

Course information

Institution: University of Waterloo

Department: Philosophy

Course code: Phil 447 (001), Psych 447 (001), Phil 673 (002)

Course title: **Concepts and Rules**

Semester: Fall 2016

Time: Friday 11:30-2:20

Location: Hagey Hall 227

Instructor information

Instructor: John Turri

Office: Hagey Hall 333

Office hours: Friday 10:30-11:20

Email: jturri@uwaterloo.ca

Course description

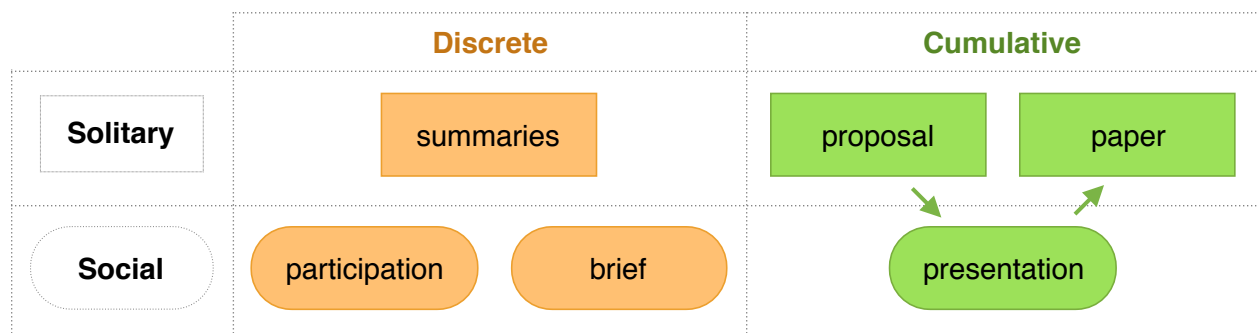
An interdisciplinary investigation of some familiar and important concepts and rules. Topics will include communication, cognition, agency, and morality.

Required text

1. J. Turri. 2016. *Knowledge and the norm of assertion: an essay in philosophical science*. Open Book Publishers. [\[open access & freely available\]](#)

Assignments and evaluation

Assignments for the course are either discrete or cumulative, on the one hand, and either solitary or social, on the other.



Discrete assignments are recurring, build knowledge of course content, and form the basis of our weekly discussions. Cumulative assignments build toward producing a

piece of scholarship. Solitary assignments can be completed privately on your own. Social assignments essentially involve interacting with others.

Here is a breakdown of how your final mark for the course will be calculated. Details follow.

Assessment	Date due	Weight (% of final mark)
Summaries	weekly	20
Brief	variable	5
Participation	weekly	5
Proposal	November 1	10
Presentation	Nov 24 or Dec 1 (draft Nov 19)	5
Paper	December 6	55
Total		100

- 1. Summaries.** Each week for which reading is assigned, you will submit a 300-400 word critical summary of the reading. A summary does not have to summarize the entire reading; focusing on a particular aspect that most interests you is fine.

 - *Purpose:* (i) cultivate the skill of carefully, charitably and concisely summarizing scholarship; (ii) ensure consistent, meaningful engagement with assigned readings and thereby provide a strong basis for shared understand and productive seminar discussion.
 - *Due date:* a summary is due by noon the day before the meeting it applies to. For example, a summary of the reading for the seminar on October 7 is due by noon on October 6. **Note:** late summaries will not be accepted.
 - *Submission:* upload it to the appropriate dropbox on the Learn site. Bring a copy with you to class.
 - *Evaluation:* summaries will be graded pass (full credit: 1) or fail (no credit: 0). A serious, good-faith effort will pass.
 - **Warning:** anyone who misses more than three summaries will fail the course.
- 2. Brief.** You will brief the seminar once on a resource relevant to the assigned reading for a particular week.

 - *Purpose:* (i) cultivate skills relevant to conducting literature reviews, summarizing scholarship, and informal presentation; (ii) contribute content to the seminar that can inform our discussion and scholarship.
 - *Due date:* you will be assigned dates for briefing the seminar. **Note:** there will be no opportunity to reschedule a missed brief.

- *Completion*: this involves three steps:
 - (i) Identify a relevant resource and clear it with me by email. This must occur by 6pm four days before the relevant seminar meeting. For example, if you are assigned to brief the seminar on October 7, you must identify a relevant resource and receive my approval by 6pm on October 3. Relevant sources can include research articles and book chapters, but these are not the only options. Other possibilities include interviews, magazine articles, documentaries, radio programs, podcasts, films, and other media suitable for expressing reasoned viewpoints.
 - (ii) Submit an approximately 400-500 word written brief exposing the resource's relevance. Include *a specific discussion point*: this should be labeled "discussion point," appear at the end of the document, clearly separated from the rest of the summary, and consist of a single sentence (no semi-colons!). To submit a written brief, upload it to the appropriate dropbox on the Learn site. A written brief is due by noon the day before the meeting it applies to. For example, if you are assigned to brief the seminar on October 7, you must submit the written work by noon on October 6.
 - (iii) Verbally brief the seminar on the assigned date. This should last 3-5 minutes and could serve as a basis for further discussion. Speak from notes. I will try to identify a natural point during the discussion for your brief to occur.
 - *Evaluation*: briefs will be evaluated out of 5 points. A brief that competently summarizes the resource, clearly relates it to the course reading, includes a pertinent and succinct discussion point, is articulately verbally presented, and accompanied by an adequate handout will receive 4 points. Briefs exceeding these criteria will receive 5 points. Briefs that don't meet the criteria will receive 3 or fewer points.
 - *Note*: depending on the number of students enrolled, it might be possible for some people to brief the seminar twice. If that happens, the formula for calculating your final mark will be adjusted as follows: the final paper will be weighted five points less, and the second brief will inherit this weighting.
3. **Participation**. This is a seminar so attending and participating in each meeting is essential. The seminar forms a research community so failing these expectations is a breach of trust and a form of disrespect. Group discussion is an essential part of the course content.
- *Purpose*: cultivate skills relevant to communication in a research community.
 - *Due date*: weekly (in class).
 - *Evaluation*: participation will be evaluated out of 5 points. Attending every session and participating regularly will receive 5 points. Attending every session but never participating will receive 3 points. Because people often think, or at least say, that

evaluating participation is more “subjective” or susceptible to bias than evaluating written work, I will err on the side of generosity when assigning participation marks. I definitely want to give everyone 5 points.

- **Warning:** anyone with more than three unexcused absences from seminar meetings will fail the course.

4. **Proposal.** A one-page (~300 word maximum) document that specifies a research question, thesis, and methodology and includes an outline and an initial bibliography for the final paper. For present purposes, I define “methodology” as one’s approach to gathering and evaluating evidence.

- *Purpose:* motivate you to begin working on the final paper early enough to do your best work.
- *Due date:* 6pm on November 1.
- *Evaluation:* proposals will be evaluated out of 10 points. A proposal that competently specifies a research question, thesis and methodology, outlines the paper, and includes an initial bibliography will receive 8 points. Proposals exceeding those criteria will receive more than 8 points. Proposals that don’t meet the criteria will receive 7 or fewer points. (Note: it is normal and expected that the final paper will deviate somewhat from the proposal. This is not a problem at all.)

5. **Presentation.** Present your paper’s main line of thought to the seminar.

- *Purpose:* (i) cultivate skills relevant to formally presenting research; (ii) provide an opportunity to reflect on and improve improve your research.
- *Due date:* you will be assigned a presentation date. My current plan is for all presentations to occur on November 25 and December 2.
- *Completion:* this involves two steps:
 - (i) *Draft submission:* no later 6pm on November 19, upload a draft of your paper to the appropriate dropbox on the Learn site. Do not exceed 3000 words. The draft paper is *not graded* but it is a prerequisite to delivering, and thus receiving points for, a presentation. **Warning:** this is a non-negotiable requirement for delivering a presentation. Out of respect for the group, I will not allow undeveloped ideas to be inflicted upon them.
 - (ii) *Delivery:* deliver your presentation. Aim for 8-10 minutes. Do not exceed 12 minutes. Speak from notes and provide a handout. Do not read the paper out loud to us.
- *Evaluation:* presentations will be evaluated out of 10 points. If the draft paper is not submitted on time, then the presentation will be cancelled and receive 0 points. If the draft paper is submitted on time, then an accurate, complete, clear, and articulate presentation accompanied by an adequate handout will receive 8 points. Presentations exceeding those criteria will receive more than 8 points. Presentations that don’t meet the criteria will receive 7 or fewer points.

- *Note*: depending on the number of people in the seminar, I might need to arrange for an extra session outside of our normal meeting time towards the end of the semester.
6. **Paper**. Do not exceed 4000 words. Include a brief summary (no more than one page) of revisions made from the initial draft. The summary does not count toward the word limit.
- *Purpose*: (i) cultivate skills relevant to conducting an independent research project; (ii) advance understanding of the underlying issues or apply existing knowledge.
 - *Due date*: 6pm on December 6. Anyone who needs it will automatically receive a five-day extension. Papers taking advantage of the extension are considered late but will not be penalized and will receive few if any comments. **Warning**: absolutely no paper will be accepted after the five-day extension.
 - *Submission*: upload it to the appropriate dropbox on the Learn site.
 - *Evaluation*: papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - (i) *Motivation*: how well it motivates the topic
 - (ii) *Methodology*: the characterization and appropriateness of methodology
 - (iii) *Research*: use of appropriate resources beyond the course reading
 - (iv) *Interpretation*: how accurately and charitably it explains existing findings, theories, arguments, etc.
 - (v) *Argument*: quality of argumentation (rational persuasiveness) for the thesis
 - (vi) *Writing*: quality of writing (clarity, precision, accuracy, rigor, concision, organization)

Provisional schedule

This provisional schedule is subject to change. See the Learn site for a list of readings.

Week	Date	Topic
1	Sept 9	[No class]
2	Sept 16	Identity
3	Sept 23	Lies
4	Sept 30	Lies
5	Oct 7	Knowledge
6	Oct 21	Knowledge
7	Oct 28	Assertion
8	Nov 4	TBD

Week	Date	Topic
9	Nov 11	TBD
10	Nov 18	Obligations
11	Nov 25	Presentations
12	Dec 2	Presentations

Policies

1. **Attendance.** Attendance is mandatory. Anyone with more than three unexcused absences from seminar meetings will fail the course.
2. **Late work.** Turn your work in on time. See above for policies on specific assignments. Travel plans, workload in other courses or TA responsibilities do not excuse late work. If unexpected challenges (including medical conditions and family emergencies) arise that will prevent you from submitting work on time, let me know as soon as possible so we can work out alternate arrangements.
3. **Accommodation.** The [AccessAbility office](#) collaborates with academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AA office at the beginning of each academic term.
4. **Cross-listing.** Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.
5. **Academic integrity.** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check out the following sites for more information: [Ethical Behavior](#) (Arts), [Academic Integrity Guide](#) (Library), and [Academic Integrity Office](#) (uWaterloo).
6. **Discipline.** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his or her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work or collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check

[Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#). In this course, the **penalty for plagiarism** (passing another person's work off as your own) is a course grade of F and referral to the Associate Dean.

7. **Grievance.** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his or her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.
8. **Appeals.** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 – Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72 – Student Appeals](#). (But remember, you don't want to be [that guy](#).)
9. **Turnitin.com.** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) may be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done partly to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. But the main reason is to provide people with extra motivation to not plagiarize. (Since I've started using turnitin, plagiarism in my classes has effectively dropped to zero.) Talk to me if you have any questions or concerns about this.
10. **Usage.** English usage will matter greatly in the evaluation of all work. Spelling and grammatical conventions distinctive of (proper) US, UK, Australian, and Canadian English are all equally acceptable, so long as you employ them *consistently*. In a word, pick one and stick to it. (You'll notice that I follow US conventions, but please don't take this as a sign that you are expected to do so too.) Grammatical mistakes will count heavily against an assignment. Grammar counts. Clarity counts. Spelling counts. Diction counts. Focused paragraphs count. Topic sentences count.
11. **Communication.** Students are expected to check their campus email accounts and the Learn site for this course regularly. Important announcements about readings and assignments may be made via those media. Ignorance of such announcements will not excuse you from completing assignments, meeting deadlines, etc. By far the best (and preferred) way to contact me is at the email address listed at the beginning of this syllabus. I check my voicemail messages rarely and sporadically.
12. **Email.** I usually respond to email queries within a couple business days. But remember: email is *emphatically not* a substitute for attending class. I have no obligation to respond to emails that ask questions along the following lines: 'What did I miss in class today?', 'I missed the lecture on X — could you tell me what that was about?', 'I've forgotten about Y — could you remind me of the details?', etc.
13. **Office hours.** I encourage you to visit during office hours. If you are puzzled by some material we have covered, it is best to come with a well-defined question already formulated. But DO NOT come to office hours while you are ill. Doing so is

worse than rude. (You might think it's just commonsense, but then you'd be surprised)

14. **Citing sources.** You may use any standard scholarly format for citing your sources (e.g. MLA, APA, Turabian), so long as you're consistent.
15. **Recording devices.** Lectures and other class discussion may be recorded only if permission is given *in advance*. Lectures are intellectual property and unauthorized use of them constitutes theft.
16. **Technological devices.** Students may not use technological devices (e.g., laptops, tablet computers, phones, etc.) in the classroom for *anything* not *directly* related to the content and purpose of current classroom discussion or activity. Using such devices for any other purpose disrupts and distracts student and professor alike, and inhibits effective instruction and learning. No electronic devices are allowed during examinations, quizzes or similar assessments.
17. **Extra credit.** There will be no extra credit assignments.
18. **Documenting illness.** UW has [an official "Verification of Illness" form](#). If you miss an assignment due to illness or injury, then you can receive accommodation only if your physician properly fills out *this very form*. Providing other documentation will not suffice to establish illness or injury, or to secure accommodation. Special exceptions will occur — and let's hope that they *don't* occur — if there is a threat of pandemic, at which point university officials will announce alternative arrangements. But, short of that, you should use only the official VOI form.