PHIL 103: Critical Reasoning

Instructor: Lauren Eichler
MTWR 9:00 – 10:50 am
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Office Hours: R 1:00-2:50
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Please note: This syllabus subject to change. An official version of the syllabus will be presented in class on the first day.

Course Description

This course will serve as an introduction to some of the basic concepts and methods involved in critical reasoning. Students will learn about the structure of arguments, and acquire a set of tools for both assessing and advancing them. Some of the major themes we shall cover include, the nature of language, truth, and meaning, different types of reasoning (deductive, inductive, scientific, moral), as well as the structure of arguments. Readings for the class shall include both sections from the textbook Critical Reasoning, as well as primary source philosophical texts. The course will be structured around lectures, workshop sessions as well as class discussion.

Learning Outcomes:

This course aims to provide students with a variety of skills including:

1. The ability to formulate and assess arguments.
2. Familiarity with important concepts such as soundness, validity, deduction, induction etc.
3. The ability to plan and write argumentative essays.

Required Texts:

William Hughes, Jonathan Lavery, Kathryn Doran, Critical Thinking, 7th edition (referred to as HLD below)

All other readings to be posted on Canvas.

Assignments:

[1] Participation and attendance		10%
[2] In-class Exams	(2 X 25%)	50%
[3] Final Take-Home exam		25%
[4] Problem sets	(3 X 5%)	15%

[1] Students are expected to participate and attend lectures. To succeed in this respect students should come to class prepared (this involves completing readings and bringing the text to class).

[2] There shall be two in-class exams for this course, consisting of multiple choice questions, as well as both long and short answer questions.

[3] Students will be required to complete a final take-home exam consisting of both short and long essay-style questions. **The final exam should be submitted on canvas.**

[4] Throughout the term students will be required to complete a short set of problems to be completed as homework. **The due dates for these are noted below**.

Course Schedule

Week 1 M T W R	• Introduction • Key concepts *HLD* 1.1-1.3 (pp. 3-9). • Meaning and Language *HLD* 2.1-2.3 (pp. 19-24) • John Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Excerpt); J. L. Austin "Performative Utterances" (**Just section I**)
Week 2 M T W R	• Definition *HLD* 2.1-2.10 (pp. 31-9) • Definition *HLD* 2.1-2.10 (pp. 31-9) (**Continued**) • Clarifying Meaning 3.1-3.2.4 (47-52) • Analytic, Contradictory, and Synthetic Statements *HLD* 3.4 & Necessary and Sufficient Conditions *HLD* 3.8 ○ **First problem set due**
Week 3 M T W R	• Reconstructing Arguments *HLD* 4.1-4.4.2 (pp. 67-74) • Argumentative Structure *HLD* 4.6-4.6.4 (pp. 78-81) • Workshop on Arguments • Review Session
Week 4 M T W R	• **EXAM #1 (In class)** • Deductive Reasoning *HLD* 9.1-9.3 (pp. 161-8) • Deductive Reasoning *HLD* 9.4-9.5 (169-73) • Inductive Reasoning *HLD* 10.1-10.3
Week 5 M T W R	• Inductive Reasoning *HLD* 10.4-10.5 • Strategies for Assessing Arguments 5.1-5.3.7 (pp. 91-6) • Truth theories and claims *HLD* 6.1 • Truth theories and claims *HLD* 6.2 ○ **Second problem set due**

Week 6 M T W R	• Fallacies 6.7-6.7.4 (pp. 115-121) • Continued • Relevance 7.1-7.1.4 (pp. 127-136) • Continued o **Third problem set due**
Week 7 M T W R	• Adequacy *HLD* 8.1-8.2 • Adequacy *HLD* 8.3-8.4 • Adequacy *HLD* 8.5-8.6 • Review Session
Week 8 M T W R	• **EXAM # 2 (In Class)** • James Rachels *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism* (Canvas) • Moral Reasoning *HLD* 12.1-12.3 • Peter Singer "All Animals are Equal"
Week 9 M T W R	• Moral Reasoning *HLD* 12.6 • The Demarcation Problem (Readings posted on Canvas) • Scientific Reasoning 11.1 & 11.4 • Scientific Reasoning 11.1 & 11.4
Week 10 M T W R	• Nietzsche, "Truth and Falsity in the Non-Moral Sense" • Genevieve Lloyd "The Man of Reason" • Anne Waters, "That Alchemical Bering Strait Theory" • Discussion

Extensions: Extensions for assignments shall only be granted in the case of documented emergencies. There will be no make-ups for missed homework assignments.

Grading:

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated. Any student caught violating university policy will automatically fail the course. Please refer to the University of Oregon Student Conduct Code for information about what constitutes academic dishonesty.

https://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-3-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code