

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 145 (section 001)**  
**CRITICAL THINKING**  
**Spring 2022**  
**Tuesday-Thursday 10:00-11:20, SJ1 3014**

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Bruno Tremblay

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-12:00

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It is very easy to meet outside of office hours, in person or virtually. Just get in touch with me and we'll find a time. Note also that I answer email fairly promptly during week days, but that I try to stay away from email in evenings and on weekends.

**Calendar Course Description**

"An analysis of basic types of reasoning, structure of arguments, critical assessment of information, common fallacies, problems of clarity and meaning."

**Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

The general purpose of the course is to learn how to think more critically. The word "critical" in critical thinking does not refer to being in a state of crisis or to being negative, but rather to our capacity to appreciate and judge both things and what we think and say about them. Indeed, to appreciate or judge something is to see it for what it is and not for what it is not, and in order to do so one must be able to discern or distinguish ("kritikos", in Ancient Greek) the true from the false, the proven from the non-proven, the certain from the uncertain, the valuable from the non-valuable, the valid from the non-valid, the substantial from the superficial, or even the real from the merely apparent. Critical thinking is in a sense the point of our whole intellectual education and getting better at it is the work of a lifetime. As such, critical thinking certainly encompasses more aspects than what one single 12-week course can cover, and consequently we will focus on only some of them in particular. Since it is through reason that we think critically and since argument is the main tool of reason in its effort to discern or judge, our course is organized around the very notion of argument (aptly also called "reasoning").

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- A. understand what an argument is and be able to identify one in speech and writing
- B. understand the main ways of forming arguments
- C. evaluate better the strength or weakness of arguments
- D. be more aware of 1) the importance of clarity and definition when using words, and 2) the exact meaning and immediate implications of the statements we make.

### Required Text

- Trudy Govier, *A PRACTICAL STUDY OF ARGUMENT* (enhanced seventh edition), Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014, 417p. The book is available at the UW bookstore as an e-book for about \$80.)

Other options that may be pursued if so you wish:

- 1) If you could get hold of a used copy of that same edition (enhanced seventh edition, 2014) or of the seventh edition (2010), that would do just as well. The differences between the seventh edition and the enhanced seventh edition are minimal and amount to tiny differences in page numbering. If you can cope with those minimal discrepancies between the two editions — I use the enhanced seventh edition and in class and in my messages on LEARN will always refer to its page numbering —, then everything should be fine. (N.B. Editions prior to the seventh edition [2010] will NOT do.)
- 2) A hard copy of the enhanced seventh edition has been put on reserve at the St. Jerome's library. I would of course not advise that for the whole term you rely solely on that copy, especially if many of you do it... But hopefully that copy could help someone who has absolutely no other option.



### Readings Available on LEARN

Most of what we will need (theory + exercises) will be in the required textbook. Any reading or exercise not available in the textbook that is to be added during the term will be posted on LEARN. I will also use LEARN to post messages after EACH class, usually to let you know what the readings are.

### Course Requirements and Assessment

There are a TEST 1 (25%), a TEST 2 (25%) and 10 multiple-choice QUIZZES (10 X 5%). All must be written without aid.

The quizzes are spread throughout the semester, i.e. approximately one a week. Each lasts for approximately 10 minutes and has to be written online, at the time of your choice within a 24-hour period. A detailed course schedule is available on LEARN and identifies each quiz, its number, its date

and what part of the material it covers. The aim of the quizzes is to evaluate the students' progress and to encourage regular and continuous work on their part. (Note that there will actually be 11 such quizzes. This also allows for any quiz missed due to illness or any other valid reason, for which there will therefore be no make-up quizzes, especially considering that you have 24 hours to write each individual quiz. Should you miss 2 quizzes or more for a legitimate and properly documented reason, however, please reach out to me and we'll see what must be done. If you happen to write all eleven quizzes, your weakest quiz mark will be deleted at the end of the semester, when final grades are calculated.)

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
12 Pop quizzes (only 10 counting)	About 1 a week (see schedule)	50%
Test 1	June 14th	25%
Test 2	July 21st	25%
Total		100%

### Course Outline / Class Schedule

A very precise and detailed course schedule (including information about quizzes, tests, lecture topics, readings, etc.) is available on LEARN, and if need be will be updated during the term.

### Make-up Tests and Plagiarism

There will be no make-up evaluation for quizzes or tests missed for a non-valid and non-properly-documented reason. Travel, excessive workload, defective alarm clocks, minor colds, a late bus, etc., are not considered to be valid reasons.

Students who are caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the evaluation in question and may fail the course. (Plagiarism, according to Webster's: the use or close imitation of the language and/or thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.)

### Important Information

#### **UW policy regarding illness and missed tests:**

[The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations](#) state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the "[University of Waterloo Verification of Illness](#)" form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or on the link provided above. If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.
- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

**Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness,

respect, and responsibility.

**[Academic Integrity Office \(UW\)](#)** : A resource for students and instructors.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services \(AS\) Office](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.