

University of Guelph
Department of Philosophy
Fall 2014

Phil 2100 Critical Thinking Syllabus

Professor: Corey Sawkins
Lecture Times: Mon and Wed 2:30-3:20
Lecture Location: ROZH 102
Office Hours: Fridays 1:30pm - 2:30pm or by appointment
Office Location: MacK 328(Office Wing)
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Teaching Assistants: Adam Langridge alangrid@uoguelph.ca
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Course Description:

An argument is a set of statements (the *premises* of the argument) that is intended to provide rational support for some further statement (the *conclusion* of the argument). We use arguments to convince ourselves and others that some view or position is rationally supported. The purpose of a critical thinking class is to make you better at identifying, analyzing, criticizing, writing about, and constructing arguments. The core text for this course is *Good Reasoning Matters! A Constructive Approach to Critical Thinking*. It provides the basic tools for construction and developing strong arguments and for assessing arguments.

The course ranges widely over a number of important philosophical topics: truth, knowledge, scientific method, bad reasoning. It also introduces important and useful concepts in the psychological study of reasoning as well as logical concepts.

Course Objectives:

The ultimate objective of the course is practical: to help the student develop useful tools for reasoning and critical thinking in any context.

Required Texts:

1. Good Reasoning Matters! A Constructive Approach to Critical Thinking. Fifth Edition
Authors: Leo Groarke and Christopher W. Tindale.
2. Extra material when applicable will be assessable on course link.

Grade Distribution:

10/11 Assignments: 30%
10 In Class Quizzes: 20%
Participation: 20%
Final Exam: 30%

Assignments:

Assignments are due **Tuesdays at 11:59pm** starting the week of September 16th for eleven weeks with the last assignment due November 25th. The assignments will be posted on the **course link** website under the '**Quizzes**' section one week in advance. The student should fill in the assignment and submit it electronically. If the student is unable to complete the assignment online, they must inform the professor or teaching assistant before the due date. Assignments will consist of multiple choice, and short and long answer questions. Students should come to the seminar with detailed notes on the assignment in order to participate in discussions.

Late Assignments:

Online access to the assignment will end at **11:59pm** on the due date (**Tuesday**) students must have the assignment completed by then. Any late assignments, without authorization from the professor, will incur a 2% penalty per day.
(See '*When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement*' below)

Participation Marks:

Participation points are awarded for students who actively contribute to the seminars through verbal contributions and questions. The rubric used for assessment will be made available on course link and discussed in tutorials.

Quizzes:

Quizzes will take place on Monday every week in class. There will be a total of ten quizzes; each quiz will be on the material covered in class the week before. The quizzes will be conducted on course link. Students that do not have a mobile device capable of accessing course link must notify the instructor in the first week of class, so arrangements can be made. The quizzes will be password protected. The password will be provided in class on the day of the quiz, so students must come to class to complete the quiz. If a student cannot make it to class on a quiz day they are to notify the instructor prior to class so that arrangements can be made.

Email communication:

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph.ca email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement:

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar's [information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration](#).

Drop Date:

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, October 31, 2014. See the Undergraduate Calendar's [regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses](#).

Accessibility:

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or go to [their website](#).

Academic Misconduct:

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part

could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is [detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Recording of Materials:

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources:

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars>

Email:

Philosophical questions about content will not be answered on email by either the professor or the TA. Students must avail themselves of lecture and tutorial time, or office hours in order to have their questions about content answered. Only short administrative questions will be answered on email by the professor. You can expect a response in 48 hours.

Readings and Lectures:

Students should read the assigned material prior to class, and should bring the texts to class as class may involve careful and close examination of the readings.

Note on Assignment Integrity:

The assignments are not intended to be group assignments. Each student is required to do the assignment on their own and submit it to the TA. Sometimes students in the sciences find that bewildering, since in the sciences assessments are often made, say, on group lab work. Indeed, even out in the real world a pharmaceutical company might get FDA approval for a drug that was developed by a team of scientists. But this is not the expectation of classes in the humanities, where we need to be able to assign a grade individually that indicates a general assessment of the extent to which the student has absorbed the course material. So, students may meet to discuss the concepts, but must do the assignment on their own. It is also in the student's interest to do this because it will better prepare them for the final exam, where students will not be able to work as a group.

Course Schedule:

WEEK 1

September 8: Course Introduction and Making Room for Argument –Chapter 1

September 10: Making Room for Argument –Chapter 1 (continued)

WEEK 2

September 15: Bias: Reading Between the Lines –Chapter 2

Quiz 1 in class

Assignment 1 due on Tuesday September 16

September 17: Bias: Reading Between the Lines –Chapter 2 (continued)

WEEK 3

September 22: Arguments, Weak and Strong –Chapter 3

Quiz 2 in class

Assignment 2 due on Tuesday September 23

September 24: Arguments, Weak and Strong –Chapter 3 (continued)

WEEK 4

September 29: Argument Structure (Dressing Arguments) –Chapter 4

Quiz 3 in class

Assignment 3 due on Tuesday September 30

October 1: Argument Structure (Dressing Arguments) –Chapter 4

WEEK 5

October 6: Argument Diagrams –Chapter 5

Quiz 4 in class

Assignment 4 due on Tuesday October 7

October 8: Argument Diagrams and Assessing Arguments –Chapter 5 and Supplemental

WEEK 6

October 13: Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

Assignment 5 due on Tuesday October 14

October 15: Review

WEEK 7 Definitions:

October 20: Hidden Argument Components –Chapter 6

Quiz 5 in class

Assignment 6 due on Tuesday October 21

October 22: Saying What You Mean –Chapter 7

WEEK 8

October 27: Weighing Evidence –Chapter 8

Quiz 6 in class

Assignment 7 due on Tuesday October 28

October 29: Looking for Facts –Chapter 9

WEEK 9

November 3: More Empirical Schemes and the Reasons of Science –Chapter 10

Quiz 7 in class

Assignment 8 due on Tuesday November 4

November 5: More Empirical Schemes and the Reasons of Science (Continued)

WEEK 10

November 10: The Public Understanding of Science -Supplemental

Quiz 8 in class

Assignment 9 due on Tuesday November 11

November 12: Schemes of Value –Chapter 11

WEEK 11

November 17: Ethotic Schemes –Chapter 12

Quiz 9 in class

Assignment 10 due on Tuesday November 18

November 19: Ethotic Schemes and Fallacies –Chapter 12 and Supplemental

WEEK 12

November 24: Assessing Arguments Revisited -Supplemental

Quiz 10 in class

Assignment 11 due on Tuesday November 25

November 26: Essaying an Argument –Chapter 13

November 28 (make up for thanks giving): Review

Final Exam Date and Time: December 6th 11:30am-1:30pm Room TBA

FINAL EXAM: PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING REGULATION FROM THE UNDERGRADUATE CALENDAR: “Students are advised that the Final Examination schedules are available for Fall Semester by mid-August, for Winter Semester by mid-December, and for Summer Semester by mid-April. Students are required to consult the final examination timetable in order to avoid conflicts in examination times when adding courses. Written approval must be obtained from the dean or director and the instructor-in-charge of the course to register in courses that have conflicting examination times.”

The Final Exam for PHIL*2100-01 will not be re-scheduled or given at an alternative time; students may not ask the professor or the TA to invigilate the exam for them at an alternative time and date.