

PHIL 201 – CRITICAL THINKING

Fall 2017, University of Victoria

Department of Philosophy

Course website: available on <http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>

Instructor and Contact Information

Dr. Clifford Roberts (cliffordroberts@uvic.ca)

Office hours: Wed 2:15 – 3:00 (or by appt.)

Office: CLE B318

Meeting Times & Place

Tue–Wed–Fri 10:30-11:20

Human & Social Development

Building A240

Course Description

Every day each of us is bombarded by attempts to persuade us of the truth of some claim, often with a view to influencing our actions and behavior. Regardless of whether it is politicians, scientists, lobbyists, advertisers, corporations, or even acquaintances or friends doing the persuading, we often wish to make up our own minds; we might even think that it's our duty as free thinking citizens to do so. But *how* do we adjudicate these myriad arguments? How do we figure out which *are* good arguments and which merely *appear* to be? This course attempts to provide you with some of the skills, methods and criteria for evaluating the arguments you may encounter in daily life. The goal of the course is to enable you not only to make up your own mind about whether an argument is good or bad, but to do so in a rationally defensible, systematic and rigorous way.

Course Texts

Required: Vaughn, Lewis & MacDonald, Chris. *The Power of Critical Thinking: Canadian 4th Edition* (Oxford University Press)

Course Evaluation

(1) Problem Sets

10 problem sets will be assigned during the term. 2 of these ten (the two receiving the lowest grades) will be dropped and each of the remaining 8 will be worth 5% of your final grade. Since there are 8 problem sets worth 3.75%, the total value will be 40% of your final grade. Answers to the problem sets will be provided online on CourseSpaces after the due date.

(2) In-class Tests

3 in-class tests will be held during the term, each worth (40/3)%, for a total of 40% of your final grade. Answers to the in-class tests will be provided online on CourseSpaces after the due date.

(3) Final Exam

A final exam worth 20% of your final grade will be held during the exam period.

(4) Class Participation/Attendance

There is no grade for class participation and I will not be taking attendance. The lecture slides for each class will be posted online on CourseSpaces after the day's lecture. However, I expect you to attend the lectures and strongly encourage you to do so for a more expansive and detailed understanding of the concepts you will be reading about.

Course Grading

Grades will be assigned in percentage points. The final grade for the course will be converted to a letter grade according to the follow table.

Grades	GPV	Percentage
A+	9	90-100
A	8	85-89
A-	7	80-84
B+	6	77-79
B	5	73-76
B-	4	70-72
C+	3	65-69
C	2	60-64
D	1	50-59
F	0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that the student submits, whether individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution

Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams and projects.

The responsibility of the student

Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If the student is unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing sources, the instructor should be consulted. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the University's policy on academic integrity: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

Policy on Late or Missed Assignments

Late problem sets will **not** be accepted and the student will receive a zero for the assignment. Missed tests can be made-up **only if** documentation is provided (e.g., a physician's letter) which explains the failure to sit the test; otherwise, students will receive a zero for the missed test. The previous policies do not apply to students with documented disabilities; all attempt will be made to accommodate such students including, but not restricted to, providing make-up assignments and tests.

Course Schedule

Dates & Topics	Assignments
<u>Week 1:</u> <i>What is Critical Thinking?</i> Sep 6 & 8	Reading: Chapter 1 Problem Set #1 due Sep 11
<u>Week 2:</u> <i>The General Nature & Kinds of Arguments</i> Sep 12, 13 & 15	Reading: Chapter 3 Problem Set #2 due Sep 18
<u>Week 3:</u> <i>Patterns of Argument & Diagramming</i> Sep 19, 20 & 22	Reading: Chapter 3 Problem Set #3 due Sep 25
<u>Week 4:</u> <i>Conflicting Claims: Expertise, Experience & Persuasion</i> Sep 26, 27 & 29	Reading: Chapter 4 **In-class test #1 on Sep 29** Problem Set #4 due Oct 2
<u>Week 5:</u> <i>Fallacious "Arguments"</i> Oct 3, 4 & 6	Reading: Chapter 5
<u>Week 6:</u> <i>Fallacious "Arguments"</i> (cont'd) Oct 10, 11 & 13	Reading: Chapter 5 Problem Set #5 due Oct 16
<u>Week 7:</u> <i>Categorical Logic</i> Oct 17, 18 & 20	Reading: Chapters 6 **In-class test #2 Oct 20** Problem Set #6 due Oct 23

Dates & Topics	Assignments
<p><u>Week 8:</u> <i>Categorical Logic</i> (cont'd) Oct 24, 25 & 27</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 6 Problem Set #7 due Oct 30</p>
<p><u>Week 9:</u> <i>Propositional Logic</i> Oct 31, Nov 1 & 3</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 7 Problem Set #8 due Nov 6</p>
<p><u>Week 10:</u> <i>Propositional Logic</i> (cont'd) Nov 7, 8 & 10</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 7 Problem Set #9 due Nov 12</p>
<p><u>Week 11:</u> Nov 17 (No class: Nov 13-15, Reading Break)</p>	<p>**In-class test #3 on Nov 17**</p>
<p><u>Week 12:</u> <i>Inductive Arguments: Enumerative & Analogical</i> Nov 21, 22 & 24</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 8 Problem Set #10 due Nov 20</p>
<p><u>Week 13:</u> <i>Inductive Arguments: Causal</i> Nov 28, 29 & Dec 1</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 8</p>