

**Course Outline**  
**PHIL 1290 – W-A05 21R**  
**Critical Thinking**

**Class time:** Webex: MWF 11:30 – 12:20 p.m. CST

Instructor: Patrick Walsh

Office Hours: Webex: Mondays 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. CST, and by appointment.

E-mail: [Patrick.Walsh@umanitoba.ca](mailto: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.

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.

**Online delivery:** This course will be delivered synchronously, through WebEx. The lectures will be scheduled at the UM Learn website, and you can access them through the site. I will be using a PowerPoint presentation, and sharing my screen. The presentations will be available before the lectures on the course's site and will remain there, so you do not need to write down everything that appears on screen during lectures.

**Required Text:**

Andrew Lawless. **Critical Thinking.** (OUP: 2014) ISBN-13: 978-0-19-544340-0

\*\* 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 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.)*

Jan. 18: Course Introduction.

Jan. 20 – Feb. 10: Text Chapters 1- 4.

#### **Feb. 12: In-class Test #1**

Feb. 15-19: reading week – no classes.

Feb. 22 – Mar. 17: Text Chapters 4- 6.

Feb. 22: Assignment released.

#### **Mar. 19: In-class Test #2**

#### **Mar. 22: Assignment due.**

Mar. 22 – Apr. 12: Text Chapters 7- 9.

#### **Apr. 14: In-class Test #3**

Apr. 16: Course Review/Exam Prep.

April Exam Period: Final Exam.

### **Evaluation:**

The evaluation for this course will involve the following 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. These tests will be completed during the class on the date noted. Each test will be worth **20%** of your final mark for this course. I will indicate beforehand, in class, the material to be covered on each test. At this time, I will also indicate the format of the test. Although you will have the opportunity to write three tests, only two of them will count towards your mark in this course. You can choose which two scores will count towards your final mark. However, by default, I will assume your two highest scores will be selected.

**2. Assignment.** There will be an assignment in this course. The assignment will be comprised of short answer questions particular to the material being covered. The assignment is worth **20%** of your final mark for this course. The assignment questions will be handed out in class approximately one month prior to the due date.

**3. 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. It will be two hours long. It will consist entirely of multiple choice questions.

**As this course is operating in the Remote Learning format, the tests and the exam will be online. These are time-limited tests that you will write during our class time on the date specified. The specific time and date for our final exam will be set later in the term. You will access the tests and the exam through the quiz function in our UMLearn course shell. I will be posting the assignment on the date indicated. You will be submitting your assignment by uploading it through the Assignment Submission Folder. Please familiarize yourself with these UMLearn functions prior to the date of the first test.**

### Summary Schedule of Course Work:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Tentative Date</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
In-Class Test	Feb. 12, Mar. 19, Apr. 14	20% each – best 2 of 3
Assignment	Mar. 22	20%
<u>Final Exam</u>	April exam period	<u>40%</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Grade

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 March 31, 2020.**

### 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 shell. In our current Remote Learning format, you can use the PowerPoint notes as a guide to track our position in the course. Following them and doing the readings covered in the notes prior to the class when the notes are discussed will be beneficial. In any case, they are intended as guides to our class discussion and to facilitate your note-taking.

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 on an issue. This will work somewhat differently in our Remote Learning format. I'm still familiarizing myself with this format, but I anticipate, speaking to the notes and then pausing, much like in a physical class, for questions. To facilitate discussion, and to ensure that I ultimately address questions that I may not get to during class, I have set up Discussion Forums in our UMLearn course shell. This is where you can post questions, or discuss course material with classmates. I can respond to questions there that the rest of the class can also view. likelihood

Requests for 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. The sooner you can speak to me, the more options I will have to arrange an alternative for you.

### 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.

**Student Accessibility Services requires volunteer note-takers for this class. If you would like to volunteer, and receive a reference letter for your time, please login to JUMP and click on the Student Accessibility Services link on the right hand side of the page. Volunteering is now easier than ever, you can upload notes directly to JUMP with the SAS scheduler.**

**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 affects our work in this course. Academic dishonesty ordinarily involves plagiarism, cheating and exam impersonation. 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.