

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-23**

**PHILOSOP 4320**  
**Synthetic Biology and Philosophy**

Winter Term  
F 9:30-12:30  
AHB-1B08

Instructors: **Eric Desjardins**  
**WIRB 7158**  
**edesjar3@uwo.ca**

**PREREQUISITE CHECKING**



“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.”

**DESCRIPTION**

“Synthetic biology is the design and construction of new biological parts, devices, and systems, and the re-design of existing, natural biological systems for useful purposes. This relatively new field has generated several reactions, from the hope of curing diseases and solving environmental issues to the fear of seeing a new wave of eugenics and endangering native species. In this discussion-based course, we will alternate between understanding various types of research and appl

Davies, Jamie A. (2018) *Synthetic Biology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press

2. Articles and book chapters available on OWL

“ This course is designed to allow students to learn about various types of research and applications of synthetic biology and reflect on philosophical issues arising from them. No prior background in synthetic biology is necessary, but a willingness to engage in philosophical reflection and a curiosity to explore science from different viewpoints is required. The course is structured like a seminar. It is a great opportunity for students to develop advanced critical thinking and communicative skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain at a general level the approaches used to pursue objectives in synthetic biology

2. Identify, evaluate

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