

Big Ideas (Online)

Course Outline

General Information

Course #: Phil 1130F

Section #: 530

Term: Intersession (May 15 – June 2)

Year: 2023

Webinar Day and Time: Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
(Webinars are live lectures via Zoom.)

Instructor Information

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Course Description

Philosophy awakens us to questions about who we are and how we relate to the world. It does so by forcing us to examine general concepts that either shape or undermine our implicit answers. In this course we will consider such concepts as God, scepticism, the scientific method, evolution, individualism, and the rule of law. Through readings, lectures, and discussion, we will investigate these “big ideas”, their connections, problems they pose, and the effects and implications they have for how we think and what we do.

Prerequisites: None

Required Course Materials

Custom Course Pack. (available through Western Bookstore)

The Malaise of Modernity, Taylor, Charles. Toronto: House of Anansi Press Limited (1991).

(This small book is also published by as The Ethics of Authenticity by Harvard University Press (1992).) (available through Western Bookstore)

Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students, 2nd ed., Vaughn, Lewis and Scott

McIntosh, Jillian, Oxford University Press (2012). (available through Western Bookstore)

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the Brescia competencies of Critical Thinking, Communication and Self-Awareness and Development by being able to:

1. Describe some key concepts from each of several core philosophical topics including metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and social political philosophy.
2. Apply abstract concepts to concrete situations. (Critical Thinking (level 2)).
3. Discuss competing points of view in relation to general concepts that impact our understanding of the world and our relation to it. (Critical Thinking (level 1); Communication (level 2)).
4. Evaluate conflicting philosophical arguments elicited by these concepts. (Critical Thinking (level 3)).
5. Formulate well-reasoned solutions to these issues. (Critical Thinking (level 3)).
6. Persuade others of a well-reasoned stance or action (Critical Thinking (level 3)).
7. Demonstrate effective writing and skillful critical and reflective thinking (Communication (level 3); Self-Awareness and Development (level 3)).

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

Brescia Competencies

Critical Thinking

The ability to engage in thinking characterized by the rational, informed, independent, and open-minded exploration of issues, ideas, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion.

Communication

The ability to exchange information and meaning across cultures, space, and time appropriately and correctly. This competency includes oral, written, and interpersonal communication, and the ability to use current or innovative media.

Self-Awareness and Development

The ability to draw meaning, knowledge and value from honest and fair reflection and self-evaluation. Students are able to recognize their emotions and patterns of thinking, their impact on others, and make a commitment to personal growth.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

3 lecture hours/day; 0.5 course.

Online webinars will be integrated with reading materials, visual presentations, and group discussions. Students are expected to devote much of their time set aside on weekends for this course to writing the essays.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Webinars, PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, lists of readings, in-class activities, assignment guidelines, and other components of the course materials are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. Such action may be considered a Code of Conduct violation and lead to sanctions.

Evaluation

Class Participation

A grade for class participation is awarded on the basis of attendance and discussion of assigned readings.

Essays

Statement on AI Use: Using tools such as generative AI (including, but not limited to ChatGPT or Google Translate) is a scholastic offence which is subject to the penalties outlined in the academic calendar. Moreover, you must work directly and substantially from the authors' writings as these writings are presented in the required course material (as opposed to, for example, working primarily from lecture slides and/or other sources) and will be graded accordingly (see "Demonstrated Authenticity" in the marking criteria below).

Assistance: I am available to answer any questions you may have. If English is your second language or you have difficulty writing essays, I strongly recommend using the excellent services offered through the Writing Support Centre.

Format:

- Hardcopy due at the beginning of class.
- Title page with name, student number and essay title.
- 12-point, times new roman font.
- Standard margins, footer, and header with page numbers on the top right-hand corner.
- Lines are to be double-spaced, without an extra line-space between paragraphs.
- No section headings.

- Bibliography listing all sources used to write the essay.
- MLA style for in-text citation and bibliography (see *Writing Philosophy: A Guide to Canadian Students*, Appendix B).
- Total length: 5 pages (excluding title page and bibliography).

Electronic Submission: In addition to a hardcopy, submit your essay electronically under the “Assignments” tab on the left margin of OWL, which will automatically link it to turnitin.com to detect any scholastic offences (including the use of generative AI).

Late Submissions: Students must consult an Academic Advisor to obtain an extension. Note that electronic submissions without a hardcopy (when due) will be subject to a 10% penalty. Hardcopy submissions without an electronic submission will receive a grade of 0%.

Marking Criteria:

Demonstrated Authenticity: Does the author make direct and substantial use of the philosophers’ writings as these writings are presented in the required course material? Does the author judiciously incorporate relevant and significant quotations with genuine citations in the specified format? [10 marks]

Understanding: How well does the author understand the relevant lectures and required course material? How well does she understand the complexity of the issues involved? [10 marks]

Argument: Does the paper answer the question asked? Does the author offer objective and independent reasons and use cogent inferences to support her answer? Do the claims made in different parts of the paper follow from one another and are they consistent? [10 marks]

Clarity: Is the author’s position clear with an explicitly articulated thesis? Is the paper clearly written overall? 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 she follow that plan? Are the paragraphs adequate and appropriate, and are they properly structured? [5 marks]

Style: Does the author use correct grammar and syntax? Have the guidelines for format been followed? [5 marks; note that significant departures from the required format can result in penalties that reduce this mark below 0].

Final Exam

The format will be a 5-page take-home essay graded like the first and second essays. Students will have from June 1 to June 4 to complete the essay. Further details will be provided to the class later in the term.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Component	Weight	Date/Deadline	Learning Outcome	Brescia Competencies
Class Participation	10%	June 1	1-7	CT,C,SAD
First Essay	25%	May 24	1-7	CT,C,SAD,
Second Essay	30%	June 1	1-7	CT,C,SAD
Final Essay Exam	35%	June 4	1-7	CT,C,SAD

Academic Accommodation

For course components worth 10% or more of the total course grade, please see the Academic Policies and Regulations section at the end of this course outline or consult the Academic Calendar.

For course components worth less than 10% of the total course grade, an academic accommodation will still be required. Supporting documentation should be submitted to your Academic Advisor if you choose not to self-report or self-reporting is not an option.

Course Content

Topics will be covered in the order listed and any dates listed are meant as a guideline.

Weekly Organizer:

Big Idea	Date	Readings	Due
God a. Cosmological Arguments	May 15	Course pack: 4-12	
b. Life's Meaning	May 16	Course pack: 14-25	

Skepticism a. Reality	May 17	Course pack: 27-33	
b. Causation/Induction	May 18	Course pack: 35-44	
Holiday	May 22		
Science a. Pseudoscience	May 23	Course pack: 46-66	
b. Truth	May 24	Course pack: 72-88	First Essay
Evolution a. Intelligent Design	May 25	Course pack: 91-123	
b. Ethics	May 29	Course pack: 125-170	
Individualism	May 30	Malaise of Modernity: Ch 1-5	
	May 31	Malaise of Modernity: Ch 6-10	
Rule of law	June 1	Course pack: 190-211	Second Essay
Final Essay Exam	June 4	Due on or before 11:59 pm.	

2022-23 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The complete policy regarding Accommodation for Illness - Undergraduate Students can be found at https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_135

Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions which may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities should seek Academic Accommodation through Student Accessibility Services (https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10).

Personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

Students who experience an illness or extenuating circumstance sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

1. For medical absences, submitting a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)** signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner;

2. For non-medical absences, submitting **appropriate documentation** (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to their Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor to clarify what documentation is acceptable.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

The following conditions apply for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds:

1. Students must submit their Student Medical Certificate (SMC) along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. An SMC can be downloaded from https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf;
2. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period;
3. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, scheduled tests or examinations, and other academic requirements;
4. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the SMC to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence;
5. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the course instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements, arranging Special Exams (make-ups), re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawal without academic penalty.

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor (https://brescia.uwo.ca/enrolment_services/academic_advising/book_an_appointment.php). If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines; please contact your Academic Advisor or see the list of sessional dates in the Academic Calendar (<https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=>).

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 eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Please note that for asynchronous online courses, attendance or participation requirements may be different than for synchronous or in-person courses.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work, and arrange academic accommodations if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory

(https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_64).

4. SCHOLASTIC 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:

https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

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.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software

currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, they may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, they may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal and if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the SRBA. For information on academic appeals consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar

https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14.

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

6. PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written Special Permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the 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 prerequisite(s).

7. SUPPORT

Support Services

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. Students can access supports through Brescia's Student Life Centre (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/student-life/>) and Learning Development & Success at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>).

Mental Health and Wellness

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can obtain information about how to obtain help for yourself or others through **Health & Wellness at Brescia**, https://brescia.uwo.ca/student_life/health_and_wellness/index.php and **Health and Wellness at Western**, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html.

Sexual Violence

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia

is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at https://brescia.uwo.ca/safe_campus/sexual_violence/index.php.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy, and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario
