



August 2020

Critical Thinking: Philosophy 3, On-line Sections 1490 & 1484; Zoom meetings, Tuesday & Thursday 8:00-9:00 and 9:00-10:00

Instructor; Dr. Crowell; Office Hours after Zoom sessions 10:00-12:00

College phone: 527-4607. Voice-mail 527-4999, extension 5121.

Web Sites <https://profiles.santarosa.edu/edward-crowell>

E-mail : ecrowell@santarosa.edu

On-line instructions : Class meetings will mirror face to face meeting times (synchronous). I will set up the Canvas sessions so that students may attend either the 8:00-9:00 or the 9:00-10:00 sessions. (This is the inclusive sense of “or”). Attending neither session is not an option. (Note: As the on-line semester develops, this syllabus may be adjusted).

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. 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: There is no purchased textbook for this course. Instructor prepared material is available on the Canvas sections. In addition, argument examples will be referenced from area print media.

Course Assignments: Read on-line Canvas documents handouts and daily material from newspapers and other print media.

Daily in-class quizzes

On-line exams (three short answer/essay)

Paper (argumentative essay written out of class)

On-line final Exam

The Quizzes: Sometime during each on-line class meeting there will be one, or sometimes two, very brief questions based on the reading assignment from the Canvas material for that meeting, or on a front-page issue that has led to public arguments on that question, or perhaps a 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 on-line. You may consult any reading notes that you have taken covering the reading assignment for that class meeting. To respond with an answer, you should e-mail me the answer. Credit will be given for the correct answer.

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 on-line and returned to me by the established deadline; 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, etc.,

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

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|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * Summarize | Briefly stating the main points. |
| * 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 from one section, you may take the exam during the other section meeting. Also, 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 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 pre-final 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), Analy Village - C, as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are provided.

Reading requirement: Students will be expected to have read the Canvas material 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 sections Cavass page. The other written source for the course will be arguments found in local print media, e.g., newspapers, periodicals, magazines, voter pamphlets, etc.

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 terrorism, waging war, the November national and state elections, 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, encourage people 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 18 & 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. (Canvas “Introduction to the Syllogism”) Propositions--their standard form, validity, the standard form syllogism, and rules for validity. Quiz collected and discussed.

The quiz to be handed in August 25 will require you to write a brief argument to be handed in next session. Indicate premises and conclusion.

SECOND WEEK August 25 & 27. Continuation of the syllogism. Review of formal proofs in the syllogism, prepare for first exam. Know: translation to Categorical Proposition, translation to Standard Form, Mood and Figure designation, Distribution, Rules for Validity.

THIRD WEEK; September 1 & 3 Review for exam

FOURTH WEEK: September 8 & 10., **First Exam, September 8 & 10.** Assignment: Read editorial pages for structure of extended arguments. Start the study of Practical arguments

FIFTH WEEK; September 15 & 17. Return and review of first exam. The study of practical arguments. The concepts of assurances, issue, warrants, counter arguments, etc.

SIXTH WEEK; September 22 & 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. September 29 & October 1. Continue with analysis of extended arguments. Review of extended arguments. Definitions of assurance, warrant, secondary thesis, counter argument, etc. Prepare for exam. Handouts for next section will be available. Assignment for next week: Study handouts for next section.

EIGHTH WEEK; October 6 & 8. **Second Examination October 6 & 8.**

NINTH WEEK; October 13 & 15. Return and review of second exam. Start the examination of defective arguments. Study 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 20 & 22. Continue the study of defective arguments. The four criteria for evaluating arguments.

ELEVENTH WEEK; October 27 & 29. Defective arguments continued. Prepare for exam. In class exercises on writing argument criticisms and evaluations. Application of the four criteria. Writing a critical evaluation.

TWELFTH WEEK; November 3 & 5. **Third examination November 3 & 5.**

THIRTEENTH WEEK; November 10 & 12. Return and review of third exam. Selection of issue for writing persuasive argument

FOURTEENTH WEEK; November 17 & 19. Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic.

FIFTEENTH WEEK; November 24. Summary session on writing original arguments. Thanksgiving Holiday, November 26-29

SIXTEENTH WEEK; December 1 & 4. **Original argument to be handed in by December 4 12:00 noon.** Papers turned in after the deadline will receive a 0.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK; December 8 & 10. Return of papers. Course review for those expecting to take final. Pre-final grades available on December 8. To take the final, you must indicate which exam(s) you want to replace. There will be a place to indicate this on the pre-final grade sheet. Once you sign up, you are committed to taking the final.

Finals week December 12-18.

Final Exam; For Section 1490 & 1484, Tuesday December 15.

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 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.