

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-2024

Philosophy 4050G/9015B: Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

Winter Term 2024

Instructor: N/A

DESCRIPTION

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was the culmination of several strands in the tradition of early modern philosophy. But it was also a decisive turn away from the tradition in fundamental respects. Kant compared his "Critical" turn to the Copernican revolution in astronomy: Copernicus had showed that some motions we observe in the heavens are actually motions of ourselves, the observer; Kant argued that metaphysical principles we ascribe to the world are actually features of our own cognition. Kant's "Critical philosophy" had a profound effect on the development, not only of metaphysics and epistemology, but also psychology, logic, mathematics, and the sciences. In this course we will consider the fundamental ideas and arguments of the *Critique*, beginning with some of the pre-Critical writings that embody Kant's engagement with previous philosophers and the gradual transition toward his mature view. We will emphasize his changing views on the relation between reason and experience, the character of a priori knowledge, and the nature and purpose of metaphysics.

TEXTS

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. The translation by Guyer and Wood has been ordered at the UWO Bookstore. Additional readings are posted on OWL under "Resources".

REQUIREMENTS

2 short essays (each 25% of final mark); final take-home assignment (40% of final mark); regular participation in class discussion (10% of final mark)

PREREQUISITES:

Philosophy 2200, or permission of the Philosophy Department.

TEXTS

Text: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge, 1999)
Supplementary texts to be posted on OWL

METHOD OF EVALUATION

2 short essays (each 20% of final mark); one long essay (40% of final mark); regular participation in class discussion (20% of final mark)

OBJECTIVES

1. To study classic and contemporary texts in the theory of knowledge
2. To understand the role of epistemological questions in knowledge generally
3. To understand and critically evaluate knowledge claims
4. To develop competence in critical analysis by careful reading and discussion
5. To develop skills of oral expression and argument through class discussion
6. To develop writing skills through written assignments

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

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 Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

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>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.