

PHILOSOPHY 201: Critical Thinking

A01: 10 – 11:20am ELL 167

Course Outline

- Instructor:* Dr. C. Klatt
- Office:* CLE B311
- Email:* cklatt@uvic.ca
- Office Hours:* Wednesdays 12–2 pm, Fridays 1 – 2:30pm and by appointment
- Drop-In Hours:* CLE B315, Tuesdays 11:30am – 1pm, Wednesdays 2:30 – 4pm, and select Fridays 1 - 2:20pm.
- Text:* *The Power of Critical Thinking* 2nd, 3rd or 4th Can. Ed. By Vaughn and MacDonald (Used copies can often be found at the UVic Bookstore or at SUBText).

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.

Grading:

Best 10 of 15 homework assignments @ 2.5% each	=	25%
5 Tests @ 15% each	=	75%
(Jan. 23 rd , Feb. 2 nd , Feb. 23 rd , Mar. 13 th , Apr. 3 rd)		

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.

Homework:

Homework assignments will be completed online through CourseSpaces. I will spend some time during the first week of class explaining how to write the assignments online. If you have any questions, please email me. The assignments can be written any time **before 8 pm** on the day it is due (unless otherwise stated). For exact due dates see the *Syllabus* below. If you miss the homework assignment you will be able to view the answers online after the due date as long as you have opened the assignment 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 homework**. Late assignments will not be graded.

Course Material on CourseSpaces:

I will put my lecture overheads, homework assignments, practice tests, solutions to selected homework problems, and any handouts given in class on CourseSpaces. I will also use our class CourseSpaces site to post grades. If you do not have consistent access to the internet then please come talk to me and I will make a paper copy of the abovementioned available in the library.

When you need help:

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

i) **Practice Questions on CourseSpaces** – Practice assignments with detailed explanations for the answers are available on our CourseSpaces site.

ii) **Drop-in hours** -- CLE B315, Tuesdays 11:30am – 1pm, Wednesdays 2:30 – 4pm, and select Fridays 1 - 2:20pm (see CourseSpaces). The course TAs will be available to discuss any problems that you have with the course material.

iii) **Office hours** – Wednesdays Noon– 2 pm and Fridays 1 – 2:30pm, and by apt.

Please feel free to come by my office during office hours to discuss any difficulties with the course material or homework problems. Most of the difficulties that student's 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. 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 15 assignment grades, there is no need to contact me unless your illness causes you to miss more than five assignments.

If you miss a test, and have a legitimate, documented excuse (e.g. doctor's note, letter from an academic advisor) then email me as soon as possible. You will have an opportunity to make up the missed material.

Other Information

For N grades and DEF status, please see Calendar.

Information regarding religious observance can be located in the UVIC Calendar, and in posted Department of Philosophy Policies.

Tests will be returned in class as soon as they are graded. For those students who have signed a Department of Philosophy Privacy Waiver (available on CourseSpaces), graded work will be distributed in class. All other graded materials must be picked up from the instructor during office hours.

Academic Misconduct

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

Syllabus:

Jan. 5th	Chp 1 Arguments, Premises, and Conclusion	
9th	Chp 3 Deduction, Induction, Validity and Soundness	
12th	Implicit Premises, Argument Patterns	Assg 1 Due, 8pm
16th	Diagramming Arguments /Review	Assg 2 Due
19th	Chp 5 Fallacies of Irrelevant Premises	Assg 3 Due
23rd	TEST#1 (covers Chps 1 and 3)	
26th	Fallacies of Unacceptable Premises/Review	Assg 4 Due
30th	Chp 7 Propositional Logic: Translations	Assg 5 & 6 Due
Feb. 2nd	TEST#2 (covers Chp 5)	
6th	Truth Tables for Arguments	Assg 7 Due
9th	Short Truth Tables/Review	Assg 8 Due
13th, 16th	Reading Week (no classes)	
20th	Chp 6 Categorical Logic - Translations	Assg 9 Due
23rd	TEST #3 (covers Chp 7)	
27th	Venn Diagrams & Syllogisms	
Mar. 2nd	Testing Validity	Assg 10 Due
6th	Review	Assg 11 Due
9th	Chp 8 Inductive Reasoning - Enumerative Induction	Assg 12 Due
13th	TEST #4 (covers Chp 6)	
16th	Statistical Syllogisms and Arguments by Analogy	
20th	Causal Arguments	Assg 13 Due
23rd	Chp 9 Explanations	Assg 14 Due
27th	Review	Assg 15 Due
30th	Review	
Apr. 3rd	TEST #5 (covers Chps 8 and 9)	

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change.

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