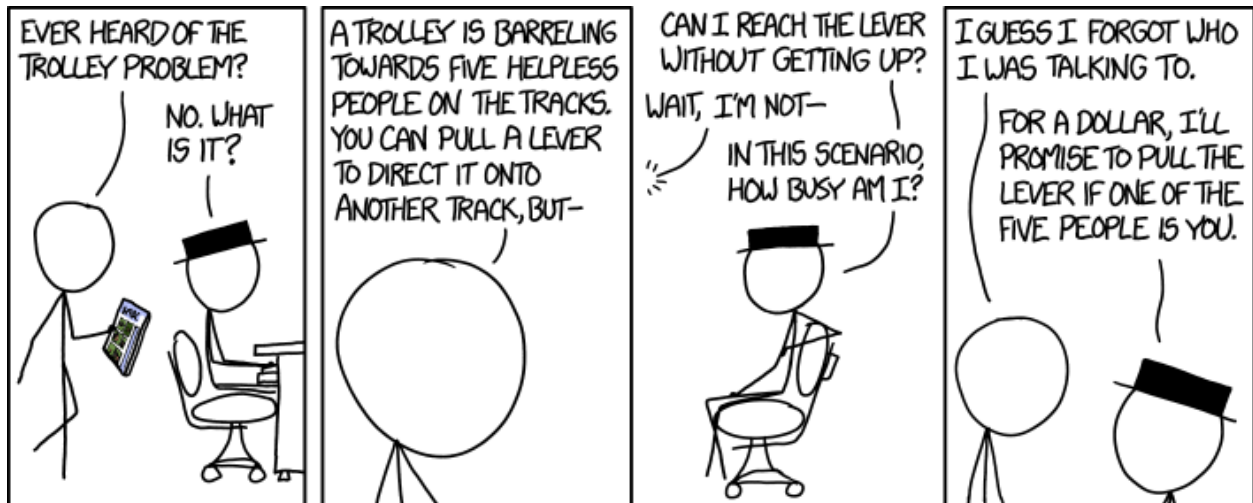
Requirements

- Active Learning: 10% (in-class activities, group work, and short assignments)
- Writing Assignments 60% (three assignments, 4–6 pages each)
- Final Exam: 30% (during the Fall exam period)

Active Learning will include group discussions/activities during class, take-home assignments, and contributions to Forum discussions. Something will be offered most weeks—you must complete to a high quality 10 such activities to get full points.

Writing Assignments will include two argumentative essays and one analysis piece. Each is worth 20% of your final grade. The assignments will be designed to make you think deeply about the topics and readings we've covered, as well as providing you the opportunity to forward your own ideas and arguments. Late work submitted without arrangement with me **in advance** will be penalized by **5% per day late**, including weekends.

The **Exam** will occur during the Fall exam period. This will be a “take-home” style assignment done over the course of one full week, requiring a demonstration of understanding and a significant synthesis of course content.



Schedule

*Please be advised that the reading list is tentative.

- Week 1 (Sept 08) **Introductory Week**
- Pigden, “Hume on *Is* and *Ought*”
- Week 2 (Sept 13/15) **Ethics & Values: Just What are We Talking About?**
- J. Rachels & S. Rachels, “What is Morality?”
 - Zimmerman, “Value and Normativity”
- Week 3 (Sept 20/22)) **Are Morals Relative or Absolute?**
- Waluchow, “It’s All Just Relative—Or Is It?”
- Week 4 (Sept 27/29) **Is it Moral to be Selfish?**
- Hobbes, selection from *Leviathan*
 - Plato, selection from *The Republic*
 - J. Rachels, “Egoism and Moral Skepticism”
- Week 5 (Oct 04/06) **Moral Principles from Aspiring Toward Virtue**
- Bailey, “Introduction to Aristotle”
 - Aristotle, selection from *The Nicomachean Ethics*
 - Borges, “Three Versions of Judas”
- First Writing Assignment (essay) due October 06th — 20%**
- Week 6 (Oct 11/13) **Moral Principles from Exercising a Good Will**
- Bailey, “Introduction to Kant”
 - Kant, selection from *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 - Bierce, *A Horseman in the Sky*
- Week 7 (Oct 18/20) **Moral Principles from Considering the Consequences**
- Bailey, “Introduction to Mill”
 - Mill, selection from *Utilitarianism*
 - Le Guin, selection from *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*
- Week 8 (Oct 25/27) **Morals from Relationships and Empathy**
*Drop Date Nov. 12
- Noddings, excerpt from “An Ethics of Caring”
 - James, “Engaged Ethics in the Time of COVID: Caring for All or Excluding Some from the Lifeboat?”
- Week ☹ (Nov 01/03) **No Class — Reading Week!! (whew!)**
- Week 10 (Nov 08/10) **What is Valuable and Why?**
- Parfait, “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best?”
 - Nozick, “The Experience Machine”

Second Writing Assignment (analysis) due November 10th — 20%

Week 11 (Nov 15/17)

Hedonism Again!

- Hewitt, “What Do Our Intuitions About the Experience Machine Really Tell Us About Hedonism?”

Week 12 (Nov 22/24)

Ethics on the Ground: Triage & Coping During COVID

- Camporesi & Mori, “Ethicists, Doctors and Triage Decisions. . .”
- Truog, *et. al.*, “The Toughest Triage—Allocating Ventilators in a Pandemic
- Excerpts from *New York State Ventilator Allocation Guidelines*

Week 13 (Nov 29/
Dec 01)

Egoism Again! Literature vs Reality

- Golding, selection from *Lord of the Flies*
- Pojman, “On the Nature and Purpose of Morality”
- Bregman, “The real Lord of the Flies: what happened when six boys were shipwrecked for 15 months”

Week 14 (Dec 06/08)

Ethics on the Ground: Is Philosophy Valuable?

- Goldhill, “Why are so many smart people such idiots about philosophy?”
- Goldhill, “Bill Nye, the science guy, says I convinced him that philosophy is not just a load of self-indulgent crap”
- Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”

Final Writing Assignment (essay) due December 08th — 20%

Final Exam during Fall Exam Period — 30%



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022

Pandemic Contingency

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no further disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

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>.

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.

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: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar/)

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: [Academic](https://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar/)

[Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) .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, tablets, 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

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, 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) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at:

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

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. 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. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) 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. 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: [accommodation medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). 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>

Wellness and Health Supports 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. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. 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
 Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)