

Philosophy 2100 – Critical Thinking

Winter 2012

Course Instructor:	Kyle Bromhall kbromhal@uoguelph.ca	Lecture Times:	Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-1:20
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:15 MacKinnon 324		Alexander Hall 100
		Seminar Times:	Available on <i>WebAdvisor</i>

Course Description

Whether it is when we are out with friends, taking a course or in a high-pressure sales situation, we are often called upon to analyze the arguments of others and to present arguments of our own. Technologies like the Internet and social media are increasing our ability to engage in mass discussion. This makes it especially important for individuals to not only identify bad arguments, but also to know why they are bad arguments. The goal of this course is to provide students with these tools, with special attention given to current discussions in the media and academia.

The core textbook through which this goal shall be achieved is Hughes and Lavery's *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills (5th Edition)* used in tandem with Weston's *A Rulebook for Arguments (4th Edition)*. Topics of study include: the types of reasoning, assessing arguments, detecting logical fallacies, counterargument, irrational techniques of persuasion, and responsible belief.

Course Texts

1. Hughes, William and Lavery, Jonathan. *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills (5th Edition)*. Peterborough, On: Broadview Press, 2008. *(Required)*
2. Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments (4th Edition)*. Cambridge, Mass: Hackett Publishing Co., 2008. *(Required)*
3. Readings to be made available via *Courselink*. *(Required)*

NB: You are responsible for gaining access to and frequently checking the *Courselink* page for this course. *Neither readings nor assignments will be made available in paper format.*

Course Requirements

Weekly Assignments (15%): Each week unless noted, due in tutorial. A reading will be posted on *Courselink* and you will be asked to answer a few questions based on that material. These are to be no more than two pages (double-spaced). You are to print off two copies, submitting one to your TA at the beginning of tutorial and keeping the other copy for your use during that tutorial. They will be graded out of three, with 1 being "clearly unsatisfactory," 2 being "neither clearly unsatisfactory nor clearly exceptional," and 3 being "clearly exceptional." The TA will grade these based on the completion of all questions, evidence of effort, and quality of the results. Only the top five shall count.

Midterm Test (20%): One in-class midterm test on the material from weeks one to four.

Assignment (20%): One assignment which shall ask you to demonstrate your competency with the skills learned from the beginning of the course but with special emphasis on the material covered after the midterm test.

Tutorials (10%): Tutorials are an integral part of this course. They will significantly aid you in your development as a critical thinker. This portion of your grade will be assigned by your Teaching Assistant on the basis of the frequency of your attendance and the quality of your contributions.

Final Examination (35%): One final examination at a date and time available on *WebAdvisor*. It will be cumulative from the beginning of the course.

Important Course Policies

Submission of Written Work

All written work must be submitted in paper format. Teaching Assistants will not allow work to be submitted via email unless the student has sought explicit permission to do so for that particular assignment. Such permission will only be granted if the student has a compelling reason. Handwritten work will not be accepted.

Late Penalties

Weekly assignments are due at the beginning of tutorial. This is a hard deadline. If not received by this time, a grade of zero shall be assigned. There are no make-up assignments for missed assignments. Exceptions shall only be made in accordance with the section "When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement" of the "8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts," available on *Courselink*, which you are required to read.

The major assignment is due on the date indicated in the Schedule of Readings, below, unless stated otherwise. If it is not received on this date, a grade of zero shall be assigned. Make-up assignments will only be allowed in accordance with the section "When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement," of the "8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts."

In sum, all assignments are either accepted or not accepted. The penalty for late work is that it is not accepted. The only exceptions to this rule are those based on humanitarian grounds, with proper documentation.

Classroom etiquette

Be aware of actions that others may find distracting. Talking, accessing social media, texting and so on all have an effect on not only your ability to concentrate on the course material being presented, but also that of all those around you. It is also disrespectful to the Instructor or Teaching Assistant. Therefore, as a courtesy, please refrain from doing anything that would distract others. If any of these things start to be a problem, the Instructor or Teaching Assistant may impose limitations on the class.

More so than in many other disciplines, philosophy asks you to vigorously and precisely defend your own position and to attack that of others. This does not mean that at any time you should ever show any sort of disrespect towards another student. As philosophers, we exhibit significant tolerance for differences of view, and it is expected that you demonstrate this tolerance.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

All dates, themes, and reading selections are subject to change with notice.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1 – January 9	Welcome		Introduction	CT: 1.1 to 1.4, <i>1.6</i> . RA: Intro.
	No tutorials this week! No weekly assignment, either!			
2 – January 16	Reconstructing Arguments	CT: 4.1, 4.2, <i>4.3</i> , <i>4.4</i> , <i>4.5</i> , <i>4.8</i> .	Counter-arguments, part 1.	CT: 13.1-13.4.
	Tutorials begin. Check <i>WebAdvisor</i> for your section.			
3 – January 23	Meaning, Functions of Language	CT: 2.1, 2.3, <i>2.4</i> , <i>2.5</i> .	Definition	CT: 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, <i>2.11</i> , <i>2.12</i> , <i>2.13</i> . RA: D1-D3.
4 – January 30	Principle of Charity, Ambiguity and Vagueness	CT: 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, <i>3.6</i> , <i>3.7</i> .	Necessary and Sufficient Conditions	CT: 3.8, 3.9.
5 – February 6	Wrap-up/ Midterm Review		Midterm	
6 – February 13	The Three Criteria: Acceptability	CT: 6.2, 6.3, <i>6.4</i> , <i>6.6</i> .	Fallacies of Acceptability	CT: 6.7, <i>6.8</i> .
7 – February 20				
	Winter Break – No lectures or tutorials.			
8 – February 27	The Three Criteria: Relevance	CT: 7.1 to 7.3.	Fallacies of Relevance	CT: 7.4, 7.5.
	Midterm returned and reviewed in tutorial. No weekly assignment due.			
9 – March 5	The Three Criteria: Adequacy	CT: 8.1 to 8.3.	Fallacies of Adequacy	CT: 8.4, 8.5, <i>8.6</i> .
10 – March 12	Deductive Reasoning 1: Truth Functionality	CT: 9.1, 9.2.	Deductive Reasoning 2: Validity	CT: 9.3-9.5
11 – March 19	Deductive Reasoning 3: Recapitulation		Inductive Reasoning	CT: 10.1, 10.2, 10.4.
	Assignment due in tutorials.			
12 – March 26	Fighting Dirty: Persuasion	CT: 14.1 to 14.6	Persuasion, cont'd.	CT: 14.7 to 14.10, <i>14.11</i> .
13 – April 2	Bias in the Media	CT: 15.1, 15.2.	Evaluating News Sources	CT: 15.3, 15.4.
	Please see <i>WebAdvisor</i> for date and time of final examination. Assignments will be returned at that time.			
Legend CT: <i>Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills</i> RA: <i>A Rulebook for Arguments</i> <i>Italicization</i> of numbered sections of CT indicates a recommended self-test.				