



# PHIL\*2100 Critical Thinking

Winter 2020

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - December 16, 2019

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course is designed to develop clarity of thought and method in the analysis and construction of arguments. By contrast to PHIL\*2110, the emphasis here is upon informal principles of critical thinking and arguments stated in terms of ordinary language. Topics include the nature and methods of arguing, classification, definition and fallacies.

**Pre-Requisites:** 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1050)

### 1.2 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. By "rationally supported" we mean "based on good reasons." 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 *How to Reason*. It provides the basic tools for recognizing, analyzing, and criticizing arguments. The other course text is *How To Think About Weird Things*. The authors of this book focus on various pseudoscientific topics in order to emphasize where people tend to go wrong when they come to believe weird things (e.g. that a flashing light is an alien UFO; that the world was created 8000 years ago, that truth is what you believe is true, that there is nothing special about science as opposed to, say, astrology). The course ranges widely over a number of important philosophical topics: truth, knowledge, bad reasoning. It also introduces important and useful concepts in the psychological study of reasoning as well as basic logical concepts. The course is lecture-based, with plenty of opportunity for students to raise questions and to *engage in argument*. Tutorials, described below, occur once a week, at various times. Lectures and tutorials differ in their goals and purpose: lectures are designed to introduce students to basic concepts in a somewhat decontextualized way; tutorials are designed to give students a chance to critically assess longer pieces from magazines, the internet, academic writing, etc. The ultimate objective of the course is practical: to help the student develop useful tools for reasoning in any context.

## 1.3 Timetable

LEC Mon, Wed  
08:30AM - 09:20AM  
MCKN, Room 117

Check WebAdvisor for your tutorial time.  
Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

## 1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

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# 2 Instructional Support

## 2.1 Instructional Support Team

<b>Instructor:</b>	Don Dedrick
<b>Email:</b>	ddedrick@uoguelph.ca
<b>Telephone:</b>	+1-519-824-4120 x53203
<b>Office:</b>	MCKN 329
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Office hours are Monday 11-12 and Tuesday 12-1. Or by appointment.

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# 3 Learning Resources

## 3.1 Required Resources

### How to Reason (Textbook)

<http://www.advancedreasoningforum.org/how-to-reason>

How to Reason: A practical Guide

Paperback \$19.95 ISBN13: 978-1-938421-38-9

Ebook: \$12.99

Paperback available from bookstore

### How to Think about Weird Things, 7th edition (Textbook)

**Paperback:** 352 pages

**Publisher:** McGraw-Hill Education; 7th edition

**ISBN-10:** 0078038367

**ISBN-13:** 978-0078038365

Paperback available from bookstore.

**Tutorial and other material (Readings)**

Available from courselink website.

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

This is a course about argumentation. It aims to make you better at recognizing, constructing and assessing arguments, a skill useful in any context.

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Distinguish arguments from non-arguments.
  2. Identify different argument types.
  3. Understand and apply basic logical concepts.
  4. Utilize strategies appropriate to different argument types in order to evaluate arguments.
  5. Understand basic issues and concepts in the psychological study of reasoning.
  6. Recognize a range of mistakes in reasoning – the “fallacies.”
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### Week 1: Claims (Jan. 6 & 8)

M. Readings: HR Chapters 1-5.

W. Readings: HR Chapters 1-5.

In tutorial you meet your TA, and discuss a contemporary issue.

### Week 2: Claims & Introduction to arguments (Jan. 13 & 15)

M. Readings: HR Chapters 1-5.

W. Readings: HR Chapter 6 & 7

Tutorial Reading # 1

### Week 3: Arguments (Jan. 20 & 22)

M. Readings: HR Chapters 6 & 7

W. Readings: HR Chapters 6 & 7

The material covered in this week is also dealt with in WT Chapter 3. There you will also find a

discussion of many of the same fallacies of informal reasoning that are discussed in HR.  
Please read this chapter.

Tutorial Reading # 2

**Week 4: Evaluating premises and arguments (Jan. 27 & 29)**

M. Readings: HR Chapters 8 & 9

W. Readings: HR Chapters 8 & 9

Tutorial Reading # 3

**Week 5: Repairing arguments, emotion, and review for midterm. (Feb. 3 & 5)**

M. Readings: HR Chapters 10 & 11

W. Readings: HR Chapters 10 & 11

Tutorial Reading # 4

**Week 6: Reasoning with prescriptive claims and Midterm (Feb. 10 & 12)**

M. Readings: HR Chapter 12

W. **Midterm** in class Wed. Feb 12

**No tutorial. Please read the Introduction and Ch.1 of WT.**

---Winter break / No classes (Feb. 17-21)---

**Week 7: Counterarguments and Analogies (Feb. 24 & 26)**

M. Readings: HR Chapters 13 & 19

W. Readings: HR Chapters 13 & 19

**Midterm returned in tutorial and discussed in tutorial.** No Tutorial topic.

**Week 8: Possibility and Knowledge (March 2 & 4)**

M: WT Chapter 2.

W: WT Chapter 4.

Tutorial Reading #5

**Week 9: Personal Experience. (March 9 & 11)**

M & W: WT Chapter 5.

Tutorial Reading #6

**Week 10: Compound claims and conditional validity. (March 16 & 18) Assignment Due**

M. Readings: HR Chapters 14 & 15

W. Readings: HR Chapters 14 & 15 **Assignment due Wed. March 18. Hand it in at the class.**

Tutorial Reading #7

**Week 11: General Claims and generalization (March 23 & 25)**

M. Readings: HR Chapters 16 & 20

W. Readings: HR Chapters 16 & 20; WT Chapter 3 pp. 39-49.

Tutorial Reading #8

**Week 12: Science and Truth (March 30 & April 1)**

M. Reading: WT Chapter 6

W. Reading: WT Chapter 8

No tutorial Topic: **Return and discussion of Assignment.**

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## 6 Assessments

### 6.1 Assessment Details

**Online quizzes (15%)**

**Date:** Online. Access through Courselink.

See courselink for more details,

**Midterm (20%)**

**Date:** Wed, Feb 12, In class.  
Midterm date is Wed. February 12.

### **Weekly Tutorials (20%)**

**Date:** See WebAdvisor for your tutorial section, time, and place.  
Tutorials meet weekly. Assignments to be handed in weekly, with exceptions noted in the class schedule.  
See Counselink for more details.

### **Assignment (20%)**

**Date:** Wed, Mar 18, To be handed in in class.  
Information about the assignment will be posted on Counselink. It is problem based, not an essay.

Assignment due date is Wed. March 18, handed in in class.

### **Final Exam (25%)**

**Date:** TBA  
During Exam period. Check WebAdvisor for details.

## **7 University Statements**

### **7.1 Email Communication**

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

### **7.2 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. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

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

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### **7.3 Drop Date**

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester.

This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

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

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

## 7.4 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.

## 7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 7.6 Academic Integrity

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 encourages academic integrity. 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.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

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

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## **7.7 Recording of Materials**

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

## **7.8 Resources**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

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