

University of Guelph
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 2100—Critical Thinking, Winter '13 (0.5 credits)

Instructor: David Brooke Struck
Lectures: Mondays & Wednesdays 4:30–5:20 (MCLN 102), and weekly tutorials
Office hours (MACK 339): Wednesdays 3:30–4:30, and by appointment
Email: dstruck@uoguelph.ca

Teaching assistants:	Diana Karbonowska	dkarbono@uoguelph.ca
	Neil Langshaw	nlangsha@uoguelph.ca
	Suzanne McCullagh	smcculla@uoguelph.ca
	Chris Wood	cwood03@uoguelph.ca

TA office hours and office locations TBA.

Syllabus

Course description:

Critical thinking is about argumentation; it's about the ability to recognize arguments and to assess their merits, as well as to create one's own arguments, skills that are crucial in the practice of rationally supporting one's beliefs and in persuading others. This introductory course in critical thinking will cover the fundamental building blocks of argument construction and criticism, with the goal of improving one's reasoning in textual dialogue (reading, reflection, written response). While these skills can be quite formal, this course emphasizes their application to diverse practical examples, which will allow students to transfer the acquired skills to other important domains such as personal decision-making, academic/intellectual endeavours in any discipline, and sober democratic participation.

The course is lecture-based, but with ample opportunities for questions and discussion. Lectures serve to introduce students to the structure of reasoning. Weekly tutorials serve two functions: (1) to apply skills learned in lecture to practical problems; (2) to explore problems in depth that one encounters frequently in the real world, e.g.: animal rights, the role of science in society, etc. Together, the lectures and tutorials should serve to give students an introduction to reasoning that can be applied in any context. Lectures and tutorials are meant to complement one another. Neither can replace the other.

Objectives:

- To introduce students to the fundamentals of argumentation
- To build up the skills necessary to critically respond to arguments, as well as to present one's own in written form
- To practice applying these skills to diverse practical problems

Required texts:

- Epstein, Richard. *Pocket Guide to Critical Thinking*, 4th ed. (Available at UoG bookstore)
- Online articles (URLs to be posted on CourseLink)

Grading overview:

15%	Weekly tutorial assignments (best 5)
10%	Online quizzes
20%	Midterm exam
25%	Final paper
25%	Final exam
5%	Tutorial participation

Course rules:

- Cell phones are strictly prohibited in lectures and in tutorials.
- The use of laptops in lectures is strongly discouraged, but if you decide to use one anyway, you must sit at the back of the room so as not to disturb others.
- The use of laptops in tutorials is prohibited, barring extenuating circumstances. If there are such circumstances, please contact your TA as soon as possible.
- If you have questions, concerns or comments, your first point of contact is your TA. If the issue persists, then please see the instructor in office hours.

Submission formatting & rules:

- 12-point, Times New Roman font
- 1" margins on all sides
- Double-spaced
- Your name, student number, course and section numbers, and the date of submission at the top of the first page
- Parenthetical citations for any quoted passages or borrowed ideas
- Full bibliographical details for any materials consulted beyond the assigned reading
- Pages stapled together
- Printed double-sided, in order to save paper
- Submissions made in person, unless express permission is given to do otherwise.
- Late submissions not accepted (i.e.: will receive no comments, and a grade of 0), except in reasonable extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances must be brought to the attention of your TA as soon as possible.

Tentative course schedule: (see CourseLink for revisions during the semester)

Jan 7: Introduction and Expectations

Jan 9: Claims, *PGCT* ch. 1

Jan 10/11: Klinkenborg on writing and intentions

Jan 14, 16: Non-Claims, *PGCT* ch. 2

Jan 16: Arguments and Validity/Invalidity, *PGCT* ch. 3 & 4

Jan 17/18: Locke on animal rights

Jan 21: Good/Bad Arguments, *PGCT* ch. 4

Jan 23: Evaluating Premises, *PGCT* ch. 5

Jan 24/25: Singer on animal rights

Jan 28: Principle of Rational Discussion and Repairing Arguments, *PGCT* ch. 6
Jan 30: Counterarguments, *PGCT* ch. 7 & 8
Jan 31/Feb 1: Stackhouse on the Occupy movement

Feb 4, 6: Fallacies, *PGCT* selected sections
Feb 7/8: Practice midterm

Feb 11: Fallacies

Feb 13: **MIDTERM EXAM IN LECTURE**

Feb 14/15: Epps on “gay conversion” and the First Amendment

Feb 18–22: **READING WEEK**

Feb 25: Midterms returned and explained

Feb 27: Compound claims *PGCT* ch. 10

Feb 28/March 1: Major assignment distributed in tutorials, *PGCT* “Writing Well”

March 4: Contradictories of compound claims, *PGCT* ch. 10

March 6: All/None/Some claims, Necessary and Sufficient conditions, *PGCT* ch. 10

March 7/8: John Stewart interview

March 11: Contradictories of All/None/Some claims, *PGCT* ch. 10

March 13: Rhetorical strategies

March 14/15: John Stewart interview

March 18, 20: Rhetorical strategies

March 21/22: John Stewart interview

March 25, 27: Relativism, “Fight, Flight, and the Frontier of the Future”

March 28: John Stewart interview

March 29: **GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY**

April 1: **EASTER MONDAY HOLIDAY**

April 3: Scientism, “Cult of the Scientific”, *PGCT* ch. 12, **FINAL PAPER DUE IN LECTURE**

April 4/5: Review

April 11: **ONLINE QUIZZES CLOSE**

April 12: **FINAL EXAM @ 8:30 AM**

8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts

Winter 2013

E-mail Communication

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their **uoguelph.ca** e-mail account regularly: e-mail 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 designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, ID#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester **Winter 2013** courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, March 8, 2013**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities which, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins 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. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counseling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>