

PHIL 110-[24] – Introduction to Critical Thinking

Department of Philosophy
San Francisco State University
Fall 2014

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:10-3:25
Humanities Building, Room 127

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Office Hours: 12:15-1:15 Mon. & Wed., and by appointment
Office: HUM 391A

ABOUT THE COURSE

This course is designed to improve the critical thinking skills associated with various forms of reasoning. The process of reasoning involves identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing arguments. We will begin by learning to recognize and analyze simple and complex arguments, to distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion, and to identify deductive and inductive logical processes. Once we have mastered these skills, we will learn how to evaluate arguments. We will learn formal methods for evaluating deductive and inductive arguments and develop an understanding of formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. Finally, we will learn to use these reasoning skills to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas, and to construct our own well-supported and well-written arguments. Throughout, we will emphasize the principles of critical thinking as they apply to several different forms of reasoning. Thus, the critical thinking skills learned in this course will enhance students' reasoning in a wide variety of academic disciplines. This course satisfies the Segment 1, Critical Thinking, General Education requirement.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand logic and its relation to language
- To learn basic inductive and deductive processes
- To understand formal and informal fallacies of language and thought
- To distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion
- To develop the ability to analyze, criticize and advocate ideas
- To reason inductively and deductively
- To reach well-supported factual or judgmental conclusions

TEXTS

- Vaughn, Lewis, *The Power of Critical Thinking: Effective Reasoning About Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims*, 4th Ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013). Available at the SFSU Bookstore and various on-line retailers.
- Supplementary text and resources will be accessible via iLearn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams

There will be a midterm and final exam. Both exams will be in-class. The midterm exam will cover information from chapters 1, 2, and 3 which will be reviewed in class from August 25th through October 1st. The midterm will be held during the regular class session on **Wednesday, October 8th**. The final exam will concentrate on chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11, although material from the first half of the course could appear on the final exam. The final exam will be held during the regularly scheduled final exam time for this class which is **Wednesday, December 17th from 1:30-4:00**. Be sure to see me immediately if you are having difficulty with the course material.

Homework Assignments

Homework is an essential part of this course, as it provides an opportunity to practice the skills you are expected to master. Homework assignments are composed of problem sets from the text. Deadlines are listed in the course schedule below. Late homework will not be accepted beyond the seventh (7th) calendar day following the original due date. Late homework will incur a penalty of 3 points for each day that it is tardy.

Pop Quizzes

Progress in the class will be periodically evaluated, in part, through six (6) unannounced pop quizzes. Pop quizzes primarily serve as tools for self-assessment. They will be administered on six (6) separate class sessions; they will be short and cover material covered in readings and lectures. Although six (6) quizzes will be administered, your overall grade from pop quizzes will be comprised of your top (5) five quiz scores. Either your lowest quiz grade (of the total six) or a single missed quiz will be excluded from this graded category. You must be present in class to receive credit for the pop quizzes. If you are absent during a class session in which a pop quiz is administered, your absence must be documented as excused in order to avoid losing credit for the quiz.

Library/Research Assignment

In addition to the regular homework assignments, there will be a library/research assignment which involves the following: (a) utilizing a plan for acquiring and recording information employing basic search strategies to explore core sources, including library resources; (b) articulating and applying rudimentary criteria in evaluating information and sources; and (c) using and citing properly the information in assignments. Complete guidelines will be distributed in class. This assignment is due in two parts; the first part is due **October 1st**, and the second part is due **October 15th**. Late assignments will not be accepted beyond the seventh (7th) calendar day following the original due date. Late assignments will incur a penalty of 3 points for each day that they are tardy.

Attendance and participation

Regular class attendance and participation are essential in learning the materials covered in this course. If you know you will be absent from a class session in advance, please email the instructor at rmmurphy@mail.sfsu.edu to document your absence. All excused absences must be documented. If you cannot notify the instructor prior to being absent, you must notify the instructor by e-mail within seven (7) calendar days to document the absence as an excused absence.

GRADING SCALE

The course grade will be based on 1000 total points, distributed as follows:

Midterm exam	250 points
Final exam	250 points
Homework assignments	350 points
Pop Quizzes	50 points
Library/Research assignment	100 points

Extra Credit

Opportunities for earning extra credit in the course will be announced during the term. If you would like to propose a project for earning extra credit, please discuss your idea with the instructor for approval. All opportunities for earning extra credit will be available to every student in the class.

Make-Up Policy for Exams and Quizzes

Exams and pop quizzes can be made-up only in cases of documented excused absences (described above) and cases pursuant to University policy. Make-up exams and quizzes must be arranged with the instructor and must be completed before Wednesday, December 10, 2014. Make-up exams and quizzes will not be administered during regular class hours; instead, they need to be scheduled during office hours or another time with the instructor. Please speak with the instructor as soon as you know you will need to schedule a make-up exam or quiz.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Accessibility

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email dprc@sfsu.edu.

Religious Holidays

Students who must be absent from class in order to observe religious a holiday must inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that she/he will be absent. Students who meet these conditions will not be penalized for their absence, and will be able to make up the work missed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. A second instance of plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Tutoring Resources

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides free, on-campus writing tutoring for SF State students. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments available. The LAC is open Monday through Friday from 9am-4pm and Friday from 9am-12pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see <http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/index.html>.

The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) also provides free, on-campus tutoring for writing and other subjects. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments available. CARP is open Monday through Thursday from 4pm-8pm and Friday from 11am-2pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see www.sfsu.edu/~carp1 or call (415)-405-0971.

Maintaining a Classroom Learning Environment

Maintaining an environment conducive to classroom learning is necessary for this class to function. Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices while class is in session. Disruptive behavior, including derogatory or intentionally disrespectful language, will not be tolerated. Classroom participants who are asked to modify their behavior and fail to comply will be asked to leave the class.

Content of Classroom Examples

Many examples and discussions in this course will reference topics and subjects that can be controversial. This content is often helpful in illustrating argument structures. The use of controversial content is for educational purposes only and should not be construed as opinion of the instructor or the University.

Communication with the Instructor

Any questions or concerns related to this course should be brought to the attention of the instructor immediately. Meeting during office hours and/or communication via email are the best means of communicating. I usually respond to e-mail communication within 48 hours. In addition to the office hours listed above, you are encouraged to contact the instructor if you would prefer to meet at another time. I am happy to meet by appointment.

The course website on iLearn *and* SFSU e-mail will be the primary modes of communication about course matters outside of class. If you have not already acquired the habit of using iLearn, please explore the website by logging in at <https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php>

Any grades appearing on the iLearn page for this course are for informative purposes only; they are not official. You may ask about your official grade at any point in the semester by contacting the instructor.

I strive to stick to the schedule so that you can plan your semester accordingly. Still, this syllabus is subject to change. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes, and the best way to do so is to regularly check the course page on iLearn.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

PCT = *The Power of Critical Thinking*

iLearn = iLearn

Section I: Recognizing Arguments

Defining arguments; recognizing premise and conclusion indicators; distinguishing arguments from explanations, exhortations, and commands; distinguishing matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion; understanding simple and complex arguments; identifying unstated premises and conclusions; recognizing enthymemes.

Week 1

Mon. 8/25-- Course Introduction, TED talk, Overview of Syllabus and Course Schedule

Wed. 8/27-- Chapter 1, Claims and Reasons, Reasons and Arguments

Reading: PCT (3-22)

Homework: PCT 1.1 (8,9,11,13,14) pg. 22-23

Week 2

Mon. 9/1—Labor Day (No Class)

Wed. 9/3—Arguments, Conclusions & Premises

Reading Review: PCT (3-22)

Homework: PCT 1.2 (1-10) pg. 24-24 and PCT 1.3 (1-11) pg. 24

Week 3

Mon. 9/8—Chapter 2, Obstacles to Critical Thinking

Reading: PCT (32-51)

Homework: PCT 2.1 (1-21) pg. 51-52

Wed. 9/10—Chapter 3, Making Sense of Arguments

Reading: PCT, Argument Basics (62-70)

Homework: PCT 3.1 (1-13) pg. 70

Section II: Analyzing and Evaluating Arguments and Reasoning Ethically

Putting simple and complex arguments into standard form; diagramming arguments; strategies of argument analysis; analyzing complex arguments; understanding basic inductive and deductive logical processes. Demonstrating ethical conduct in reasoning, including accurately stating and not misrepresenting the strength of logical connections, not misleading others regarding the truth status of empirical claims, providing full citation or attribution of other people's views, adhering to the "principle of generosity" in reporting or interpreting other people's views.

Week 4

Mon. 9/15—Judging Arguments

Reading: PCT (70-75)

Reading Review: PCT (62-70)

Homework: PCT 3.2 (1-10) pg. 75-76

Wed. 9/17—Review and Discuss Judging Arguments

Reading Review: PCT (62-75)

Homework: PCT 3.3 (1-23) pg. 77

Week 5

Mon. 9/22—Finding the Missing Parts of an Argument

Reading: PCT (78-83)

Homework: PCT 3.4 part I (1-5) pg. 83, part II (1-6) pg. 84

Wed. 9/24—Argument Patterns

Reading: PCT (84-89)

Homework: PCT 3.5 (1-12) pg. 89-90

Week 6

Mon. 9/29—Argument Patterns, Continued

Reading Review: PCT (84-89)

Homework: PCT 3.6 (1-5) and 3.7 (2-10) pg. 91

Wed. 10/1—Library Research, Part I: Research Strategies & Reasoning Ethically

Reading & Homework: TBA

Week 7

Mon. 10/6-- Midterm Exam Review Session

Homework: Bring at least two questions (typed or written) to class

Wed. 10/8—**Midterm Exam**

Section III: Evaluating Deductive Arguments: Truth-Functional Logic

Types of truth-functional arguments; methods for identifying formal fallacies in truth-functional arguments, including truth tables, valid and invalid argument forms, and inference and equivalence rules to establish validity; applying methods to real-life truth-functional arguments.

Week 8

Mon. 10/13— Chapter 6, Deductive Reasoning: Propositional Logic

Connectives and Truth Values

Reading: PCT (209-220)

Homework: PCT 6.1 (1-8) pg. 220-221

Wed. 10/15—Library Research, Part II: Reasoning Ethically & Standards of Citation

Reading & Homework: TBA

Week 9

Mon. 10/20—Connectives and Truth Values, Continued

Reading Review: PCT (209-220)

Homework: PCT 6.2 (1-16) pg. 221, 6.3 (1-5) pg. 221-222, 6.4 (1-5) pg. 222

Wed. 10/22-- Connectives and Truth Values, Continued

Reading Review: PCT (209-220)

Homework: PCT 6.5 (1-10), 6.6 (1-10) pg. 222-223

Week 10

Mon. 10/27—Truth Tables

Reading: PCT (223-230)

Homework: 6.8 PCT (1-7) pg. 234

Wed. 10/29—Truth Tables, Continued

Reading Review: PCT (223-234)

Homework: PCT 6.8 (10-15) and 6.9 (1-5) pg. 234-236

Section IV: Evaluating Deductive Arguments: Categorical Reasoning

Types of categorical arguments; methods for identifying formal fallacies in categorical reasoning, including Venn diagrams; applying methods to real-life categorical reasoning.

Week 11

Mon. 11/3—Chapter 7, Deductive Reasoning: Categorical Logic

Reading: PCT (243-254)

Homework: PCT 7.1 (1-6) pg. 247 and PCT 7.2 (1-10) pg. 255

Wed. 11/5— Diagramming Categorical Statements

Reading: PCT (256-268)

Homework: PCT 7.4 (1-12) pg. 260

Section V: Evaluating Inductive Arguments: Enumerative, Analogical, and Causal Arguments

Basic patterns of causal reasoning; cause as necessary and sufficient conditions; contributing factors as causes; causal explanations; testing causal claims; experimental trials; methods for identifying formal fallacies in causal arguments; applying methods to real-life causal reasoning. Types of analogical arguments; methods for identifying formal fallacies in analogical arguments; applying methods to real-life analogical reasoning.

Week 12

Mon. 11/10— Chapter 8, Inductive Reasoning

Enumerative Induction and Analogies

Reading: PCT (276-289, 294-300)

Homework: PCT 8.1 (1,4, and 5) pg. 290 and 8.6 (1-4 and 4-10, *EC for #5*) pg. 300-301

Wed. 11/12— Causal Arguments, Necessary and Sufficient Causes

Reading: PCT (303-319) Skim pages 308,309,311

Homework: PCT 8.8 (1-7) Pg. 319-320

Week 13

Mon. 11/17— Chapter 11, Critical Thinking in Morality and the Law

Moral Arguments, Premises, and Theories

Reading: PCT (442-454)

Homework: PCT 11.2 (1-10) and 11.3 (1-5) Pg. 466

Wed. 11/19—Reasoning Ethically: Moral Theories, Continued

Reading: O’Neill, A Simplified Account of Kant’s Ethics (on iLearn)

Homework: PCT 11.6 (1-4) and “Telling Lies and Breaking Promises” (on iLearn)

Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)

Section VI: Evaluating Arguments: Informal Fallacies

Methods for identifying common informal fallacies of thought and language, including psychological fallacies and fallacies of relevance, inadequate evidence, illegitimate assumption, criticism and response, and defense.

Week 14

Mon. 12/1-- Chapter 5, Informal Fallacies

*See the inside cover of PCT for a “Cheat Sheet” on common fallacies

Irrelevant Premises

Reading: Fallacies: PCT(169-186)

Homework: None due today, long homework due 12/8

Wed. 12/3-- Informal Fallacies, Continued

Unacceptable Premises

Reading: PCT (186-194)

Homework: None due today, long homework due 12/8

Week 15

Mon. 12/8—Informal Fallacies, Continued

Persuaders: Rhetorical Moves

Reading: PCT (194-197)

Homework: PCT 5.2 (1-26) pg. 199-201

Wed. 12/10—Final Exam Review Session

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 17th from 1:30-4:00