

PHILOSOPHY 108.05 LOGIC AND CRITICAL REASONING
Tu &Th 8:20 – 9:40 Chem 126
Fall Semester 2001

Instructor: Chris Johns E-Mail: cjohns@ic.sunysb.edu Philosophy Dept. office: 632-7570	Office: 142 Harriman Hall Office Hours: After class until 11:00, and by appointment.
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Course Description: This course is an introduction to the methods of logic, critical reasoning, and argumentation. Its purpose is to develop and refine your critical thinking skills—probably, the most useful and enduring skills you will ever learn. We will learn what an argument is, including what makes arguments good and poor; how to identify and critique deductive, inductive, and conductive arguments; and how to utilize categorical and propositional logic. In treating these topics, we will analyze arguments drawn from a wide variety of sources, such as everyday conversation, newspapers, advertisements, and philosophy. The readings are relatively short, but intensive. Weekly exercises will be assigned and active class participation will be expected. There will be a mid-term, a final exam, and a 3-5 page paper.

Required Texts: The required book may be purchased at Stony Books, across from the train station.

- Govier, Trudi. *A Practical Study of Argument* (5th Edition).
- Extra material you will copy from the philosophy office, 213 Harriman (to be assigned).

Course Requirements:

Weekly Exercises 30%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Analysis Paper: (3-5 pages) 15%

Final Exam: 25%

Attendance and Participation 10%

Weekly Exercises: Developing one's critical thinking skills requires not merely *reading about* various techniques, but *actively practicing* these techniques. Each week you must complete the assigned exercises (from the textbook), which will cover material discussed during the *previous* week. Late assignments will not be accepted. That means, if you are absent on Monday, you will receive a zero for that week's Exercise. Exercises will receive letter grades in accordance with standards of correctness and effort. That is, a few wrong answers will be excused if you show you've made an effort to avoid them. The Exercises are designed to be excellent preparation for the Mid-Term and Final exams.

Analysis Paper: Toward the end of the semester, you will compose a 3-5 page argumentative/analysis essay, which gives you the chance to apply your newly refined critical thinking skills to an extended argument. You will choose your paper topic from a list I provide, and you must submit a "thesis" for your paper one week before the paper is due. Papers handed in after the due date will be rejected or penalized. Papers must be typed in a normal font, double spaced, and have one-inch margins. Papers must support a clearly defined thesis. I will provide you with details on what I expect and on how to organize a good paper.

Attendance and Participation: Since latecomers are distracting, please be on time. Most days I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you do not arrive by the time attendance is taken, you will be marked absent—no exceptions. Attendance will be figured into your participation grade. However, if you accumulate more than eight unexcused absences during the semester, you will automatically fail the course. I will excuse an absence only if you provide written documentation for a legitimate excuse. Keep in mind that coming to class and participating will more likely improve your exam and paper grades, as well.

Class discussions: Critical thinking is developed not merely through reading and writing, but through oral practice. Thus, each class period, in addition to covering the textbook material, we will engage in open discussions of arguments drawn from a wide variety of sources, including from you. *As part of your participation grade*, at some point in the semester you will be asked to present a brief argument of your choice for class discussion, a discussion which you will lead. I will hand out a sign-up sheet.

And keep in mind that in this class there is no question too foolish to ask.

Exams: Exams will be comprehensive. Make-ups are discouraged, but will be given *only* for serious reasons accompanied by written documentation. Faulty alarm clocks do not count as a serious reason.

Plagiarism: Unfortunately, too many students attempt to plagiarize their papers, and unfortunately for them, they get caught. To put it bluntly, plagiarism is lying and stealing and will not be tolerated. Do not underestimate my ability to spot it. I have sent many a dismayed student to the Office of Academic Judiciary. The penalty is severe. These days it is easy to get papers off the Internet, but it is also easy for teachers to find them on the Internet. Yet the Internet is not the only source of plagiarism.

However, plagiarism is a complex issue. If you are unsure about how to cite sources properly, please talk to me. If you are having trouble with an assignment, it is always best to talk to me *before* handing in your paper. I would rather see you struggle with a topic and learn something, rather than fail you for dishonesty.

University Services:

- **Writing Center**: If you have writing issues that need extra attention, please take advantage of the Writing Center's tutorial services. These instructors help all students, from first-year to doctoral. Keep in mind that they will *not* proofread or copy-edit your work. Call 632-7405 for an appointment, or stop by Humanities 198. Check out <<http://ws.cc.sunysb.edu/writrhet/description/writctr.html>> for more information.
- **Disability**: If you have a mental or physical disability and require special assistance, please contact Disabled Student Services (DSS), Humanities 133, 2-6748. All information is strictly confidential.
- **Ombud**: If you are having a conflict with the teacher or other students, and you need to speak confidentially to a neutral party, please consult the Ombudsperson in Humanities 114, 2-9200.

Course Schedule. This schedule is subject to change, but not without due notice. Each class will have lecture/discussion covering the course material assigned for that week, plus any supplementary material. Please have the chapters read *prior* to class time. Exercises (Ex.) are due at the beginning of class on the day listed. Do *only* those exercises that are *not* marked by an asterisk in the textbook. You are free to practice on those that are marked, the answers for which are found in the back of the textbook.

Week/Chapters to Read	Tuesday	Thursday
0. Introduction: Doxa and Episteme	8/28	8/30 Ch. 1 introduction
1. Ch 1: What is/is not an Argument?	9/4	9/6 Ex. 2, 1-17 (p. 24)
2. Ch. 2 Pinning Down Argument Structure	9/11	9/13 Ex. 2 Part B, 1-6 (p. 49)
3. Ch. 3 When is an Arg a Good One?	9/18 Rosh Hashanah NO CLASS	9/20 Ex. 5, 1-17 (p. 62)
4. Ch. 4 Language Ch. 5 Premises: What to Accept	9/25 Ex. 1, 1-17 (p. 82)	9/27 Yom Kippur NO CLASS
5. Ch. 5 Premises	10/2 Ex. 1 Part A, 1-17 (p. 155); Part B, 1-8	10/4
6. Ch. 6 Working on Relevance	10/9 Ex. 2 Part C, 1-16 (p. 167); Part D, choose two.	10/11
7. Ch. 7 Deductions: Categorical Logic	10/16 Ex. 2, 1-16 (p. 204)	10/18 Mid-Term Exam (in class)
8. Ch.8 Deductively Valid Arguments	10/23 Ex. 4, 1-16 (p. 248)	10/25
9. Ch. 8	10/30 Ex. 1 Part A, 1-10 (p. 264); Part B, 1-6	11/1
10. Ch 9 Intro to Inductive Arguments	11/6 Ex. 3, 1-17 (p. 283)	11/8
11. Ch. 10 Analogies Ch. 11 Conduction	11/13 Ex. 3 Part A, 1-14 (p. 331); Part B, 1-13	11/15
12. <i>Family Arguments</i>	11/20 Thanksgiving week NO CLASS	11/22 NO CLASS
13. Ch. 12 Analysis of Longer Works	11/27 Ex. 4, 1-8 (p. 341); Ex. 3, 1-7 (p. 385)	11/29
14. Ch. 12	12/4 Ex. 1, 1-10 (p. 403)	12/6
15.	12/11 Review for Finals	12/13 Last Day of classes. Analysis paper due.

FINAL EXAM: Thursday Dec. 20, 8:00 AM – 10:30 AM in classroom.