

PHILOSOPHY 1290 (A01) – CRITICAL THINKING
COURSE SYLLABUS
1030-1120 MWF
237 UC

Instructor: Dave Hampton
SPC 233

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Office Hours: 1230-1330 MW

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:

Browne, N., and Keeley, S., *Asking the Right Questions, A Guide to Critical Thinking* 10th Ed (Pearson, 2012)

Student Evaluation:

Assignments	50%
Mid-Term Examination	20%
Final Examination	30%

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 ten take-home assignments due throughout the term and one bonus assignment (which, if completed, will replace the student's lowest scored assignment assuming that the grade on the bonus assignment is higher). Each assignment will be equally weighted (5% of the final course grade). The assignments will consist of exercises calculated to assess the student's understanding of the concepts and skills studied in that section of the course.

Examinations: The mid-term examination will be held in class on February 13th. It will require the student to represent an argument and may consist of short answer questions as well. Students will be responsible for all material up to the Mid-term for this examination. The final examination will be scheduled in the end-of-term exam period. It will be 2 hours long. The final examination will consist of short answer questions and argument evaluation exercises; students will be responsible for all course material.

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 relevant sections of the University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar, 2010-11).

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

Jan 4 Jan 6, 9	Course Introduction & Expectations, Assignment 1 Distributed on Jan 4 Identifying Arguments , Read Chapters 1 & 2
Jan 11 Jan 13	Assignment 1 Due, Assignment 2 Distributed on Jan 9 Comprehending Arguments: Premises and Conclusions , Read Chapter 3
Jan 16 Jan 18, 20	Assignment 2 Due Comprehending Arguments: Essay Structure , no reading, Assignment 3 Distributed on Jan 18
Jan 23 Jan 25, 27	Assignment 3 Due Continue with Essay Structure, no additional reading, Assignment 4 Distributed on Jan 25
Jan 30 Feb 1, 3	Assignment 4 Due Comprehending Arguments: Ambiguity , Read Chapter 4, Assignment 5 Distributed on Feb 1
Feb 6 Feb 8 Feb 10	Assignment 5 Due Argument Evaluation: Introduction , no reading Mid-Term Exam Preparation
Feb 13 Feb 15 Feb 17 Feb 20-24	Mid-Term Exam Go over Mid-Term Exam Premise Acceptability , Read Chapter 7, Assignment 6 Distributed on Feb 17 Mid-Term Break, no classes
Feb 27 Feb 29, Mar 2	Assignment 6 Due Premise Unacceptability , Read Chapter 11, Assignment 7 Distributed on Feb 29
Mar 5 Mar 7, 9	Assignment 7 Due Deductive Validity , Read Chapter 6, Assignment 8 Distributed on Mar 7
Mar 12 Mar 14, 16	Assignment 8 Due Inductive Validity , Read Chapter 8, Assignment 9 Distributed on Mar 14
Mar 19 Mar 21, 23	Assignment 9 Due Strong & Weak Arguments , Assignment 10 Distributed on Mar 21
Mar 26 Mar 28, 30	Assignment 10 Due Read Chapter 12, Bonus Assignment 11 Distributed on Mar 28
Apr 2 Apr 4	Assignment 11 Due Final Exam Preparation