



The Catalog of High- Impact Courses at Western University

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Letter to the Student

Dear Student,

Welcome to the first edition of WebStraw's Catalogue of Impactful Electives, which includes a select number of courses offered by Western University that based on reviews, we believe to offer an opportunity to improve and help make the most of your time here. These courses may or may not be birds, but if you're looking for electives that you might remember years from now, you're in the right place.

We define the term "**impactful**" in this case as describing a course that has positively shaped your understanding about a topic, offered an opportunity to develop important skills, or in general those that contributed to shaping a positive university experience for other students.

On that note, impactful courses must also be able to stay relevant, and with that comes an expectation for change. The current edition of this catalogue contains information based on several years of previous reviews, both from the *Must Knows* Facebook Page, and based on a poll sent out in September 2021.

Disclaimer: We cannot guarantee that this resource will stand the test of time and therefore we are not responsible for any outdated information. This resource is supplementary to resources provided by your instructors and should not be used as an alternative to course syllabi. We also are not responsible for the outcome of anyone's decisions based on this resource.

We will try our best to update this resource if there are any drastic changes.

Best of Luck,

The WebStraw Team

Note to Instructors: If this resource includes any inaccurate or concerning information, please email us at team@webstraw.org.

Resource Guide

Course Name

Professor: This section includes the professors that teach the course most often

Course Code: This section introduces the course code that the following information is describing. **You will also find the most recent course outline hyperlinked here.**

Lecture Hours: This section includes the number of hours required for lecture content each week.

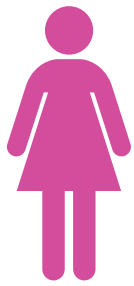
Key Terms: This section includes the Category (A,B, or C) as well as other key terms that came up commonly in reviews.

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- Here you will find some skills or benefits you can hope to gain from taking the course

Review(s):

This section includes the reviews for this course, based on those extracted from the Must Knows Facebook Page and on polls.



Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies 2161B

Women and Popular Culture

Professor: Dr. Nichole Edwards



Course Name: GSWS 2161 - Women and Popular Culture

Lecture Hours: 3 hours per week

Key Terms: Category A, Fun, Enjoyable, Pop-Culture/Media, Eye-Opening, Feminism

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- Apply what you learn to your perception of women in popular culture and media, becoming more conscious and critical of all the media surrounding this topic.
- Get a fun and engaging look into recent pop culture and media, and how their perceptions of women have changed over time.

Review(s):

"[GSWS 2161] opened my eyes to the different experiences of women, such as trans women. I learned about the intersections of gender with race, religion, etc. I learned about how the effects of being a minority are amplified with your identity. It was very educational and showed me that just because someone is being represented, it isn't always done in a good way. I found it really interesting because it focused a lot on modern media and historical media, as well as how the subject changed throughout the years. One thing we talked about was coming of age movies and how they have changed [overtime]... [we also discussed] Beyonce's Formation Video... the examples she chose to explain concepts were very relevant and allowed us to reflect back on the course material with a different perception. The course made me more conscious of the representation of women and minorities in the media, and it deepened my understanding [on the topic]. I am a lot more critical of the media I consume because of the course."

"If Nicole Edwards is teaching it I highly recommend it! She makes the course really fun and interesting! One of your assignments is to watch an episode of a TV show and critique it!"

"Not a hard class. Exams aren't bad; no tricky questions. Four online posts worth 5% each and then one midterm and final exam. 80+ is very doable. 86+ depends on the TA you have as they will be marking your posts and exams. I had a pretty easy TA, but I know that some other TAs were strict with marking. Prof Nicole Edwards is really nice though!"

"One of my favourite classes I've taken! I had Professor Edwards whose lectures I absolutely adored, and I remember her being very understanding and accommodating when asking for help. I also take a lot of women's studies classes and a lot of the material/readings I was already familiar with, but I still think it would be a very enjoyable/doable class for anyone."



Political Sciences 2140B

Globalization

A

Professors: Dr. Dan Bousfield

Course Code: PoliSci 2140 - Globalization

Lecture Hours: 2 hours per week (online during 2021-2022 year)

Key Terms: Category A, Self Directed, Engaging, Interesting

What Can You Gain From This Course

- Student-directed assessments and flexible deadlines
- Applicable knowledge to the modern world as globalization expands
- Engaging content, which is recorded for the convenience of the student

Review(s):

“Loved [PoliSci] 2140, [the] workload wasn’t too heavy and I found the content interesting! Also found it easy to do well in”

“Would 100% recommend taking [PoliSci] 2140!!!! I loved it, [it is] very eye opening [an] fairly easy... Dan is the man”

“2140 by Dr. Bousfield was really engaging! Cool content, good teaching- if you’re looking for a fun class, this is pretty good.”

“I had him so many times I can't even count. By far some of the most interesting classes I took for Political Science. He's really interactive, understanding about deadlines, and a fair marker in my opinion.”

“What can I say, Dan is just the modern-day example of a professor who can connect with the GenXYZ.... He is extremely bold and daring and challenges us with unique topics that no other professors at Western are willing to bring forward in a class filled with over 100 students. Love his accessibility outside the class and his willingness to help out.”

***Active on Facebook, willing to engage with students directly if you’re interested. Examples:

- “Just message me and I can give you special permission for 3209”
- “If you email me with your student number, I can get you added”



Speech 2001

Forms of Oral Discourse

B

Professors: Dr. Aaron Schneider, Prof. Marielle Ayles

Course Code: Speech 2001 – Forms of Oral Discourse

Lecture Hours: 3 hours per week

Key Terms: Category B, Practical, Useful, Well-Taught, Fun

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- Improved public speaking and presentation skills
- Public speaking skills that can be applied to any field of work where presentations are required
- Useful life skills that can be used in various other situations outside of the workplace

Review(s):

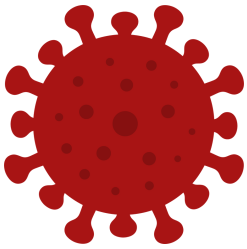
“Speech was the most practical course I took in [my] four years [of undergrad]. It is a great way to get better and [more] comfortable with public speaking.”

“Speech was a great course in terms of working on speaking skills.”

“[Speech 2001] was indeed interesting and different from all others, no exams, just write up speeches, some had PPTs to make alongside, but overall I believe an 80-90 [or above] is... achievable!”

“There are a TON of speeches you need to write and recite/present to the class throughout the full year, so having them memorized with minimal pausing, filler words, hand gestures etc, will take some practice. Overall, I enjoyed the course but you need to make sure you do well on all aspects (including giving feedback!) ... I did enjoy the course as an elective though, there's little to no lecture work and a bit of reading but overall...”

“In terms of usefulness, I think it definitely improved my public speaking/speech skills”



Microbiology and Immunology 2500 A/B



The Biology of Infection and Immunity

Professors: Dr. Kelly Summers, Dr. John McCormick and Dr. Jimmy Dikeokos

Course Code: MicroImm 2500

Lecture Hours: 3 hours per week

Key Terms: Category C, Interesting, Applicable, Important

What Can You Gain From this Course:

- Knowledge of concepts that are heavily applicable to a number of other courses, especially in the medical sciences.
- Develop an interest in microbiology and immunology through a well-designed introductory course highlighting relevant bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi.
- Knowledge of an area of medical sciences that is very applicable to everyday life
- An introduction to concepts in clinical medicine (infectious diseases)

Review(s):

"...There are quite a lot of small details you have to memorize but a 90+ is attainable if you put the work in. Micro has been the most interesting course I've taken so far. 10/10 recommend it, lots of memorization... so don't put it off till [the] last minute!"

"Agree with what everyone else has said, micro2500 is a REALLY interesting course that convinced me to pursue the HSP microimm module. I've mentioned this in more detail on past posts in this group already, but [something] to consider is that the course is pretty content heavy... In terms of the course itself though at face value, it's definitely amazing, 20/10 could not recommend it more if you have the time to commit to it!"

"...VERY valuable in terms of content. It has [applicable to] some extent to almost every other medsci course and is just really good for [learning] the basic principles of infection and immunity that are relevant even just for... life. I'm constantly hearing/seeing all these pathogens in courses and whatnot and microimm gives an amazing background to know what these are! One of the best courses I've ever taken. It is a bit of work but very doable!"

"It was genuinely one of the most interesting courses, I loved it!... It's also super applicable [because] of COVID so there were a lot of real life connections and lessons taught about it!"

"Loved taking microimm — while it wasn't the easiest or lightest course, it was very interesting and I genuinely enjoyed learning the material! What I learned also carried through in my other courses — and it teaches you very useful information about diseases that are applicable to other courses and the real world!"

"...I took micro and it literally was my favourite course in all of second year. It was super interesting and felt like the first "medical" related course in med sci. It definitely isn't the easiest course out of the list and you will have to put in time and effort but I personally thought it was worth it."

"I wasn't thinking about micro as an option at all [as a module], but I took this course and absolutely loved it, and it is the entire reason I pursued a major in microimm. The content is really interesting, the [professors] are great, and you learn a LOT!"



Anatomy and Cell Biology 3309

Mammalian Histology



Professors: Dr. Martin Sandig, Dr. Kem Rogers,
Dr. Susanne Schmid

Course Code: AnatCell 3309

Lecture Hours: 3 hours per week

Key Terms: Category C, Useful, Interesting, Science

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- Understanding of histology which can be applied to several biology/medical science courses and research projects
- Learn several aspects of physiology, in addition to histology, in order to relate structure to function
- Better preparedness to understand histological images found in research papers and the implied results.

Review(s):

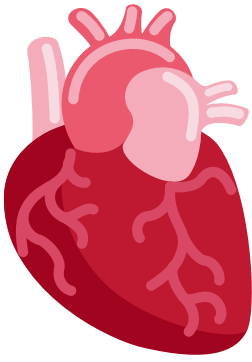
"I LOVED histology, possibly one of my favourite courses [in] 3rd year!! ... It does an amazing job of relating structure to function, following phys 3120 similarly [in structure and content if you're taking both], and is exceptionally well taught almost the entire way through the course. Exams were VERY fair... LOTS of content but very manageable and quite interesting and well organized"

"I loved the course as well as the Professor (Dr. Martin Sandig). It's one of the best 3rd year science courses I have taken."

"I didn't expect to like this course, but I ended up really enjoying it! The [professors] are great and the TAs are amazing! The exams are straightforward if you study and there are no midterms each semester so that's a bonus."

"ACB 3309 was one of my favourite courses this year! There are weekly labs that are a little time consuming, but not difficult at all as long as you follow the instructions. The labs are also a great way to ensure that you keep up with the material, making it easier to review during exam season."

"I 100% recommend 3309! Anatomy 3309 requires a decent amount of work throughout the year with weekly labs but they're easy to do well in. There's 2 exams (one in December and one in January) and both are straightforward as long as you keep up with the course content and make sure you know how to recognize the different histology images (the lab slides help a lot with this). There's also 6 quizzes - I found these a bit tougher since you have to complete 20 questions in 20 minutes and it's linear but still very doable."



Physiology 2130

Human Physiology

C

Professors: Dr. Christine Bell (online), Dr. Anita Wood (in-person)

Course Name: Phys 2130

Lecture Hours: 5 hours per week

Key Terms: Category C, Interesting, Helpful, Science

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- Strong background of human physiology which is useful for several upper year science courses and the MCAT
- Knowledge of several human systems which can be applied to everyday life, as well as in clinical applications

Review(s):

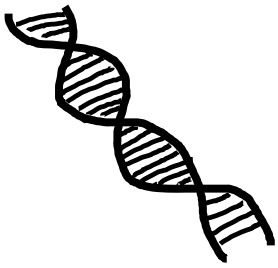
"I found the content to be interesting so I genuinely felt myself wanting to study the material for the exams."

"Phys 2130 is a really great course. it provides you with a really strong background for any future phys-pharm courses and I found it super helpful as its course content overlaps with Biochem 2280."

"I enjoyed phys 2130 and recommend it if you're interested in a physiology module. The content is mostly quite interesting"

"You learn a lot of really neat concepts and it relates to almost all disciplines of the sciences in my opinion! It's [also] helpful for some other courses in science."

"Physiology 2130 is an amazing course! The content is very clearly explained."



Biology 3592A

Principles of Human Genetics



Professors: Dr. Kathleen Hill

Course Code: Biology 3592

Lecture Hours: 2 hours per week + 1 Tutorial Hour

Key Terms: Category C, Genetics, Engaging, Interesting, Fairly Evaluated, Engaging, Well Taught, and Well Structured

What Can You Gain From this Course

- Learn about the frontiers in research on human genetics, based directly on current published research papers
- Develop an understanding and appreciation for the complex field of human genetics

Review(s):

"It had really interesting content and I learned a lot of things that I previously knew nothing about. Definitely a good experience"

"Dr.Hill is an amazing prof... she repeats herself so many times... so you can tell what type of questions will likely show up on the exams. It is content heavy though and there is a lot to learn (so it's not a bird by any shape or form and you absolutely have to study hard for it, but your hard work definitely pays off). There is a genomification report, an essay, and weekly quizzes so make sure you do well on these as well as on the midterm and the final."

"[Biology] 3592 was the most interesting and engaging course I've ever taken and [the] highest mark of my undergraduate degree. Definitely would recommend!!!"

"[Biology] 3592 was a course that I found hard at the start because it's taught based on research papers, but it definitely gets easier as you go. It had really interesting content and I learned a lot of things that I previously knew nothing about. Definitely a good experience."



Environmental Sciences 1021G

Environmental Science and Sustainability



Professors: Dr. Kelly Hollingshead

Course Name: EnviroSci 1021G

* Instructors seem to change consistently between offerings so some comments may be referring to the course under previous professors

Lecture Hours: 3 hours per week (online for Winter 2021 synchronous session)

Key Terms: Category C, Favourite, Interesting, Environment

What Can You Gain From This Course:

- The ability to improve your writing skills, especially in scientific context
- A greater understanding of the scientific background necessary to think critically about modern environmental issues
- The opportunity to speak with others in groups and expand your views on various environmental concerns

Review(s):

"I took it last year and loved it. Definitely recommend it"

"I loved this class. I took it when it was online... but it's honestly one of my favourite courses...! The prof was super helpful and truly cared about his students. ... It's a lot of writing but if you want to learn about environmental issues and sustainability it's super interesting!"

"I took it in my first year. Loved the prof. Not a science student, but I didn't find it especially challenging. The material was very interesting ... there was even a field trip (...it was a great component)."