

COURSE: PHIL 111
SEMESTER: Ongoing
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If you phone me and I am unavailable please leave a detailed message on my Voice Mail and a number where I can reach you. The best way to reach me is to send me an e-mail message to the address above. However, I do not check my email on the weekends.

INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THINKING

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to informal and elementary formal logic. Emphasis will be placed on the analysis and evaluation of the sorts of arguments one encounters everyday. Topics include: what is a good argument? cogency, standardization of arguments, analogies, fallacies, deduction and induction, categorical and propositional logic. Students will be introduced to both 'practical' and the more 'technical or abstract' elements of rational persuasion.

Accordingly, this course is ideally suited to those individuals who are interested in developing their reading, writing and reasoning skills.

Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to help students gain an understanding and appreciation of various forms of argumentation and reasoning. When the student has successfully completed this course he/she should be able to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, be able to standardize and focus upon key elements of arguments and be able to assess the merits of various types (and components) of argumentation by using a variety of formal and informal techniques. Furthermore, the student will be able to develop and defend their own particular beliefs and recognize shortcomings. Thus one of the key elements here is that the student is able to direct their own learning and study times.

Required Readings:

An Introduction to Critical Thinking (.pdf file)

Format:

Lectures will be devoted to the presentation, explication and discussion of course materials. Focus will be upon the lecture notes which complement the text readings. Lecture Notes have been made available online so that a) students have accurate representations of the more complex materials covered b) students have the opportunity to devote class time to discuss and participate c) students can focus upon the content of the course rather than writing detailed notes. Students will be assigned homework which will be reviewed in class but which will not be submitted.

We will be using Blackboard for the online component of this course. There you will access the course assessments (quizzes, assignments, tests), grades, bulletin board etc. You will find an extensive number

of practice quizzes which are not for marks but to keep you refreshed with the material. The two tests will look very similar to the assignment components of the course.

Outline:

We shall be following the text closely. As noted above, topics will be accompanied by PowerPoint lecture notes. Tests, quizzes and assignments will presume that students have read and understood all class materials assigned whether discussed in class or not.

We shall spend the first half of the course working through one chapter a week or so as they deal with the practical and informal analysis and evaluation of all types of arguments. The second half is more 'technical' and will focus on the evaluation of deductive forms of argumentation as laid out in chapters 7 and 8.

Evaluation:

8 chapter True/False Quizzes	8 @ 5%	20%
4 assignments	3 @ 5% , 1 @ 10	15%
Mid Term		20%
Final test		15%
Total		100%

Quizzes will examine your understanding of the textbook and lectures and will be simple true/false type questions. All quizzes are timed, questions are presented one at a time and in random order. You will not be able to 'ponder' over the questions for **if you run out of time, you will not get credit for your answers**. You will do these (sometimes 1, sometimes 2) at home or in a computer lab during a set time for your convenience.

Mid term will cover chapters 1-5. The final test will cover Chapters 6, 7, 8. ONLY I am of the hope that we can have the final test in the last class instead of during final exams (we are allowed to give a test on during the last week if the maximum is no more than 15%)

Take home assignments will be various exercise type questions that will examine your ability to recognize, standardize and evaluate different types of arguments. Most will be available online (and listed under 'Assessments').

Assignment 1 will be based on chapters 1-3

Assignment 2 will be based on chapters 4 and 5.

Assignment 3 will be based on Fallacies,

Assignment 4 (worth 10%) will be based on chapters 7 & 8.

Please Note. I am updating the online course throughout the term so I appreciate your patience and any notices of errors (but not in assessment content since I know the basic questions are correct), typos etc., are welcome!

By attending this course you understand and agree to the following:

- No late assignments or quizzes will be accepted unless the student has received prior verbal or written consent of the instructor or if there is a medically documented emergency. Communicate with the instructor. Don't assume that leaving a voice mail or an e-mail will do the 'job'. As well, 'Prior' does not mean 'at the beginning of class'. **Make ups, extra credit work, or 'making the next assignment worth more' are not options in this course.** So try your very best on everything.
- If you forget to hand in or complete required work with more than 50% total you will get a DNC which translates to an 'F' on your transcript. Don't think that if you miss something that you can (a) make it up on the next one. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.
- Computer problems, delays, long lines, no access at home, do not excuse you from missing a quiz. **Do NOT wait until the very last minute to start your Assignment or quiz!**
- Any necessary changes to the course schedule, content, assignments or due dates, will be determined and decided in class by unanimous agreement of those in class. Absent students will be held accountable to any of these changes made. Always check online for updates.
- Attendance is not taken however students who are absent are responsible for ensuring that they have not missed handouts, deadlines or assignments.
- Any other notices, provisions and requirements or changes stipulated by the instructor or in the TRU calendar (including Attendance regulations) will be adhered to.

Critical thinking involves practice. Students cannot master this course by simply attending class or reading the textbook. Like a foreign language, or like mathematics, the only way to learn 'critical thinking' is by doing it. Each chapter depends on knowledge of the previous ones so it is crucial that you remain current in your readings and ask questions if you do not understand. Be sure to do all the exercises and homework. Peer study groups are useful and encouraged for doing homework exercises/perhaps someone will start one via the online bulletin board. This is why I am working hard to make this course something that YOU do, rather than something that I just lecture about!

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Cheating is defined as any dishonest or deceptive conduct or attempted conduct by which individuals or groups of individuals use or attempt to use unauthorized aids, assistance, materials and methods to represent their academic work, training and standards as other than they are.

Plagiarism is defined as an act in which an individual submits the work of another person as his or her own. A student caught in either of these activities will be penalized with at least a zero grade on the particular assignment. Serious cases will result in automatic failure of the course. See the section on academic honesty in the Calendar.

The quizzes really not worth a lot, so don't waste your time trying to cheat because even if you mess up one, it is not a serious matter. However, it is important that you learn from your mistakes as they are good practice for the mid term and exam – when the percentages are greater.