

Philosophy 110
CRITICAL THINKING
Fall 2016

Meeting: M W F 8:00-8:50, Dooly Memorial 119
Instructor: Azenet López
Email: all56@miami.edu
Office Hours: Merrick Building, Room 251 (email me for appointment).

Textbook:

Rainbolt, George W., and Sandra L. Dwyer, *Critical Thinking: The Art of Argument*, Second edition, Cengage Learning, 2015.

Course Overview:

Critical thinking is a skill. In a nutshell, this skill consists in being able to elaborate good arguments to back up your beliefs, and also in being able to evaluate how good the arguments that other people gives to back up their own beliefs are. This is an introductory class which aims at familiarizing you with some of the fundamental concepts related to this skill. But, most importantly, in this class you will practice critical thinking by analyzing and sometimes constructing several different types of arguments.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this semester you will be able to:

- Identify when an argument is given, and distinguish arguments from non-argumentative forms of discourse.
- Identify the premises and conclusion of any given argument.
- Identify sub-arguments within an argument.
- Distinguish arguments that guarantee the truth of the conclusion (deductive arguments) from arguments that only support the conclusion to a certain degree (inductive arguments).
- Identify some of the most common correct argument forms.
- Identify the most common fallacies of reasoning.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

45%..... 14 weekly assignments

15%.....Exam 1

15%.....Exam 2

- 15%.....Exam 3
- 10%.....Attendance and participation

Grading scale:

The usual grading scale will apply: 0-59% F, 60-62% D-, 63-66% D, 67-69% D+, 70-72% C-, 73-76% C, 77-79% C+, 80-82% B-, 83-86% B, 87-89% B+, 90-92% A-, 93-96% A, 97-100% A+.

About the exams:

The exams are take home. You are required to take all three exams. However, your lowest grade will be dropped and replaced by your highest grade. For instance, if your grades for exams 1-3 are 60, 80 and 90, you'll end up with 90, 80 and 90.

About the assignments:

Weekly assignments are due every Monday. Assignments for every week are indicated below.

Late assignments are strongly discouraged and (except in cases of documented illness or documented grave emergency) will be downgraded at a rate of 5% per day late.

WRITING CREDIT:

In order to earn writing credit, students need to write a minimum of 4,000 words and revise their work in the light of the instructor's feedback. **If you need writing credit for this class, you must let me know as soon as possible.** You will be required to write a paper **INSTEAD** of submitting the weekly assignments. Your grade for the paper will be determined as follows:

- (1) A 500 words outline of your paper..... 5%
- (2) Expansion of that outline into a full 3,500 words paper 30%
- (3) Revised version of the paper that takes into account
instructor's feedback..... 10%
- TOTAL.....45%

All (1) to (3) must be submitted with a word count. See below for due dates.

Some suggested paper topics are:

- Chapter 5, exercise 5.5, 2 (p.179)
- Chapter 7, exercise 7.2, 1 (p.253)
- Chapter 7, exercise 7.2, 2 (p.253)
- Chapter 7, exercise 7.2, 5 (p.253)
- Chapter 10, exercise 10.4 (p. 380)

However, you are welcome to come and talk to me if there is a different topic (relevant to the class) you would like to write about.

Class Participation and Attendance Policy:

You must come to class prepared, having read the assigned sections of the book, and prepared to answer (and ask) questions about them. **You are allowed to miss a maximum of three classes**, without any harm to your grade. After that, the percentage corresponding to your absences will be deducted from your grade.

Academic Dishonesty:

No plagiarism will be tolerated. Any student caught cheating in any way will automatically fail the course.

Disabilities:

Any student who may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible in order to make the necessary accommodations.

Tentative Schedule:

The schedule below is subject to change as the course develops:

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 1	Ch. 1 Critical Thinking and Arguments	1.2 7-10 1.3 2, 5, 13 1.4 5, 6, 11
WEEK 2	Ch. 2 Good Arguments	1.6 9,11 2.4 3, 5, 10 2.5 10, 11, 15
WEEK 3	Ch. 2 (continued) Ch. 3 Premises and conclusions NO CLASS ON SEPT. 5: LABOR DAY	2.7 C 2.10 9, 11, 14 3.2 D 1-5, E
WEEK 4	Ch. 3 (continued) Ch. 4 Language	3.3 14, 15 3.4 A 7 4.1 A 2, 14 4.4 5, 6, 7
WEEK 5	Ch. 4 Language NO CLASS ON SEPT. 23 & 26: I'm off for a conference	4.5 6, 13 4.6 2, 4, 14
WEEK 6	Ch. 5 Propositional arguments	5.1 1, 3, 5, 7, 10 5.2 1, 11, 12, 13 EXAM 1 IS DUE WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 28
WEEK 7	Ch. 5 (continued)	5.3 3-8 Outline is due Oct. 14

WEEK 8	Ch. 5 (continued) Ch. 6 Categorical arguments	5.4 1,3,5,10 5.5 1 6.1 2-5 6.2 A1, 2, 9, 13 6.2 B (only for the above)
WEEK 9	Ch. 6 (continued) FALL RECESS	6.4 A 6.5 A 4-8, B 3, 4
WEEK 10	Ch. 6 (continued) Ch. 7 Analogical arguments	6.7 (only for the above) 7.1 A
WEEK 11	Ch. 7 (continued) Ch. 8 Statistical arguments	7.2 3, 5 7.3 C 2, 4 8.3 2, 7, 13 EXAM 2 IS DUE MONDAY, OCT. 31
WEEK 12	Ch. 8 (continued) NO CLASS ON NOV. 11: I'm off for a conference	8.4 B (only for the above) 8.5 3, 13
WEEK 13	Ch. 9 Causal arguments	9.2 3, 6, 10 9.4 A 1-5 9.5 A 2, 9, C3 Paper due Nov.18
	THANKSGIVING RECESS	
WEEK 14	Ch. 10 Moral arguments	10.1 2, 5, 12 10.2 10.3 7-9 10.6 9-11
WEEK 15	Review day	EXAM 3 IS DUE SUNDAY, DEC. 11, AT MIDNIGHT
FINALS WEEK		Revised paper due Dec. 14

Getting to my office:

From the entrance that faces the old student activity center and the bookstore: Go through the glass door, make a right, then a left. Make another left at the end of the hallway.

From the fountain side: Look for the glass door that says “Anthropology Department”, in the right hand side of the building. Go through the door and go up. Then down.

For both: If you see this staircase, you’re at the right place! My office is upstairs.

