

# Western University

## Department of Philosophy

### Philosophy 3870G(001): Philosophy of Social Science 2022-23

#### Classes

Monday 10:30-12:30, Wednesday 1:30-12:30 UC1225

#### Instructors

Dennis Klimchuk  
klimchuk@uwo.ca | StvH 4150 | (519) 661-2111 x 85758  
Office hours: Mondays 10-11

Varun Ravikumar  
vraviku@uwo.ca | WIRB 7107  
Office hours: Thursdays 12-1

Klimchuk will teach nine of the weeks we will meet and grade the long papers and exams.  
Ravikumar will teach three of the weeks we will meet and grade the short papers.

#### Description

A survey of a number of core philosophical questions raised in and about the social sciences, for example: Can, and ought, the social sciences aspire to objectivity? Is the goal of the social sciences explanation, prediction, understanding, prescription or some combination? Is social life governed by laws? Examples will be drawn from a number of social sciences, especially (

## Objectives

This course has two main objectives. The first is to introduce students to the philosophy of the social sciences and to a number of philosophically interesting questions raised in the social sciences. The second is to help them develop the skills philosophy requires: careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

## Texts

All readings will be available online, on the course OWL page, in the Resources folder.

## Requirements and evaluation

(1) There will be two options for essays:

- (a) You may choose to write two short papers (5-6 double spaced pages):  $30\% \times 2 = 60\%$ . There will be three topics for you to choose from, each with its own due date. You may write any two. You may also write a third paper, in which case your best two grades will count toward your final grade. These papers will not require any research.

See the document "Short essays," under the Syllabus tab on the course OWL site, for more details.

- (b) Alternatively, you may choose to write one longer (10-12 double spaced pages) research paper, worth 60%. This paper will engage with work on a topic in a social science, bringing to bear on it material and issues we have discussed in this course. This may be an attractive option for students coming from the social sciences. You will need to propose a topic and assemble a short bibliography and submit it for my approval.

2) A final exam, worth 40%

## Late papers

Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 2%/day, to a maximum of 10%. I will accept papers after they have accumulated the full penalty, until the last day of the classes, April 10, 2023.

If you need an extension on a paper, you will need to see an academic counsellor in the office of the dean of your faculty. Your counsellor will get in touch with me with any recommendations they have. I am not permitted to accept any documentation, medical or otherwise, please submit those to your counsellor. See below, under "Accommodation" under "Department Policies" for more information.

## Auditing

Students wishing to audit the courses 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 should be the 3(m)-2 (us) tar(t

