



Course Outline

The Meaning of Life

General Information

Course #: Phil 2084A
Section #: 530
Term: Fall
Year: 2022
Course Day and Time: Wednesdays, 6:30 – 9:30 pm
Course Location: BR- 135

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Lucien Lamoureux
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Telephone number for office appointments: 519-702-6517
Office hours for students: Mondays, 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm
Office location: I meet students in the Huron Dining Hall

Course Description

A philosophical exploration of interrelated questions: Why does the universe exist? Why do humans (in general) exist? Why do I exist? Ancient, scholastic and contemporary sources will be examined, including both theistic and atheistic stances as well as approaches that question the meaningfulness of these questions.

Antirequisite(s): Philosophy 2266F/G

Required Course Materials

The Meaning of Life: A Reader, 4th ed., edited by Klemke, E.D. and Cahn, Steven M, Oxford University Press (2018).

Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students, 2nd ed., Vaughn, Lewis and Scott McIntosh, Jillian, Oxford University Press (2012).

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe the important normative theories that influence discourse about the meaning of life (Valuing (level 2)).
2. Discuss competing points of view on issues in the meaning of life (Valuing (level 2); Critical Thinking (level 1); Self Awareness and Development (level 2); Communication (level 2)).
3. Evaluate conflicting philosophical arguments related to these issues (Valuing (level 2); Critical Thinking (level 2)).
4. Formulate well-reasoned solutions to problems concerning the meaning of life (Valuing (level 2); Critical Thinking (level 2)).
5. Persuade others of a well-reasoned stance or action (Critical Thinking (level 2)).
6. Demonstrate effective writing and skillful critical and reflective thinking (Communication (level 2); Self-Awareness and Development (level 2)).

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.

Brescia Competencies

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.

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.

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.

Valuing

The ability to make decisions or choose actions based on the consistent application of principles expressing fundamental values that are accepted on account of reason or spiritual insight.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

3 lecture hours/week; 0.5 course.

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

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 Attendance and Participation

A 10% grade will be awarded based on classroom attendance and discussion of assigned readings.

Reading Questions

Students will be asked to submit written answers to questions concerning assigned readings. The answers are expected to be no more than 2 pages (double-spaced), and will be evaluated based on clarity, accuracy and persuasiveness. Hardcopies must be submitted in class. In addition, electronic copies must be submitted to OWL for a plagiarism check.

Exams

The format will be a combination of any of multiple choice, short answer, and essay. Further details will be provided to the class later in the term.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Component	Weight	Date/ Deadline	Learning Outcome	Brescia Competencies
Class Attendance and Participation	10%	Sept. 14 – Dec. 7	1,2,3,4,5	C,CT,SAD,V

Reading Questions	10%	Sept. 28, Oct. 19, Nov. 9, Nov. 30	1,2,3,4,5,6	C,CT,SAD,V
Midterm Exam	35%	Oct. 22	1,2,3,4,5,	C,CT,SAD,V
Final Exam	45%	TBA	1,2,3,4,5	C,CT,SAD,V

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.

Assignment Authoring

All assignments (reports, exams, etc.) must be authored from an original document using a Microsoft Word account registered to the student. Microsoft Word is available free to all students by visiting myoffice.uwo.ca. Documents submitted with registrations affiliated to anyone other than the student may be taken as evidence of collaboration or plagiarism. Only Microsoft Word documents will be acceptable upload submissions (i.e. do not submit pdf documents). If a student is required to resubmit due to improper document formatting, late penalties will be calculated from the time the properly formatted document is submitted.

Course Content

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

Weekly Organizer:

Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments Due
Introduction	Sept 14	Introduction	
Religious Answers a. Eastern	Sept 21	Confucianism: Chapter 5 Buddhism: Chapters 4	

b. Western	Sept 28	Tolstoy: Chapter 1 Judaism: Chapter 3 Christianity: Chapter 2	Reading Question #1
Non-Religious Answers	Oct 5	Baier: Chapter 10	
a. Science and Meaning			
b. Pessimism and Suffering	Oct 12	Schopenhauer: Chapter 6 Edwards: Chapter 11	
c. Pessimism and The Absurd	Oct 19	Camus: Chapter 9 Taylor: Chapter 12	Reading Question #2
	Oct 26	Nagel: Chapter 13 Feinberg: Chapter 14	
Midterm Exam (Saturday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm)	Oct 22		
Reading Week	Nov 2		
d. Consciousness, Ideals and Youth	Nov 9	Klemke: Chapter 15 Russell: Chapter 7 Schlick: Chapter 8	Reading Question #3
Questioning the Question	Nov 16	Wisdom: Chapter 16 Nozick: Chapter 17	
	Nov 23	Wolf: Chapter 18 Vitrano: Chapter 19	
The End of Life	Nov 30	Nagel: Chapter 20 Williams: Chapter 21 Fischer: Chapter 22	Reading Question #4
a. Death and Immortality			
b. The Afterlife	Dec 7	Scheffler: Chapter 23 Frankfurt: Chapter 24 Wolf: Chapter 25	

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.
