

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 145
CRITICAL THINKING
Winter 2019
Monday-Wednesday 1:00-2:20, SJ2 2002

Instructor Information

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It is very easy to meet outside of office hours. 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 it 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 for about \$160.) I think the book comes with access to some extra online stuff, but I won't use it for this course (mainly because I do not want students to absolutely have to buy that book — see other options, below).

This is a rather expensive textbook and other options 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) The UW bookstore also assures me that limited-time access to an electronic version (ebook) of the enhanced seventh edition can be purchased from them at a better price (about \$80).
- 3) 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 no other option.



Readings Available on LEARN

Almost everything that we will need (theory + exercises) will be in the required textbook. If any reading or exercise not available in the textbook is to be added during the term, it 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 will be one midterm (30%), one comprehensive final exam (40%), and 10 pop quizzes (10 X 3%).

All must be written without aid.

The quizzes will be given throughout the semester (at a pace of approximately one a week, always at the very beginning of a class, for a duration of about 5-10 minutes each time) and without warning. Their aim is to evaluate the students' progress and to encourage regular and continuous work on their part. (There will actually be 12 such quizzes. Only the best 10 marks will count. 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. Should a student miss more than 2 quizzes for a legitimate and properly documented reason, however, some making-up will be arranged.)

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
12 Pop quizzes (only 10 counting)	Approximately 1 a week	30%
Midterm	February 13th	30%
Final exam	Examination period	40%
Total		100%

Course Outline / Class Schedule

This schedule is general and very tentative. You should always rely first and foremost on the messages posted on LEARN after each and every class in order to know what the exact readings are.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Date	What is an argument	Chapter 1
2	Date	Argument structure	Chapter 2
3	Date	Words and definition	Chapter 3
4	Date	Good arguments	Chapter 4
5	Date	Acceptable premises	Chapter 5
6	Date	Relevance	Chapter 6
7	Date	Deduction	Chapter 7
8	Date	Statement and immediate inference	Chapter 7
9	Date	Rules of syllogism	Chapter 7
10	Date	Induction	Chapter 9
11	Date	Induction (continued)	Chapter 10
12	Date	Analogical reasoning	Chapter 11

Make-up Tests and Plagiarism

There will be no make-up evaluation for quizzes, tests or final exams 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

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) 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 their 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 their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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.