PHILOSOPHY 1290 (A02) – CRITICAL THINKING
COURSE SYLLABUS
1130-1245 T-Th
Human Ecology 206

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Office Hours: 1000-1115 MTWThF

Course Description:
The advent of modern communication and computing technologies has vastly increased the quantity of information available to
the citizen, the accessibility to that information, to the means of distributing it, and to the speed with which it is available. While
this is a positive development in many respects it has not led to a decrease in epistemic dependence and, to some degree, has
contributed to the erosion of individual reading comprehension and critical reasoning skills. This is a matter of concern for
epistemic autonomy, the ability to reason critically for oneself, stands at the heart of both enlightenment values and the pursuit of
truth. The focus of this course will be upon the fundamentals of argumentation that are necessary to exercise epistemic autonomy.
We will devote our attention to argument construction, comprehension and evaluation; skills that the student in any academic or
professional discipline will find essential.

Required Text:

Student Evaluation:
Assignments 40%
In-Class Test 20%
Final Exam 40%

Important Note: Final course grades are subject to the approval of the Faculty of Arts and may be subject to change in order to fall within the
parameters set by this Faculty, or in order to meet any new policies implemented by the Faculty.

Evaluation Explanations:
Assignments: There will be two take-home assignments due throughout the term. Each assignment will be equally
weighted (20% of the final course grade). The assignments will consist of short answer questions and exercises
calculated to assess the student’s understanding of the concepts and skills studied in that section of the course.
Assignment 1 will consist of questions related to Chapters 1 and 2 of the text and the class lectures on essay
structure. Assignment 2 will consist of questions related to Chapters 6 and 7 of the text.

In-Class Test: There will be one closed book in-class test on Thursday October 24 worth 20% of the final course
grade. The test will be short answer and will consist of questions pertaining to Chapters 3, 4, 5 and the first two
pages of Chapter 6 of the text.

Final Exam: There will be a 2-hour closed book final exam during the regularly scheduled exam period. The final
exam will consist of short answer questions and exercises primarily covering the last half of the course.

Late Policy: Overdue work will only be accepted with a documented medical excuse or on the basis of a serious
personal crisis. Note that failing to manage one’s time is not a ‘serious personal crisis.’

Academic Dishonesty: Students should acquaint themselves with the University’s policy on plagiarism, cheating and
examination impersonation (see the University of Manitoba Academic Regulations, Undergraduate Calendar, 2019-
20). Please note that the Philosophy Department possesses a ‘no tolerance’ policy with regard to academic
dishonesty.

Approximate Grade Scale:
A+  93%+
A   87-92%
B+  80-86%
B   74-79%
C+  68-73%
C   62-67%
D   55-61%
F   <55%
APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE

Sep 5 Course Introduction & Expectations

Identifying Arguments
Sep 10 Read Chapter 1
Sep 12 Cont c.1, Premises & Conclusions, Read Chapter 2

Comprehending Arguments
Sep 17 Continue c.2, Assignment 1 Posted to UM Learn on Sep 17
Sep 19 Continue c.2
Sep 24 Finish c.2, Essay Structure, Handout Essay Posted to UM Learn
Sep 26 Essay Structure, continued
Jan 22 Essay Structure
Oct 1 Finish essay structure, Language Issues, Read Chapter 3
Oct 3 Continue c.3
Oct 8 Continue c.3, Strong/Weak Arguments, Read Chapters 4
Oct 10 Assignment 1 Due in class on Oct 10, Review Answers

Argument Evaluation
Oct 15 Premise Acceptability/Unacceptability, Read Chapter 5
Oct 17 Continue c.5, Relevance/Irrelevance, Read Chapter 6
Oct 22 Continue c.6
Oct 24 In-Class Test, Finish c.6
Oct 29 Introduction to Validity (reread Chapter 4), Deductive Validity, Read Chapter 7
(178-187 and 204-210)
Oct 31 Continue c.7
Nov 5 Finish c.7
Nov 7 Tests Returned, Review Answers; Inductive Generalizations, Read Chapter 9
(255-265)

Nov 11 Remembrance Day, no classes
Nov 12-15 Fall Term Break, no classes
Nov 18 Voluntary Withdrawal Date

Nov 19 Finish c.9, Causal Inductive Arguments, Chapter 10 (286-293 and 298-303);
Assignment 2 Posted to UM Learn on Nov 19
Nov 21 Causal Inductive Validity & IBE Arguments, c.10 continued
Nov 26 Continue IBE arguments
Nov 28 Continue IBE arguments, Inductive Analogy, Read Chapter 11 (333-345)
Dec 3 Assignment 2 Due in class Dec 3, Review Answers
Dec 5 Tips for the Final Exam

Dec 9-20 Final Exam Period