

PHILOSOPHY 201 (A01): Critical Thinking
CRN: 22457
Course Outline
Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. C. Klatt

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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 (Jan 24 th – 26 th , Feb 13 th – 15 th , Mar 13 th – 15 th)	=	60%
1 Test @ 15% (Apr 3 rd – 5 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.

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 11:30 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:

- Jan 19th : Withdrawal with 100% reduction of tuition fees
- Feb 9th: Withdrawal with 50% reduction of tuition fees
- Feb 28th: Last day for withdrawal (no fees returned)

Course Material on BrightSpaces:

I will put my lecture overheads, quizzes, 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:

- Practice Questions on BrightSpaces** – Practice quizzes with detailed explanations for the answers are available on our BrightSpaces site.
- Drop-in hours on Zoom** – time and dates will be posted on BrightSpace. The instructor will be available to discuss any problems that you have with the course material. This will be a group meeting.
- Office hours on Zoom** – times and dates will be posted on BrightSpace. The instructor will be available to discuss any issues that you have with the course. These will be one-on-one meetings. Please sign up for meetings by emailing the instructor at cklatt@uvic.ca.
- Office hours 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 an 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&bcItem=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcType=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. (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>). 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 environment 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>

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

Jan 6 th – 10 th	Arguments, Premises, and Conclusion, Deduction, Induction	
Jan 13 th – 17 th	Validity, Soundness, Counter Example Method	Quiz 1 Due Jan 13th
		Quiz 2 Due Jan 17th
Jan 20 th – 23 rd	Implicit Premises, Argument Patterns, Diagramming Arguments, Review	Quiz 3 Due Jan 22nd
Jan 24 th – 26 th	TEST #1	

Unit 2: Deductive Arguments

Jan 27 th – 31 st	Propositional Translations	Quiz 4 Due Jan 31st
Feb 3 rd – 7 th	Truth Tables	Quiz 5 Due Feb 6th
Feb 10 th – 12 th	Short Truth Tables/Review	Quiz 6 Due Feb 11th
Feb 13 th – 15 th	TEST #2	
Feb 17 th – 21 st	READING BREAK	

Unit 3: Inductive Arguments

Feb 24 th – 28 th	Enumerative Induction	Quiz 7 Due Feb 28th
Mar 3 rd – 7 th	Args by Analogy, Causal Args	Quiz 8 Due Mar 5th
Mar 10 th – 12 th	Explanations and Hypotheses, Review	Quiz 9 Due Mar 10th
Mar 13 th – 15 th	TEST #3	

Unit 4: Fallacies and Biases

Mar 17 th – 21 st	Fallacies of Irrelevant Premises	Quiz 10 Due Mar 19th
Mar 24 th – 28 th	Fallacies of Unacceptable Premises, Biases	Quiz 11 Due Mar 24th
		Quiz 12 Due Mar 28th
Mar 31 st – Apr 2 nd	Biases, Review	Quiz 13 Due Apr 1st
Apr 3 rd – 5 th	TEST #4	

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change.