

Philosophy 2100 – Critical Thinking

Winter 2014

Course Instructor:	Kyle Bromhall kbromhal@uoguelph.ca	Lecture Times:	Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-12:20
Office Hours:	Mondays 12:30-2:30 MacKinnon 332		Rozanski Hall 103
		Seminar Times:	Available on <i>WebAdvisor</i>

Course Description

The objective of this course is the development of critical thinking skills, i.e. how to tell whether the conclusion of an argument is supported by its premises, and how to assess the strength of that support. The course deals with how to detect ambiguities, how to express ideas clearly, how to challenge arguments and claims, how to recognize and avoid fallacies, and how to develop strong arguments. (From the original syllabus)

Course Texts

1. Schick, Theodore Jr. and Vaughn, Lewis. *How to Think About Weird Things*, 7th edition. (Required)
2. 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

Unit A Assignment (15%): One take-home assignment covering the material of week five. More information shall be made available on *Courselink* closer to the date.

Unit B Midterm Examination (25%): One examination which shall be cumulative from week five but with special emphasis on the material covered in Unit B. This midterm shall be held on 12 March, in lecture. More information shall be made available on *Courselink* closer to the date.

Unit C Assignment (20%): One assignment which shall be cumulative from week five but with special emphasis on the material covered in Unit C. More information shall be made available on *Courselink* closer to the date.

Seminar Participation (10%): Seminars 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 quality of your contributions to discussion. Only the seminars occurring on or after week five will be taken into consideration.

Take-Home Examination (30%): One take-home final examination which shall be cumulative from the beginning of the course. More information shall be made available on *Courselink* closer to the date.

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.

The only exception to this rule is the take-home examination, which must be submitted by email to your Teaching Assistant.

Late Penalties

Assignments are due on the dates indicated in the Schedule of Readings, below, unless stated otherwise. If an assignment is not received on its listed due 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."

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 those 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.

Teaching Assistants

This course has three teaching assistants. Their contact information and office hours are as follows:

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 6	Welcome/Philo		Sophia	
2 – January 13	Metaphysics/ Epistemology		Aesthetics	
3 – January 20	(Class cancelled)		Ethics	
4 – January 27	(Class cancelled)		(Class cancelled)	
5 – February 3 *Kyle takes over	Claims & Arguments	WT: 33-39.	The First Steps of Argumentation	WT: 16-22.
6 – February 10	Acceptability	WT: 62-71.	Fallacies of Acceptability	WT: 49-50.
Unit A Assignment due in seminars.				
7 – February 17				
Winter Break – No lectures or seminars.				
8 – February 24	Relevance	WT: 71-90.	Fallacies of Relevance	WT: 50-53.
9 – March 3	Adequacy	WT: 171-181.	Fallacies of Adequacy	WT: 53-55.
10 – March 10	Persuasion	See link on <i>Courselink</i>	Unit B Midterm held in-class	
11 – March 17	Deductive Reasoning	WT: 39-42.	Inductive Reasoning	WT: 42-49.
12 – March 24	Cognitive Errors, part one	WT: 96-117.	Cognitive Errors, part two	WT: 118-148.
13 – March 31	Truth & Truthiness	WT: 295-311.	Science & Scientism	WT: 158-171.
Unit C Assignment due in seminars.				
The Take-Home Examination will be distributed on 10 April through <i>Courselink</i> . It must be submitted via the Dropbox function of <i>Courselink</i> no later than 11:59 PM on 17 April .				
Legend WT: <i>How to Think About Weird Things, 7th Ed.</i>		Unit A: Identification	Unit B: Assessment	Unit C: Reasoning

Last updated: 24 March 2014