

Phil 102, 3 Credit, Fall 2015, Somewhere.

Critical Thinking

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Course Description

In this course, we will be learning how to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments. We will begin by discussing what critical thinking is and why we should improve our ability to do it. Since critical thinking concerns arguments, the bulk of the course will focus on reconstructing arguments and learning how to diagnose them. Topics to be covered include argument patterns, argument types, fallacies, introductory formal logic, probabilistic reasoning, and reasoning in the law.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to (i) identify the difference between deductive and inductive arguments, (ii) assess the former for validity and soundness, the latter for strength, (iii) identify argument patterns, (iv) diagnose their own thoughts, (v) reason better.

Required Textbook

By 09/08/2015, the following textbook must be purchased or rented:

- [‘The Power of Critical Thinking: Effective Reasoning about Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims’, 4th edition, by Lewis Vaughn](#) (Available from the campus book store as well as online retailers)
- [Book’s Companion website](#)

Requirements

- *Workload*: Successfully completing this course requires a minimum commitment of 6 hours per week.
- *6 Problem Sets*: administered through Blackboard. First problem set due in Week 3.
- *2 Exams*: There is a mid-term and cumulative final.
- *Attendance*: Roll call will be taken from Week 1. 0.5 point per class up to a maximum of 10 points. Excludes Week 1 & 2.
- *Grade Distribution*: 6 Problem sets—10 points each (60 total); Mid-term—20; Final—25; Attendance—0.5 point per class (10 total).
- *Grade Breakdown*:

96–115	A		77–79	C+
90–95	A-		73–76	C
87–89	B+		70–72	C-
83–86	B		60–69	D
80–82	B -		0–59	F

Policies

- *Student Responsibility:* This syllabus outlines the required text, assignments, requirements, and policies for this course. By taking this course, you agree to read this syllabus and be bound by those requirements and policies.
- *Late work & Make-up Policy:*
 - All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard by 1:00 pm on the due date (see assignment schedule below).
 - No make-ups or late work accepted under any circumstances. No exceptions.
 - Blackboard difficulties are rare and automatically reported to instructors. Under no circumstance will a student's report of a Blackboard difficulty be reason for an extension. It is your responsibility to contact blackboard support for help: dlsupport@njcu.edu.
- *Attendance:* You are considered absent if you are (i) not present during roll call, or (ii) leave early, or (iii) leave without permission, or (iv) leave for an extended period of time.
- *Electronic devices:* Use of electronic device, including, but not limited, to smartphones, dictaphones, tablets, laptops, is prohibited. Recording a lecture is in violation of Copyright. Penalties include, but are not limited to, a lost of attendance grade for the day of violation. Repeat offenders will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- *Conduct:* Distracting and disrespectful behavior, including but not limited to eating, leaving your seat, talking out of turn, aggression is prohibited. Penalties include, but are not limited to, a lost of attendance grade for the day of violation. Repeat offenders will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- *Communication:* All communication will be through Blackboard. Messages will be responded to within two days of receiving them.
- *Grading Schedule:* Grades will be available within 1 week of an assignment being submitted.
- *Statement for students with disabilities:* If you are a student with a disability and wish to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, please register with the Office of Specialized Services and Supplemental Instruction (OSS/SI). To begin this process, complete the registration form available on the OSS/SI

website at www.njcu.edu/Specialized_Services.aspx (listed under Student Resources-Forms). Contact OSS/SI at 201-200-2091 or visit the office in Karnoutsos Hall, Room 102 for additional information.

Plagiarism

- You are bound by [NJCU's Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- Penalty for plagiarism:
 - 1st infraction: 0 for the assignment.
 - 2nd infraction: 0 for the entire course & application for permanent record on student's transcript. (Repeated violations can lead to expulsion from NJCU).

Weekly Course Schedule

Dates refer to the first day of the week:

1. 08/31 Introduction, no class on Mon. ch.1.
2. 09/07 Continued, no class on Mon. ch.1
3. 09/14 Obstacles to Critical Thinking, ch.2
4. 09/21 Judging Arguments, ch.3
5. 09/28 Argument Patterns, ch.3
6. 10/05 Deductive Reasoning, ch.6
7. 10/12 Connectives & Truth Values, ch.6
8. 10/19 Truth Tables, ch.6
9. 10/26 Review and mid-term.
10. 11/02 Enumerative Induction, ch.8
11. 11/09 Analogical and Causal Arguments, ch.8
12. 11/16 Fallacies and Persuaders, ch.5
13. 11/23 Continued (catchup), ch.5

14. *11/30* Inference to the Best Explanation. ch.9
15. *11/01* Continued, ch.9
16. *12/14* Exam Review

Not enough time on truth tables.

Assignment & Exam Schedule

Dates refer to the due date. All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard by 1:00pm. No late work accepted. No make-ups. No exceptions. Final exam will be determined by NJCU's centralized exam schedule.

1. *09/18/2015*, Problem Set 1 (covers ch.1 and 2)
2. *10/01/2015*, Problem Set 2 (cover ch. 3)
3. *10/15/2015*, Problem Set 3 (covers parts of ch. 6)
4. *10/28/2015*, Mid-term
5. *11/13/2015*, Problem Set 4 (ch.8)
6. *11/20/2015*, Problem Set 5 (covers ch.5)
7. *12/10/2015*, Problem Set 6
8. *Exam Week*. Final exam date to be determined.