

**Philosophy 126 Section 06 – Logic and Argumentative Writing
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Spring 2018**

9:10 - 11:00 am Building 20, Room 128

Dr. Linda Bomstad lbomstad@calpoly.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 11:10 am to 1:00 pm

Building 026M, Room 103

GE Requirement Satisfied by This Course: Area A3

Course Prerequisites: Completion of GE Area A1 and Area A2

Required Texts: Lewis Vaughn, *The Power of Critical Thinking*, 5th edition
Bruce Bartlett, *The Truth Matters*, Ten Speed Press

Welcome to PHIL126!

Most of you already have good reasoning skills, or you wouldn't be in this university classroom. So, my goal here is to introduce ways of improving the critical thinking skills you already have, and provide you with plenty of opportunities to practice sharpening those skills. In addition, I hope that our classroom experience will help to foster in each of you the desire and disposition to think critically, often and well.

Thinking well has its benefits, of course. It will help you succeed in other university courses, pass such post-baccalaureate entrance exams as the GRE, GMAT, MCAT, or LSAT, and do better on pre-employment and job training tests. Moreover, sharpened skill in reasoning is important in all aspects of your everyday life, as a citizen, consumer, family member and so on. In short, good critical thinking is an essential element of a successful life--at the university, in a career, in your civic life, and beyond.

And we cannot overlook the fact that clear, logical thinking can help us win arguments and defeat viewpoints that we oppose. Granted, there is a certain pleasure in pointing out the absurdity or logical flaw in someone else's position. But the greatest value in critical thinking comes when we apply it ruthlessly to our own beliefs, viewpoints and reasoning. For then, and only then, can we achieve the goal of every educated person: to become a fully autonomous thinker, making careful, informed and well-reasoned independent decisions about what to believe and do.

Course Format:

Our course will be lecture-discussion, with an emphasis on discussion. So, it is important to **keep up with and think about** reading assignments. (This helps at exam time, too)

Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete PHIL 126 will be able to:

- Identify issues and the arguments that address them
- Recognize, analyze, evaluate arguments--one's own and others
- Discern the relevance of premises to conclusions, and the relevance of arguments to issue
- Explain and apply rules of deductive validity and soundness, and inductive strength
- Recognize and explain rhetorical uses of language, and common fallacies of reasoning

- Find, evaluate and incorporate research materials, as well as document them accurately
- Apply principles of fair-minded argument (including how to identify and respond to bias, emotion and propaganda)
- Write in-class and out-of-class argumentative essays

One Important Note: To avoid having to repeat this class, you must earn a C- grade or better!

REQUIREMENTS:

Journal – worth 10% of your final grade

Three Midterm Exams – each worth 10% of your final grade (NO early or make-up exams)

Two papers – each worth 15% of your final grade

Final Exam – worth 30% of your final grade

Exam Challenge Opportunity - Protocols for challenging graded exams:

1. Challenges to keyed answers on the standardized (scantron) part of the exam must begin as follows: "My answer is as good or better than the keyed answer because.....
2. Next, that claim must be supported by careful, clear and cogent reasoning that appeals to criteria (from text, or powerpoints) for a correct answer to the item.
3. Challenges to scoring of written responses can be more informal, but still require cogent reasoning.
4. Challenge Deadline: One week from the date exam was returned. No late challenges will be accepted.

READINGS (finish readings in advance of the day discussed below)

APRIL

| | | |
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| T | 3 | Critical Thinking: Power (Chapter 1) & Obstacles (Chapter 2) |
| TH | 5 | Making Sense of Arguments (Chapter 3) |
| T | 10 | Reasons for Belief and Doubt (Chapter 4) |
| TH | 12 | Fallacies and Persuaders (Chapter 5) |
| T | 17 | White Paper Peer Review |
| TH | 18 | Midterm Exam #1 |
| T | 24 | Deductive Reasoning: Propositional Logic (Chapter 6) |
| TH | 26 | Propositional Logic, continued |

MAY

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| T | 1 | Propositional Logic, continued |
| TH | 3 | Deductive Reasoning: Categorical Logic (Chapter 7) |
| T | 8 | Categorical Logic, continued |
| TH | 10 | Midterm Exam #2 |
| T | 15 | Inductive Reasoning (Chapter 8) |
| TH | 17 | Argument by Analogy (Chapter 8) |
| T | 22 | Causal Reasoning (Chapter 8) |

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| TH | 24 | Inference to the Best Explanation (Chapter 9) |
| T | 29 | Judging Scientific Theories (Chapter 10) |
| TH | 31 | Midterm Exam #3 |

JUNE

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| T | 5 | Critical Thinking in Ethics (Chapter 11) |
| TH | 7 | Review for Final Exam |
| T | 12 | FINAL EXAM – 10:10 am – 1:00 pm |