Course Outline
PHIL 1290 A02 19S
Critical Thinking
MTWThF 1:30 – 3:30
Room: 308 Tier
Instructor: Patrick Walsh
Office: Room 440A University College
Office Hours: By appointment.
Phone: 204-474-9076
E-mail: Patrick.Walsh@umanitoba.ca.

Brief Introduction:
This is a course that helps students to think clearly and critically, and to present, defend, and evaluate arguments. Practically speaking, this course is about how to identify and evaluate arguments. The course will begin by focusing on what is of central importance for logicians – arguments. Argumentation is about the reasons we have in support of the beliefs we have. So, we need to learn how to identify arguments. This may seem like a simple task, and it usually is, but it can be tricky at times especially if the language is not clear. Once we have dealt with argument identification we will learn how logicians discern good from bad reasoning. This is an important task inasmuch as we try to direct our lives by making decisions based on good reasons.

A large part of this course will involve learning the formalism for which logic is often distinguished. Students often liken the formal logic material to mathematics. Don’t be alarmed by this, we will be working into our formalism from ordinary language. Furthermore, after we master the formalism we must always be prepared to re-apply to ordinary language. To this end, throughout the course we will be applying our critical skills to the constructive task of presenting good arguments.

Required Text:

** You cannot expect to do well in this course if you do not have access to a copy of this text. **

Course Reading:
In general, we will be following the presentation of our course text. I have a scheduled outline of the material we’ll be discussing. This is only a tentative outline because the depth of our discussion on any given problem will be influenced by our collective interest in the problem. I’ll ensure that we speak about the “basics” of each problem, but your class participation will determine how thoroughly we engage a particular topic.
Tentative Reading Timetable:
(Please note that although every effort will be made to cover the material as it is listed below during class/lecture, this may not always be possible due to time constraints or unforeseen schedule changes.)

June 3 - 7: Course introduction; Text Chapters 1-4
June 11 - 14: Text Chapters 5-6
June 18 - 21: Text Chapters 7-9
June 25: Course Review / Exam Prep.

Evaluation:
The evaluation for this course will involve 4 pieces of work. Each piece is defined briefly below. Further elaboration will follow when we deal specifically with each item.

1. In-class Tests. There will be 3 in-class tests scheduled. They will be closed book tests. These pieces of work will consist of some multiple choice questions and some short answer questions. The first in-class test will cover the material from Chapters 1-4 of our course text. The second in-class test will focus on the material from Chapters 5 & 6 of our course text. The third in-class test will cover material from Chapters 7-9 of our course text. Each test will be worth 20% of your final mark for the course. However, if you do poorly on a test, I will allow you to have the value of that test decreased to 10%, and your remaining two tests will be valued at 25% each. This offer applies to only one test. You must speak to me directly if you want to take advantage of this offer.

2. Final exam. There will be a final exam scheduled for this course. This exam will be worth 40% of your final mark for this course. It will be cumulative, in that it will cover all material from the whole course (i.e. Chapters 1-9). It will be two hours long. It will consist entirely of multiple choice questions. Our exam is currently scheduled for 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. on Thursday June 27, in 306 Tier.

Summary Schedule of Course Work:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Tentative Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test #1</td>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test #2</td>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test #3</td>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Grades
In this course (though not necessarily in any other course in the Department of Philosophy) the following equivalence between letter grades and percentages is used:

A+ - 93-100  A - 85-93  B+ - 80-85  B – 70-80
C+ - 65-70   C - 55-65  D - 45-55  F - 0-45

The last date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is Wednesday, June 19, 2019.
**Additional Points**

Students will be responsible for all reading, lecture, and discussion material, so attendance is crucial. I routinely use PowerPoint. These presentations will be available on our UMLearn course website. They are intended as guides to our class discussion and to facilitate your note-taking. As well, the readings must be completed for the assigned date to maximize the effect of our discussion.

Discussion is an important part of any philosophy class. Presenting your ideas, either as a response to a question or as a question, gives you an opportunity to organize and develop your thoughts. Although no marks are directly awarded for class participation, one of the goals of this course is to enhance your skills of analytic reasoning and debate. This happens in the classroom. These skills will assist you in tackling the written coursework. As an end state, these skills should enable you to think more clearly and debate more effectively on intellectual issues in general. That is, issues where a conclusion can’t be reached by simply appealing to some fact of the matter.

Make-up tests will not normally be granted except on compassionate grounds (medical excuse, death in the family, etc.) Requests for a make-up test must be made directly to me, prior to the date in question, together with appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor’s note).

**University of Manitoba Policies and Resources**

The University of Manitoba (UM) provides resources and has established policies to assist students during their term of study. The university’s policy is set out in a document called *Responsibilities of Academic Staff with Regard to Students*. (Called ROASS for short.) You should take some time to review this document.

On our UMLearn course site there is a document called “ROASS Schedule A” that provides a thorough synopsis of important information about various UM policies and resources. It also contains URLs to the various resource agencies. If you determine that you require the assistance of one of these agencies, then you should refer to this document to find their contact information.

As you review this document, note of the information is organized into four sections:

**Section (a).** The UM provides a number of academic supports to students, such as the Academic Learning Centre and UM Libraries. If you require assistance with essay writing, your test taking strategies, or if you require assistance with navigating the UM library system these are the agencies to contact.

**Section (b).** If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments due to a physical or mental condition or illness, you should discuss these issues with your instructor and/or one of the Student Affairs offices listed in this section. This section provides contact information for services such as Student Counselling Centre, Student Accessibility Services, and University Health Services.
In fact, student accessibility Services has asked me to make the following announcement pertaining to this course.

“Student Accessibility Services requires volunteer note-takers for this class. If you would like to volunteer, and receive recognition on your Co-Curricular Record (CCR) for your time, please login to JUMP and click on the Student Accessibility Services link on the top left-hand side of the page (in the Quick Links section). Volunteering is now easier than ever, you can upload notes directly to JUMP with the SAS scheduler. Thank you.”

Section (c). All students are required to respect copyright as per Canada’s Copyright Act. Staff and students play a key role in the University’s copyright compliance as we balance user rights for educational purposes with the rights of content creators from around the world. The Copyright Office provides copyright resources and support for all members of the University of Manitoba community.

Section (d). As a student of the University of Manitoba you have rights and responsibilities. It is important for you to know what you can expect from the University as a student and to understand what the University expects from you. Become familiar with the policies and procedures of the University and the regulations that are specific to your faculty, college or school. These policies are important to you. They cover areas such as academic dishonesty, student access to final exam scripts, student discipline, grade appeals, student advocacy, maintaining a respectful work and learning environment, sexual assault reporting, and intellectual property.

I would like to elaborate a bit on the topic of academic dishonesty, as it is one of the policies that most directly impacts our work in this course. Academic dishonesty ordinarily involves plagiarism, cheating and exam impersonation. Plagiarism is when you present somebody else’s work as your own.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a written assignment, test, or examination is F on the paper and F for the course. For the most serious acts, such as the purchase of an essay or cheating on a test or examination, the penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism. Please also see section 7 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements in your Undergraduate Calendar for information concerning academic dishonesty. However, if you are ever uncertain about the academic honesty of anything you are doing for the course, please talk to me. A little conversation can save a lot of pain and complication for both of us.