

PHILOSOPHY 201 (A01): Critical Thinking
CRN: 12743
Course Outline
Fall 2026

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Text: No text to buy for this course. Class notes will be provided online.

Course Objectives:

Arguments serve as a way to persuade others that something is true. Arguments allow us to increase our knowledge of the world in the absence of direct observation. We see arguments every day: in the newspaper, in advertising, in lectures, in common conversation. Argumentation plays such a large role in our lives that we would be remiss if we did not take the time to learn how to evaluate them effectively. In this class we will investigate various techniques that can be applied to determine the worth of arguments. There is a treatment of elementary principles of deductive and inductive logic as well as informal fallacies. An understanding of the basics of logic will help the student write better essays, read more efficiently and think critically. This course will also be of benefit to anyone who plans to write the LSAT or GRE exam.

Lectures, Assignments, Tests and Help Sessions:

Phil 201 will be run as an asynchronous course. That is, there is no requirement to be online at any one given time. Work can be completed when convenient for you but there will be specific due dates for assignments and tests.

All lectures will be pre-recorded and available to view at any time on BrightSpaces.

Quizzes will be completed online. They are untimed but must be submitted before the due date on the syllabus. Late submissions will not be graded.

Tests will be completed online. You may write the test at any time on the test dates. Once you start, the test will close after 90 minutes.

Live help sessions will be run at various times through the week. These sessions are not mandatory.

Grading:

Best 10 of 13 quizzes @ 2.5% each	=	25%
3 Tests @ 20% each (Sept 30 - Oct 3, Oct 24 – 26, Nov 14 - 17)	=	60%
1 Test @ 15% (Dec 4 - 7)	=	15%
Drop-In Session Participation (bonus)	=	1%
No Final Exam		

The final grade will be recorded as a percentage.

A+ = 90 – 100; A = 85 – 89; A- = 80 – 84; B+ = 77 – 79; B = 73 – 76; B- = 70 – 72;
C+ = 65 – 69; C = 60 – 64; D = 50 – 59; F = 0 – 49.

Quizzes:

Quizzes will be completed online through BrightSpaces. I will spend some time during the first week of class explaining how to write the quizzes online. If you have any questions, please email me. The quizzes may be written any time **before 11:59 pm (Victoria time)** on the day it is due. For exact due dates see the *Syllabus* below. If you miss the quiz, you will be able to view the answers online after the due date as long as you have opened the quiz before the due time. Please note that **it will be very difficult to do well in this course if you do not attempt most of the quizzes**. Late quizzes will not be graded.

Course Withdrawal Deadlines:

- Sept 22nd: Withdrawal without reduction of tuition fees
- Oct 13th: Withdrawal with 50% reduction of tuition fees
- Oct 30th: Last day for withdrawal (no fees returned)

Course Material on BrightSpace:

I will put my lecture overheads, quizzes, practice tests, solutions to selected homework problems, and any handouts given in class on BrightSpace. I will also use our class BrightSpace site to post grades.

When you need help:

There are a number of different ways to receive assistance with any problems that you have with the material:

- Practice Questions on BrightSpace** – Practice quizzes with detailed explanations for the answers are available on our BrightSpace site.
- Drop-in Help hours on Zoom and in-person** – Time and dates will be posted on BrightSpace. The instructor and the course Academic Coordinator will be available to discuss any problems that you have with the course material. These will be group meetings. *A bonus 1% will be added to your grade if you participate in one of these sessions (either in-person or on-line).*
- Office hours online and in-person** – Location CLE B311. Times and dates will be posted on BrightSpace. These will be small group or individual meetings with the instructor.

Please feel free to join me during the drop-in hours to discuss any difficulties with the course material or homework problems. Most of the difficulties that students have with logic can be cleared up quite easily. I encourage you to work and study with your classmates; they can be a great resource. However, please see below for information about what kinds of sharing information count as academic misconduct. If you have any questions, please ask me in advance. If you cannot attend the scheduled office hours, then please email me and we will make other arrangements.

When you miss a test or assignment:

Since I will be counting only the top 10 of 13 quiz grades, there is no need to contact me unless your illness causes you to miss more than three quizzes. If you need to miss a quiz, be sure to open the quiz before the due date if you'd like to see the answers afterwards.

If you miss a test, email me as soon as possible. You will have an opportunity to make up the missed material.

Academic Misconduct:

See the section *Policy on Academic Integrity* in the UVic calendar for information on cheating and its consequences.

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcltemType=policies.

In particular, note that:

“Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- copying the answers or other work of another person
- sharing information or answers when doing take-home assignments, tests or examinations except where the instructor has authorized collaborative work
- having in an examination or test any materials or equipment other than those authorized by the examiners
- accessing unauthorized information when doing take-home assignments, tests or examinations
- impersonating a student on an examination or test, or being assigned the results of such impersonation
- accessing or attempting to access examinations or tests before it is permitted to do so

Students found communicating with one another in any way or having unauthorized books, papers, notes or electronic devices in their possession during a test or examination will be considered to be in violation of this policy.

Aiding Others to Cheat

It is a violation to help others or attempt to help others to engage in any of the conduct described above.”

Cheating will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the test or assignment or failure in the course.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Technology

The use of generative AI technologies, like ChatGPT, is NOT allowed on quizzes and tests in this course. Such use will be considered Academic Dishonesty and will result in

disciplinary action. You may use generative AI technologies for non-testing activities such as creating summary notes, generating practice questions etc.

Intellectual property of materials on the LMS website

Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the LMS website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity.

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/index.php>

Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

Territory Acknowledgement

The University of Victoria acknowledges with respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Equity

UVic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environments for all its members. Information about UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN>

If you have any particular concerns about equity in our course, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Religious Accommodation

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVIC Calendar at

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/r1q0gofdN?bc=true&bcCurrent=10%20-%20Accommodation%20of%20Religious%20Observance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies>

Student Conduct: This course is governed by UVic's policies on student behaviour and adheres to its commitment to [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#). All members of our class—myself, our T.A., and all students—have the right to experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment. Professionalism is expected from all students enrolled in courses in the Tri-Faculty; these [standards for professional behaviour](#) apply to interactions both in person and online. Please see also information on University expectations regarding [Student Conduct](#) and policies regarding [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#).

Other Resources

Student Resources

- a. [UVic Learn Anywhere](#). UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students. It offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.

- b. [Library resources](#). Information for students wishing to use the UVic library.
- c. Indigenous [student services](#)
- d. [Centre for Academic Communication](#)
- e. [Learning Strategist Program](#)
- f. [Academic Concession Regulations](#)
- g. [Academic Concessions and Accommodations](#)
- h. Academic accommodation & access for students with disabilities – [Policy AC1205](#)
- i. [Student wellness](#) resources.
- j. [Ombudsperson](#). A resource to help resolve disputes or complaints.
- k. Other [student groups and resources](#).

University Statements and Policies

- a. University Calendar – [“Information for all students”](#)
- b. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- c. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- d. [Student Conduct and Non-Academic Student Misconduct](#)
- e. [Accessibility](#)
- f. [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- g. [Equity and Human Rights](#)
- h. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- i. Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)

What is the sense of studying philosophy if all that it does for you is enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life?

– Ludwig Wittgenstein

Syllabus:

Unit 1: Arguments

Sept 9 th – 11 th	Arguments, Premises, and Conclusion	
Sept 14 th – 18 th	Deductive, Inductive, Validity, Soundness, Counter Example Method	Quiz 1 Due Sept 15th
Sept 21 st – 25 th	Implicit Premises, Argument Patterns, Diagramming Arguments	Quiz 2 Due Sept 21st
Sept 28 th – 29 th	Review	Quiz 3 Due Sept 28th
Sept 30 th – Oct 3 rd TEST #1		

Unit 2: Deductive Arguments

Oct 5 th – 9 th	Propositional Translations	Quiz 4 Due Oct 8th
Oct 13 th – 16 th	Truth Tables	Quiz 5 Due Oct 15th
Oct 19 th – 23 rd	Short Truth Tables/Review	Quiz 6 Due Oct 22nd
Oct 24 th – 26 th	TEST #2	

Unit 3: Inductive Arguments

Oct 27 th – 30 th	Enumerative Induction	Quiz 7 Due Oct 30th
Nov 2 nd – 6 th	Args by Analogy, Causal Args	Quiz 8 Due Nov 5th
Nov 9 th – 11 th	READING BREAK	
Nov 12 th – 13 th	Explanations and Hypotheses, Review	Quiz 9 Due Nov 12th
Nov 14 th – 17 th	TEST #3	

Unit 4: Fallacies and Biases

Nov 18 th – 20 th	Fallacies of Irrelevant Premises	Quiz 10 Due Nov 20th
Nov 23 rd – 27 th	Fallacies of Unacceptable Premises	Quiz 11 Due Nov 24th
		Quiz 12 Due Nov 27th
Nov 30 th – Dec 3 rd	Biases, Review	Quiz 13 Due Dec 2nd
Dec 4 th – 7 th	TEST #4	

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change.