

January 19, 2022

Critical Thinking: Philosophy 3, On-line & In Class (Blended) Sections 7547: Meetings, Wednesday 1:00-3:00  
(In Class meetings, Emeritus 1692)

Instructor; Dr. Crowell; Office Hours Wednesday 12:00 pm

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Web Page : <http://srjstaff.santarosa.edu/~tcrowell/> Class Schedule, Section 7547 Wednesdays 1:00-3:00

This section is “blended”. I will meet in the classroom (Emeritus 1692) for the first hour, (1:00) and the remaining hour (2:00) remotely on Zoom. As the semester unfolds there will be additional open hours online by arrangement. This is in addition to an online office hour before class. However, to establish class enrollment, in class attendance is encouraged for at least two in class sections.

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. We will establish the standards for arguing properly and, by implication, ways to distinguish between correct and incorrect arguments. 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 textbook purchase for this course. All course material is available on Canvas.

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

Daily in-class quizzes

Exams (three short answer/essay)

Paper (argumentative essay written out of 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 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 Canvas reading assignment or from your knowledge of currently argued issues.

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 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, and previous assignments.

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

- \* Summarize      Sating 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, there is the option of replacing the grade, (0), by taking that section(s) of the final.

A tentative grade based on the four assignments and the quiz total will be posted before the final. Letter grades will be based on total number of points. 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.

**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; As in the 90% and above, Bs between 80% and 90%, Cs between 70% and 80%, D's between 60% and 70%, not passing below 60%.

Daily Quizzes; 20% (100 points)  
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 Canvas Module that is to be covered on a specific class session (see outline that follows). Time spent on any of the outside activities is up to the individual, but there is the expectation that these activities will be completed. 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 appear in the various sources. Students should choose the various reliable news sources.

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 problems COVID safety. national and state elections, etc. Part of the requirement is to be familiar with 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 exercises 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, material on Canvas, analysis and exercises, daily quizzes, open book exams.

The following schedule is not set in stone. We can make adjustments as the need arises.

FIRST WEEK; January 19. Introduction to the Class. What is Critical Thinking? What is an argument? Assignment for next class: Read and study the handout What is Meant by Critical Thinking and Introduction to the Syllogism. 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

SECOND WEEK: January 26.: Review of What is Critical Thinking. Definition of Argument. Prepare for exam over the definition of an argument and the concept of Critical Thinking. **Take home 50-point exam due January 28.**

THIRD WEEK; February 2; The Syllogism. Propositions--their standard form, validity, the standard form syllogism, and rules for validity. Review of formal proofs in the syllogism, Know: translation to Categorical Proposition, translation to Standard Form, Mood and Figure designation, Distribution, Rules for Validity.

FOURTH WEEK: February 9: Continuation of the Syllogism. Completion of exercises

FIFTH WEEK; February 16. . **50-Point Exam Wednesday February 16.** The study of practical arguments, The concepts of assurances, issue, warrants, counter arguments, etc.

SIXTH WEEK; February 23. 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 on Canvas.

SEVENTH WEEK. March 2. Continue with analysis of extended arguments. Review of extended arguments. Definitions of assurance, warrant, secondary thesis, counter argument, etc. Prepare for exam. **Second Examination on March 9.** Material for next section will be available online. Assignment for next week: Study Canvas material for next section.

EIGHTH WEEK; March 9. **Second Exam March 9** Return and review of second exam March 19

NINTH WEEK; March 19. 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.

March 21-27; Spring Break.

TENTH WEEK; March 30 Continue the study of defective arguments. The four criteria for evaluating arguments. Mid Term grades issued

ELEVENTH WEEK; April 6. Defective arguments continued.

TWELFTH WEEK; April 13 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. **Prepare for Third examination Wednesday April 20.**

THIRTEENTH WEEK; April 20. **Third Exam, Wednesday April 20**

FOURTEENTH WEEK; May 4. Return and review of third exam. Selection of issue for writing persuasive argument. Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic

FIFTEENTH WEEK; May 11. Writing original arguments. Organizing and outlining. Narrowing the issues. Structuring a written argument. Researching the topic. Using Turnitin.com **Original argument to be handed in by May 13.** Papers turned in after the deadline will receive a 0.

SIXTEENTH WEEK; May 18. Return of papers. Course review for those expecting to take final. Pre-final grades available on May 7. To take the final, you must indicate which exam(s) you want to replace. There will be place to indicate this on the pre-final grade sheet. Once you sign up, you are committed to taking the final.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK; May 20; Course Review for those planning to take final exam

Final Exam week May 21-27, Time and date to be determined.

## 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.