

## Phil 201: Critical Thinking

**Class times:** Monday—Friday, 10:30am—12:20pm  
Lectures will be held during class time via Blackboard Collaborate  
Lectures will be recorded

**Instructor:** Dr Di Yang (pronouns: she & her)  
**Email:** [diyang@uvic.ca](mailto:diyang@uvic.ca)

**Teaching assistants:**  
Ryan Tonkin  
[email address TBA]                      Vanessa Houghton  
[email address TBA]

**TA Office hours:** TBD

**Textbook:** *The Power of Critical Thinking*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., by MacDonald and Vaughn. Oxford University Press, 2018. (Optional) 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> editions also okay

### Course description:

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.

**Territorial Acknowledgement:** The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For more information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the [UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement](#).

### Grading:

10 Assignments @ 4% each	=	40%
4 Tests @ 15% each	=	60%

No final exam.

The grading options available for the spring term will NOT apply to the summer term. The final grade will be recorded as a percentage according to [UVic's Undergraduate Grading Scale](#).

### PLEASE NOTE:

The lectures for this course will be recorded so students need not attend live lectures everyday during scheduled class times.

However, tests will be administered during scheduled class times (10:30am-12:20pm). Tests will be available on CourseSpaces at 10:35am, and must be submitted within the allotted time (typically 90 minutes). Instructions will be provided in the first week of class. **If you choose to take this course, you must be available to write the tests during the**

**scheduled dates and times** (see course schedule below). Exceptions will be made in cases of illness or family emergency only.

Please contact me ASAP if you are currently living in a time zone which would make writing tests at the scheduled times particularly challenging (e.g. Asia or Australia). Accommodations can be made, but you must let me know ASAP (no later than May 13<sup>th</sup>).

The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. I expect to adhere to the schedule below, but we might have to make adjustments (including rescheduling tests and assignments) given the circumstances.

### Course Schedule:

May 11 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 1—Introduction; Arguments, premises, and conclusion	
May 12 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 3—Deduction, induction, validity, soundness	<b>Assignment 1 Due</b>
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 3—Implicit premises and argument patterns	<b>Assignment 2 Due</b>
May 14 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 3—Diagramming arguments and review	<b>Assignment 3 Due</b>
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>TEST No. 1</b> (covers chapters 1 & 3)	
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Victoria Day	
May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 5—Fallacies of irrelevant premises	
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 5—Fallacies of unacceptable premises/review	<b>Assignment 4 Due</b>
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Ch. 7—Propositional logic: Translations	<b>Assignment 5 Due</b>
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>TEST No. 2</b> (covers chapter 5)	
May 25 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 7—Truth tables and review	<b>Assignment 6 Due</b>
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS. Extra office hours to review chapter 7	<b>Assignment 7 Due</b>
May 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>TEST No. 3</b> (covers chapter 7)	
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 8—Enumerative induction	
May 29 <sup>th</sup>	Ch. 8—Arguments by analogy and causal arguments	<b>Assignment 8 Due</b>
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Ch. 9—Explanations	<b>Assignment 9 Due</b>
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Review plus extra office hours	<b>Assignment 10 Due</b>
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Test No. 4</b> (covers chapters 8 & 9)	

**\*All assignments are due by 8pm on CourseSpaces**

### Assignments:

Assignments will be completed online through CourseSpaces. All assignments should be submitted by 8pm on the day they are due. You will have 2 attempts at each assignment. The highest mark will be counted.

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 assignments. Late assignments will not be graded, except in cases of illness or family emergency.

### Course materials:

Lecture recordings, slides, assignments, practice tests will be posted on CourseSpaces. The textbook is optional. I will say more about that during the first lecture.

**Discussion forum:**

I would like us to utilize the discussion forum in this class. If you have any questions about the course, whether it's administrative or content related, please consider posting it on the forum. Chances are, if you're unclear about something, some of your peers in the class will be as well. By posting your question, you can help out your peers, who might have the same question, and help your TAs, who just have to answer the question once on the forum instead of responding to multiple emails asking the same question. Your TAs will monitor the forum in order to answer questions. But if you know the answer to a question, please feel free to respond. Treat the discussion forum as a collegial space, where we can all ask questions of and learn from each other.

**Academic integrity:**

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

Students are expected to abide by the [University's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). And it is the students' responsibility to understand what constitutes [plagiarism](#) and to understand 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.”