Philosophy 3880F 550: Social Ontology/Social Construction of Institutions

Course Outline, Fall 2022 ~ J. Epp

Mon. 12:30-2:30 pm Instructor: Jennifer Epp

Wed. 1:30-2:30 pm Office hours: TBD. Check OWL Announcements for details.

HC-W101

Email: jepp6@uwo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Social ontology can be understood as the study of the social components of reality. This statement implies that there are both natural and social components to reality – a disputed claim. Alternately, one might say that social ontology is the study of the nature of social reality.

Questions in this field include: What are the parts of our social world/s? How do those parts relate to each other? What is the source of their existence? Are social worlds, or aspects of them, constructed? If so, how? Could they have been constructed differently? Can they be changed? Are there natural kinds or other aspects of social reality that are not constructed? Do social worlds or aspects of social reality depend on minds for their existence or are they mindindependent? If they are mind-dependent, in what way? Are the minds in question individual or collective? How does the operation of power influence social reality? What do language, ideology, representation, ignorance, emotion, memory, and conversation or dialogue have to do with "what there is" or "what there could be?"

The course will address these questions in part by focusing on the ontology of race.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- 1. To develop student's abilities to identify, understand, construct and critique philosophical arguments. In order to meet this objective, students will enhance their oral and written communication skills, active listening skills, analytical ability and potential for creative problem solving via written assignments, collaborative exercises in interpretation, and on-line discussion.
- 2. To familiarize students with a central debate in contemporary metaphysics and to illuminate connections between metaphysics and social and political philosophy. To meet this objective, students will read relevant literature and engage in written exegesis, conceptual analysis, and respectful debate. Discussions will directly address connections between different areas of philosophical thought and touch on methodology.

3. To provide students with resources that may help them to identify, and think critically about, assumptions about "the way things are" in their social milieus. To meet this objective, students will consider the social ontology of race with a focus on anti-Black racism, Whiteness, and First Nations identity and experience. They will also enhance their ability to formulate theoretical and practical questions about both course material and the current global and local political landscapes in which they are situated. Questions will be discussed in class.

CLASS METHODS

Class will include interactive lecture time, as well as time for group breakout discussions, and on-line interaction in the Forum on OWL. Participation is highly encouraged, and students are expected to come to class prepared to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the readings.

TEXTS

All readings can be found either on the internet, via UWO Libraries, or in the Resources section of OWL. Addresses for web-based readings are given in the Syllabus/Reading list below.

REQUIRMENTS:

Forum Discussions, 6 weeks on-going 6 x 3% =	18%
Essay, due Oct. 28	25%
Group Presentation (Story Assignment), due Nov. 28 – Dec. 7	25%
Pre-Presentation Check-In, due 3 weeks before presenting	2%
Take Home Exam	30%

ASSIGNMENTS:

Submit all assignments, except Forum Discussions, to the **Assignments section of OWL.** If you have trouble submitting through OWL e-mail your assignment to jepp6@uwo.ca to prevent it from being counted as late. Forum Discussions take place in the **Forum section of OWL.**

Details and evaluation criteria for all assignments will also appear in the **Assignments** section.

ANONYMOUS GRADING:

Do not put your name anywhere on your Essay or Exam (including title pages, headers, and document file names). **Include your student number instead.** To avoid bias, I grade those assignments **anonymously.**

OWL: check the Announcements section of OWL regularly.

PLAIGIARISM:

Work submitted to the Assignments section in OWL is automatically sent to Turnitin.com (a plagiarism checking service). Papers are not graded until they are submitted and checked there.

You may not submit assignments, or portions of assignments, that have been prepared for other courses. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be taken very seriously. Make sure to cite all direct quotes, use quotation marks, cite all ideas that you got from somewhere else even if you are not using quotes, and include a bibliography or footnotes of <u>any</u> external resources that you use in anything submitted for this class.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Your success is important to me and there are many ways to learn. Feel free to discuss your learning needs with me during office hours or by e-mail. Together we will find ways to make the class accessible and productive for you.

Life can get in the way of school sometimes. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, please talk to me by email or during office hours (which will be private). I will do my best to support your success during the term. In addition to disability or wellness, I accommodate for employment and family responsibilities. For accommodations on assignments worth more than 10% please also (or instead if you prefer), speak with an academic counsellor. See Academic Advising at Huron: https://huronatwestern.ca/academic-advising.

If I have concerns about your academic performance or wellbeing, I may identify them through Early Alert. With Early Alert (HEART), faculty members can connect you with advisors and wellness staff who offer students support and assistance in getting back on track. Only members of HEART can access concerns and Early Alert does not affect your academic record.

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a Huron Wellness counsellor, please visit https://huronatwestern.ca/wellness-services.

I encourage students with disabilities to use the Services for Students with Disabilities provided by the Student Development Centre at Western including the provision of note-takers, learning strategies assistance, assignment and exam accommodations, and sign-language interpreters. The Accessibility Services Office is located on the 4th floor of the Student Services Building, room 4111. See http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/ for more information or call (519) 661-2147.

LATE POLICY:

We will decide on a late policy together in class. Participate to design this part of the course.

Reading List

*All readings or videos are required unless they are listed *below* the word "Optional." All required articles have author names in **bold**.

	Topic	Articles or Videos	Author
Sept. 12		"What is Ontology?"	Kent Löfgren
& 14		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTsaZWzVJ 4c	
		Topic: What might the parts and processes of social reality be? What other questions could we ask?	
		"The Women in the Tower"	Cynthia Rich
	Introduction	How To Use the Exonerative Tense to Uphold White Supremacy: https://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/how-to-use-the-past-exonerative-tense-to-uphold-white-supremacy	Devorah Blachor
	& Parts and Processes: Storytelling	Ask a Slave (First 5 episodes) https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query= ask+a+slave	Azie Mira Dungey
	and Our Story	Optional:	Jay Smooth
	Assignment	"How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQta U	David Bruce Brian Epstein
		"The Trouble with 12 Tone Equal Temperament"	
		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9Zv6MGdh <u>7Y</u>	
		Social Ontology https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-ontology/#ConsSociCate	
Sept. 19 & 21	Parts and Processes: Storytelling	"Land as Pedagogy" Chapter 9 in As We Have Always Done https://ocul-	Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
	Land, and the Practice	uwo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_U WO/r0c2m8/alma991044439946505163	
	of Indigenous Resurgence	Optional & helpful for your story assignment:	Margaret Kovach

		"Story as Indigenous Methodology" Chapter 5 in <i>Indigenous Methodologies</i> .	Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
		"Theorizing Resurgence From Within Nishnaabeg Thought" in <i>Dancing On Our Turtle's Back</i>	Simpson
		Topic: Story as an indigenous practice of theorizing, knowing, teaching/learning, relationship building, and living well in the context of indigenous resurgence on Turtle Island.	
Sept. 26		"Social Ontology and Political Power"	John Searle
& 28		Topic: The role of language and collective intentionality in creating institutional facts and enabling political power.	
	Parts and	Optional:	
	Processes: Creating Institutional Facts	"Freedom House Ambulance Service" https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/freedom-house-ambulance-service/	Kevin Hazzard & Joe Rosenberg
		Topic: Institutional social construction in action ~ emergency medicine, race, and political power. "Social Institutions" esp. section 1. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-institutions/#AccSocIns	Seumas Miller
Oct. 3		"Why Ask What?"	Ian Hacking
& 5	Social	Topic: Social matrixes, looping, and the construction of human "kinds."	
	Constructio n:	Optional:	Christophe
		"How Norway Designed a More Humane Prison"	Haubursin
	Of what? By whom? How?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v13wrVEQ2M	Sally Haslanger
		"Social Construction: the "Debunking" Project" What Does Social Construction Really Mean?	Cuck Philosophy
		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UpSoosy9ws	

Oct. 12	Parts and Processes:	"Remembering for the Future" Chapter 8 in Our Faithfulness to the Past: The Ethics and Politics of Memory	Susan Campbell
	ng and Constructive Agency	Topic: Remembering, interpreting, and making significance together to construct futures.	
Oct. 17 & 19	Parts and Processes: Strategies	"Tracking Privilege-Preserving Epistemic Pushback in Feminist and Critical Race Philosophy Classes"	Alison Bailey
	for Preserving World(view) s and Epistemic Authority	"Tell Me How That Makes You Feel": Philosophy's Reason/Emotion Divide and Epistemic Pushback in Philosophy Classrooms"	Allison B. Wolf
Oct. 24 & 26		"Race" http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/ Racial Ontology: 1. Introduction	Michael James
Essay Due Oct. 28		https://wi-phi.com/videos/racial-ontology/	David Miguel Gray
	The	Racial Ontology: 3b. Sociohistorical Theories of Race https://wi-phi.com/videos/sociohistorical-theories-of-race/	"
	Ontological Status of Race: Does Race Exist?	+ Optional:	
	If so, how?	Racial Ontology: 3a. Sociohistorical Theories of Race https://wi-phi.com/videos/sociohistorical-theories-of-race/	" Sally Haslanger
		"Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be? http://www.mit.edu/~shaslang/papers/WIGRnous.pdf	Charles Mills
		""But What Are You <i>Really</i> ?" The Metaphysics of Race." Chapter 3 of <i>Blackness Visible</i> (or any chapter of this book).	

Oct 31 – Nov. 6	Reading Week	Rest. Catch up. Enjoy!	
Nov. 7		"The New Biology of Race"	Joshua M. Glasgow
& 9	The Ontological	https://www-jstor- org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/3655724?seq=16# metadata_info_tab_contents Racial Ontologies: 2. Naturalist Theories of Race https://wi-phi.com/videos/naturalist-theories-of-race/	David Miguel Gray
	Status of Race: Is Race Biological?	Optional: "How To Decide If Races Exist" (Eliminativism) What is Race? Four Philosophical Views.	Anthony Kwame Appiah
		(Spencer: biological naturalism; Glasgow: racial anti- realism or basic racial realism; Haslanger: sociopolitical constructionist revisionism. Jeffers: cultural constructionist revisionism.)	Joshua Glasgow, Sally Haslanger, Quayshawn Spencer, Chike Jeffers
Nov. 14	Parts and Processes: Racist Social	These are short videos or news articles. Review all of them:	Eduardo
& 16	Institutions	"Race: Race and Racist Institutions" https://wi-phi.com/videos/race-and-racist-institutions/	Mendieta
	AKA	Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A	NPR
	Structural Anti-Black Racism and	Short History https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM	Douglas A. Blackmon
	White Supremacy	"The Untold history of Post-Civil War 'Neoslavery" https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyI	Olufemi O. Taiwo
	Optional:	<u>d=89051115</u>	Gregory Jaynes &
	AKA	"Race and the Carceral State"	Frances
	Structural Anti-	https://wi-phi.com/videos/race-and-the-carceral-state/	Frank Marcus
	Indigenous Racism and White Supremacy	Suit on Race Recalls Lines Drawn Under Slavery https://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/30/us/suit-on-race-recalls-lines-drawn-under-slavery.html & Louisiana Repels Black Blood Law	The Root

	And/Or	https://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/06/us/louisiana-repeals-black-blood-law.html	Wikipedia
	Institutional Sexism	How Voter Suppression Affects Black People	NVI .
		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KYnaER2esg	Whatever you find!
		& Voter Suppression in the United States https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_suppression in t	Bonita Lawrence
		he United States Optional:	Pamela Palmater
		Search the terms "Digital Redlining" and "Discrimination algorithm race face recognition" on the internet.	
		"Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States"	Robyn Doolittle &
		"Introduction: A Mi'kmaq Woman" in Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity	Chen Wang
		Topic: Gender-based discrimination in Canadian law to create "status and non-status Indians" as a tool of dispossession and assimilation. Including in relation to the power to designate citizenship as a political power necessary for self-determination.	
		"How medicine's gender power gap sets up women for unequal pay and less prestigious jobs" https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-power-gap-in-medicine/	
Nov. 21		"White Ignorance"	Charles Mills
& 23	Parts and Processes: Constructed Ignorance and the ontological	Topic: Ignorance is not always lack of knowledge. Not-knowing can be motivated (this time racially) + ignorance can be created (constructed) and enforced. Optional:	
	status of Whiteness	Why So Many Canadian Universities Know So Little About Their Own Racial Diversity	

		https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/race-canadian-universities-1.4030537 Anything from Look! A White! or What White Looks Like (full books via UWO libraries) President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf "Eternity Martis: Being Black in a White Place" (About racism at Western and in London) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWft0MWiUEY "What it's like to deal with racism in Canada's health-care system" https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/what-its-like-to-deal-with-racism-in-canadas-health-caresystem/article37600473/	Jeremy McDonald, Lori Ward George Yancy ARWG, Western University Nam Kiwanuka & Eternity Martis LaRon E. Nelson Nancy Tuana APTN
		"Coming To Understand" (On the construction of ignorance about women's sexual anatomy and pleasure.) Go exploring on the APTN (Aboriginal People's Television Network) https://www.aptn.ca/	
Nov. 28	Story Analysis	Class Presentations	The Class
Dec. 5	Story Analysis	Class Presentations	The Class
Dec. 10 - 22	Exam Period	Date to be announced. The registrar will schedule our take-home exam.	



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:

 $\frac{https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res\%20Life/Student\%20Code\%20of\%20Conduct\%20-\%20Revised\%20September\%202019.pdf.$

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: <u>Academic Calendar - Western University (uwo.ca)</u>

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:

<u>Academic Calendar - Western University (uwo.ca)</u>. 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 <u>Medical Grounds</u> 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 <u>Student Medical Certificate</u>. The instructor may <u>not</u> 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 <u>Academic Calendar - Western University (uwo.ca)</u> 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 <u>Consideration Request Form</u>. 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

<u>huronsss@uwo.ca</u>. 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: https://huronatwestern.ca/student-university College Student Council: <a href="https://huronatwestern.ca/student-uni

<u>life/beyond-</u> <u>classroom/hucsc/</u>

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)