

PHILOSOPHY 201 (A01): Critical Thinking

CRN: 32707

Course Outline

- Instructor:** Dr. C. Klatt
- Email:** cklatt@uvic.ca
- Office Hours:** Schedule to be posted on BrightSpace
- Drop-In Hours:** Schedule to be posted on BrightSpace
- 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.

Assignments 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 homework assignments @ 2.5% each	=	25%
3 Tests @ 20% each (May 21 st , June 4 th , June 18 th)	=	60%
1 Test @ 15% (June 25 th)	=	15%

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 BrightSpaces. 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 may be written any time **before 11:30 pm (Victoria time)** on the day it is due. 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 BrightSpaces:

I will put my lecture overheads, homework assignments, practice tests, solutions to selected homework problems, and any handouts given in class on BrightSpaces. I will also use our class BrightSpaces 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:

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

ii) **Drop-in hours on Zoom** – time and dates to be announced
The instructor will be available to discuss any problems that you have with the course material. This will be a group meeting.

iii) **Office hours on Zoom** – time and dates to be announced. The instructor will be available to discuss any issues that you have with the course. This will be a one-on-one meetings. Please sign up for meetings by emailing the instructor at cklatt@uvic.ca.

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 assignment grades, there is no need to contact me unless your illness causes you to miss more than three assignments. If you need to miss an assignment, be sure to open the assignment 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.

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.

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.

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

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

- May 10th – 14th Arguments, Premises, and Conclusion
Deduction, Induction, Validity, Soundness,
Counter Example Method **Assg 1 Due May 13th**
- May 17th – 20th Implicit Premises, Argument Patterns, Diagramming
Arguments, Review **Assg 2 Due May 17th**
Assg 3 Due May 19th
- May 21st – 23rd **TEST #1**

Unit 2: Deductive Arguments

- May 25th – 28th Propositional Translations
Truth Tables **Assg 4 Due May 27th**
- May 31st – June 3rd Short Truth Tables/Review **Assg 5 Due May 31st**
Assg 6 Due June 2nd
- June 4th – 6th **TEST #2**

Unit 3: Inductive Arguments

- June 7th – 11th Enumerative Induction
Args by Analogy, Causal Args **Assg 7 Due June 9th**
- June 14th – 17th Explanations and Hypotheses/Review
Assg 8 Due June 14th
Assg 9 Due June 16th
- June 18th – 20th **TEST #3**

Unit 4: Fallacies and Biases

- June 21st – 24th Fallacies of Irrelevant Premises
Fallacies of Unacceptable Premises, Biases
Assg 10 Due June 22nd
Assg 11 Due June 23rd
Assg 12 Due June 23rd
Review **Assg 13 Due June 24th**
- June 25th **TEST #4**

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change.