

PHIL 103: Critical Reasoning

Instructor: Shannon Hayes
shannonh@uoregon.edu
Office: 158 SCH
Office Hours: TW 10-11am

Course Description:

This course serves to introduce students to the study of philosophy through an introduction to thinking and reasoning critically. During the first section of the course we will situate our investigation of ‘critical thinking’ within the Western philosophical tradition through the texts of Plato, Descartes, Kant, Foucault, and Lloyd. After exploring some of the philosophical motivations underlying the expansion of reason, as well as the limitations of such a project, we will turn our attention to analyses of deductive and inductive arguments. We will learn to identify, reconstruct and evaluate both types of argumentation. Lectures for these classes will be based on readings assigned from a textbook (*How To Think Logically*), but will frequently incorporate topical matter, encouraging analyses of recent events and controversies. Students should expect additional (short) reading assignments and exercises to be assigned during class. The final two weeks of the course will focus on some limitations of rationality within the Western philosophical tradition, with an emphasis on what it means to teach and to learn to think critically about oneself and the world. This section will include texts by Hume, Goodman, Nietzsche, Fanon, Friere, and Ellsworth.

Some questions that will be addressed during the course: What is philosophy? What role does reason play in the history of Western philosophy? What does it mean to be a ‘critical thinker’? What is critical thinking capable of accomplishing? What are the benefits and limitations of such thinking—What is emphasized? What is left out? How is reason gendered, racialized, politicized?

Class Format:

Most classes will be a combination of lecture, discussion, in-class exercises, and in-class videos, when appropriate. During weeks 3-8, much of the class time will be devoted to in-class exercises in order to practice the techniques of argument identification, analysis and construction.

Evaluation:

20% Class Participation
15% Essay #1 (Due: October 13th)
20% In-Class Exam (Deductive: October 30th)

- 20% In-Class Exam (Inductive: November 20th)
- 25% Essay #2 (Due: December 9th)

Class Participation: You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for each day. This means that the readings are completed prior to class and that you have a copy of the assigned reading(s) available during class. I try to keep the readings short (less than 20 pages), but this does not mean that these are 'easy' or 'fast' readings. Philosophy is often dense, and asks for both your time and attention. Be prepared to devote a considerable amount of time to each reading—enough to read each text twice.

- During weeks 3-8, this includes coming to class with completed homework assignments
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of most classes. More than three unexcused absences will result in a final grade no higher than a D.

Essays: You are required to complete two essays.

- Essay #1—due Monday of week three—is a 2-3 page response to the guiding questions for the first section of the course: the role of reason in the history of Western philosophy. A prompt will be handed out Thursday of week 2. A hard-copy of your essay must be turned in during class *and* it must be submitted through BlackBoard's SafeAssign. SafeAssign is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. It encourages original writing and proper citation by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of websites, essays, journal articles, and other published work.
- The Final Essay—due 2:00pm, Tuesday of finals week—is a 3-5 page argumentative essay that provides a topical analysis of the practical applications of critical reasoning. Essay prompts will be handed out Monday of week 10. A hard-copy of your essay must be turned in to the philosophy office in Susan Campbell Hall by 2:00pm and an electronic copy must be submitted via SafeAssign by 2:00pm as well.
- Late essays that are received within **12 hours** of the due date will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade (A → A-; A- → B+...). Any essay received after the initial 12 hours will be docked one letter grade per 24 hour period.

In-Class Exams: There will be two in-class exams. The first will cover the section on 'deductive arguments' (weeks 3, 4, 5). The second will cover the sections on 'inductive reasoning' and 'fallacies' (weeks 6, 7, 8). There is no cumulative exam.

- Make-up exams are allowed *only* in the case of a documented emergency. In these cases, the exam must be completed within one week of the original exam date.

Required Texts:

Seay, Gary & Nuccetelli, Susana. *How To Think Logically* (second edition).

*** All other assigned readings will be posted on BlackBoard.*

Course Policies:

Incompletes and extensions will be given only in the event of documented emergencies.

Retaining copies of all returned work: Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.

Computers and other electronic equipment: Please turn off all electronic equipment prior to the start of class. Use of laptop computers during class is prohibited except as part of a classroom exercise. Exceptions to the prohibition of laptops may be requested from the instructor and will be granted only for legitimate academic reasons. Use of laptops for academic reasons will be monitored throughout the term, and failure to restrict their use to this function will result in the revocation of any laptop privileges.

Academic Misconduct: The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Individual Differences: If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your education process. The university offers a wide range of services to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements, including the following:

- *Teaching & Learning Center (TLC)*: TLC provides numerous resources (including courses, workshops, and tutoring) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions. Web: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/> – Phone: 541-346-2184.

- *University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC)*: The UCTC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops and outreach as well as emergency services. Web: <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/> – Phone: 541-346-3227

- *Disability Services (DS)*: DS coordinates services, provides advocacy and support to students with documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and provides assistance to

the general campus community in responding appropriately to requests for accommodations based on disability. Web: <http://ds.uoregon.edu/> Phone: 541-346-6013

Course Schedule:

Readings listed for each day are to be completed prior to class. This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Week 1 (9/29-10/2): Reason & Philosophy

M	Introduction to the course
T	Plato, <i>The Crito</i>
W	Plato, <i>The Apology</i>
TH	Descartes, Rene, from <i>Discourse on Method</i>

Week 2 (10/6-10/9): Reason & The Enlightenment

M	Descartes, Rene, from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>
T	Kant, Immanuel, "What is Enlightenment?"
W	Foucault, Michel, "What Is Enlightenment?"
TH	Lloyd, Genevieve, from <i>The Man of Reason</i>

Week 3 (10/13-10/16): Identifying and Reconstructing Arguments

M	** Essay #1 Due ** Identifying arguments: <i>HTL</i> 4-9
T	Identifying 'Non-Arguments': <i>HTL</i> 16-21 (ex.VII 2-25)
W	Argument Reconstruction: <i>HTL</i> 9-16 (V 2-25)
TH	Principles of Argument Reconstruction: <i>HTL</i> 25-30 (II 2-15); 74-81 (II 2-15)

Week 4 (10/20-10/23): Deductive Arguments

M	Valid vs. Invalid Arguments: <i>HTL</i> 95-101 (II 2-24)
T	Propositional Argument Forms <i>HTL</i> 102-104; 109 (VII 2-8)
W	Categorical Argument Forms: <i>HTL</i> 104-108; 109 (VIII 2-8)
TH	Propositional vs. Categorical Forms: <i>HTL</i> 108-114 (IX; X; XI; XIII)

Week 5 (10/27-10/30): Deductive Arguments II

M	* NO CLASS * (Instructor at conference)
T	Soundness & Cogency: <i>HTL</i> 114-119 (XVI; XVII; XVIII)
W	<i>Deductive Arguments—REVIEW</i>
TH	** In-Class Exam **

Week 6 (11/3-11/6): Inductive Reasoning

M	Questioning Deductive Reasoning
T	What Makes an Argument ‘Inductive’?: <i>HTL</i> 81-83; 123-125; 135 (II 2-15)
W	Types of Inductive Arguments: <i>HTL</i> 125-129; 133-134; 136 (IV 2-15)
TH	Causal Arguments: <i>HTL</i> 130-133

Week 7 (11/10-11/13): Inductive Reasoning II

M	Evaluating Inductive Arguments: <i>HTL</i> 137-142 (VII 2-25)
T	Evaluating (topical) Inductive Arguments: (TBD)
W	Fallacies of Failed Induction: <i>HTL</i> 148-160 (II 2-15; III 2-10)
TH	Fallacies of Presumption: <i>HTL</i> 167-174 (IV 2-15); 178-182 (X 2-10; XI 2-15)

Week 8 (11/17-11/20): Fallacies

M	Fallacies of Unclear Language; Relevance: <i>HTL</i> 188-203 (V 2-25); 210-221 (II 2-25)
T	Fallacies <i>continued</i> ; In-Class Video: “12 Angry Men”
W	<i>Inductive Reasoning/Fallacies—REVIEW</i>
TH	** In-Class Exam **

Week 9 (11/24-11/26): Questioning Induction

M	Hume, David, from <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>
T	Goodman, Nelson, “The New Riddle of Induction”
W	Nietzsche, Friedrich, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”
TH	**NO CLASS** (Thanksgiving)

Week 10 (12/1-12/4): Critical Pedagogy

M	Fanon, Franz, from <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>
T	Freire, Paulo, from <i>Pedagogy of The Oppressed</i>
W	Freire <i>continued</i>
TH	Ellsworth, Elizabeth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy”

Final Paper Due: Tuesday December 9th, 2:00pm