



August 2019

Critical Thinking: Philosophy 3, Section 2286; Tuesday & Thursday 7:30-9:00. Emeritus 1518

Instructor; Dr. Crowell; Office Hours, Tuesday & Thursday 7:00-7:30 & 10:30-12:00, Emeritus 1513.

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This beginning course is a study of arguments. An argument, for this class, includes giving reasons, establishing support for things we think are true and justifying beliefs or actions based on beliefs and evidence. When this activity is engaged in by thoughtful persons, the result will often be what we will call an argument. We will, during the course, attempt to establish the standards for arguing properly and, by implication, ways to distinguish between correct and incorrect arguments. We will be interested in finding mistakes in this process, avoiding the pitfalls of fallacious arguments, and being able to think through some complex issue. This does not mean that on many complex questions there is a single right answer, but it does mean that there is a correct method. The puzzle is how can single correct method of argument lead to contradictory answers? Part of this course is to examine this puzzle.

Text: Instructor prepared material in the form of handouts; area newspapers, magazines and other media

Course Assignments: Read handouts and daily material from newspapers, magazines, etc.

Daily in-class quizzes

In-class exams (three short answer/essay)

Paper (argumentative essay written out of class)

In-class final Exam

The Quizzes: Sometime during each class meeting there will be one, or sometimes two, very brief questions based on the reading assignment in the handout for that meeting, or on a front-page issue that has led to public arguments on that question, or perhaps an in-class group assignment. They will be worth 10 points each, no partial credit and if missed, cannot be made up. They can be answered from the reading assignment or from your reading of the daily local papers, or the work you do in class. Quizzes will be closed book, but you may consult any reading notes that you have taken covering the reading assignment for that class meeting.

One way to earn quiz credit is have a letter to the editor published in one of the regional papers.

The Exams: There will be three short answer/essay exams during the semester and one outside of class

paper. The three exams will be in class exams; the fourth assignment will be a take home paper. They will be graded on completeness, accuracy, clarity, language skills, and relevance to the questions. All examinations are open book. This means you may consult notes, handouts, but not each other's exams, during the examination.

The semester's exams will require you to do the following:

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| * Summarize | Briefly stating the main points. This includes identifying the thesis |
| * Explain | Making clear, interpreting some point or idea by putting the point in your own words. |
| * Define | Giving the meaning of a term or concept. |
| * Discuss | Considering something from several points of view. Presenting opposing views |
| * Criticize | Stating your opinion on the correctness of something and evaluating the opinion of others. |
| * Evaluate | Determining the strength of an argument |
| * Justify | Giving good evidence, showing reasons for an evaluation |
| * Prove | Establishing the truth of something by justifying correctly. |

It is not possible to schedule individual make up exams. If an individual misses an exam, there is the option of replacing the grade, (0), by taking that section(s) of the final.

If a class exam is missed for an unavoidable reason, e.g., flood, earthquake, etc. there will be a makeup.

A tentative grade based on the four assignments and the quiz total will be posted before the final. Letter grades will be converted to numerical equivalence and averaged. Decimals less than whole numbers will be ignored. One then may elect to retake some or all of the four assignments as a final exam. The grade received on the final(s) will replace the grade(s) received on the earlier exam. To take the final, you must say which exam(s) you want to replace. There will be place to show this on the prefinal grade sheet, made available prior to the final. Signing up for the final obligates you to take the final.

Grades: The four assignments (three exams and one paper) will be 100 points each. The quiz total is calculated at 100 points as well. The total possible points (500) will be averaged for a letter grade. Letter grades usually reflect the normal distribution; A's in the 90% and above, B's between 80% and 90%, C's between 70% and 80%, D's between 60% and 70%, not passing below 60%.

Daily Quizzes; 20% (100 points)
Three In-class exams; 60% (300 points)
Paper; 20% (100 points)

Absences and Attendance: Attendance is not specifically graded but will be reflected in the quizzes. However, I will drop students who miss the first week of class or who have not participated in any of the graded assignments (quizzes and exams). It is the student's responsibility to initiate a drop procedure in any other circumstance.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Resources (527-4278) as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are provided.

Reading requirement: Students will be expected to have read the material in the handout that is to be covered on a specific class session (see outline that follows). In addition, students will be expected to have read or be familiar important news events from the immediate period. This knowledge can be gained from reading the important news reports for that day, or hearing in depth reports from the various media outlets. The focus should be on the arguments that are reported in each of these cases. The focus should be on the arguments that appear in the various sources. Sources include: Press Democrat, San Francisco Chronicle, Sacramento Bee; Broadcast media, National Public Radio on KQED 88.5 and 88.3, fm KRCB 91.1 fm; The News Hour on KQED, and KRCB TV; all-news station KCBS on 740 am.

The reading material will be available on the Canvas section page in the Modules. I strongly recommend these materials be printed as hard copy. The other written source for the course will be arguments found in local print media, e.g., newspapers, periodicals, magazines, voter pamphlets, etc. The electronic version of the Press Democrat is available in the data base section of our library.

Reading these arguments will result in our being familiar with the important political, economic, and social questions of the day, e.g., national and state budget issues, questions relating to the problem of gun control, environmental issues, border concerns, etc. Part of the requirement will be to read at least four opinion pieces regarding these questions each week. The idea is to think about real life issues, encouraging students to read arguments on these issues, and apply classroom exercise to the analysis and evaluation of these arguments.

Goal: To understand the nature of arguments. To teach practical, usable skills for analyzing, evaluating and constructing extended arguments in such areas as politics, economics, public concerns, business policy, value determination and perhaps personal matters; to enable the student to read, evaluate, and write quality arguments. A second purpose is to touch on and explain philosophical issues and methods as they occur in the semester's work.

Assumptions: The study of arguments requires the study of language. The use of language in arguments is governed by informal rules (identified as "language games" in recent philosophical discussions). In some areas philosophers have established formal rules that, when followed, form the necessary conditions for correctness and quality in arguments. These conditions are observable, public, and teachable and serve as the foundation for proper communication.

Method: Lecture, discussion, handouts, analysis and exercises, daily quizzes, open book exams.

FIRST WEEK; August 20. Introduction to the Class. What is Critical Thinking? What is an argument? Assignment for next class: Read and study the accompanying handout. Arguments defined: practical and deductive (the Syllogism). The separation of arguments from non-arguments. Examples of arguments from the local media. Practical arguments and deductive arguments. Deductive arguments: The Syllogism. Propositions--their standard form, validity, the standard form syllogism, and rules for validity.

SECOND WEEK August 27. Continuation of the syllogism. Review of formal proofs in the syllogism, Know: translation to Categorical Proposition, translation to Standard Form, Mood and Figure designation, Distribution, Rules for Validity.

THIRD WEEK; September 3, Prepare for first exam. Review for exam, **First Exam Wednesday, September 6.** Handouts for next section will be available after exam.

FOURTH WEEK: September 10. First Census, September 9. Return and review of first exam September 10. Instructor will drop students who have never attended or do not take the first exam. Withdrawal after September 9 is student responsibility. Assignment: Read editorial pages for structure of extended arguments. Start the study of Practical arguments

FIFTH WEEK; September 17. The study of practical arguments. The concepts of assurances, issue, warrants, counter arguments, etc.

SIXTH WEEK; September 24. Continue with Practical arguments--the study of arguments in the media. The analysis of extended arguments--evaluation and the structure of extended arguments. Assignment for next week: Analysis of arguments in handouts.

SEVENTH WEEK. October 1. Continue with analysis of extended arguments. Review of extended arguments. Definitions of assurance, warrant, secondary thesis, counter argument, etc. Prepare for exam

EIGHTH WEEK; October 8. **Second Examination Wednesday October 10.** Handouts for next section will be available. Assignment for next week: Study handouts for next section.

NINTH WEEK; October 15. Return and review of second exam, October 15. Start the examination of defective arguments. Fallacies in arguments. Assignment for next week: The quiz for next week consists of selecting and handing in an argument that you regard as defective. You should briefly describe the nature of the problem in the example you hand in. Study of defective arguments continued. Assignment: continue with study of handouts.

TENTH WEEK; October 22. Continue the study of defective arguments. The four criteria for evaluating arguments.

ELEVENTH WEEK; October 29. Defective arguments continued.

TWELFTH WEEK; November 5. Review of defective arguments continued. Discussion of the four criteria for strong arguments. Prepare for exam. In class exercises on writing argument criticisms and evaluations. Application of the four criteria. Writing a critical evaluation. **Third examination Wednesday November 8.**

THIRTEENTH WEEK; November 12 Return and review of third exam. Selection of issue for writing persuasive argument.

FOURTEENTH WEEK; November 19. Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic

Thanksgiving Holiday, November 28-December 1

FIFTEENTH WEEK; November 27. Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic.

SIXTEENTH WEEK; December 3. **Original argument to be handed in by December 5.** Papers turned in

after the deadline will receive a 0.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK; December 10. Return of papers. Course review for those expecting to take final. Pre-final grades available on December 12. To take the final, you must indicate which exam(s) you want to replace. There will be place to indicate this on the prefinal grade sheet. Once you sign up, you are committed to taking the final.

Final Exam; For Section 1508, Tuesday, December 17. 7:00—9:45 am in Emeritus 1518

Below is a section from the official course of record for Philosophy 3. For transfer purposes, this is what is expected to have been accomplished at the end of our work. We will review this as part of the year end course review.

COURSE CONTENT

Outcomes and Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify arguments;
2. Distinguish arguments from explanations, and from statements of unsupported opinion;
3. Portray the structure of support within an argument;
4. Paraphrase arguments;
5. Distinguish “inductive” (what we call “concrete non deductive”) from deductive reasoning;
6. Apply appropriate standards for the evaluation of both inductive and deductive arguments;
7. Apply appropriate standards of informal argument evaluation (recognition of informally fallacious arguments);
8. Design and compose arguments that meet appropriate standards of evaluation.