

UWG PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

PHIL 2020

CRITICAL THINKING (3 hours)

Spring Semester 2012

Section: 04/CRN: 11911/Time: 5:30p-6:50p

Class Location: Pafford, 306

Email: jchristi@westga.edu

Instructor: **Jesse G. Christiansen M.A.**

Office: Pafford, 304D

Office Hours: 3:30pm-5pm
and by email appointment

My office telephone:

English/Philosophy telephone: (678) 839-4164

**All email communication must be conducted from your official UWG email account. Students are obligated to check their UWG email accounts on a regular basis and to ensure that their mailboxes do not become full.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides an introduction to logical reasoning and critical thinking. We will focus on the nature and analysis of arguments, deductive and non-deductive reasoning, informal fallacies, and the uses of language, focusing on skills essential to effective critical thinking in both academic and general use. The study of important common components (issue, method, evidence, and conclusion) provides a basis for the construction, analysis, and evaluation of arguments in a variety of contexts. This course also addresses fundamental elements of informal logic, including induction, deduction, fallacy-avoidance, moral and legal reasoning, and causality.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the semester, each student will be able to:

- Identify deductive and inductive argumentation;
- Distinguish fact and informed opinion from mere opinion in a variety of argumentative contexts;
- Organize evidence and compose persuasive arguments, both orally and in writing;
- Identify and distinguish formal and informal fallacies of reasoning;
- Identify, develop, and analyze reasons in support of a conclusion.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students to better:

- ask philosophical questions and differentiate their types;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues;
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: Because of the size of the class, this is primarily a lecture course, although we will regularly take time for class discussions. Reading assignments will be made on a regular basis. In order to benefit fully from lectures, **it is a must** that you do the reading when it is assigned. Success in this course will require a commitment of your time and energy. I advise the following study regimen: Do the assigned reading and writing before coming to class. (This is the bare minimum!) As soon as possible after class and in the light of class discussion and lecture, re-read the selection, taking notes for review and study. This will go a long way toward preparing you for the examinations.

REQUIRED TEXT:

- *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 11th edition, Patrick J. Hurley.
- Online materials: the above textbook comes with a tutorial CD that has proved **quite helpful** to students due to its supplemental logical exercises; practice is the cornerstone of learning logic.

EVALUATION:

Grading Percentages: Homework Exercises 15%, Exams 45%, Paper/Presentation 30%, Attendance and Participation 10%.

Exercises: doing the starred exercises as well as assigned non-starred exercises from the text is an integral part of being successful in this course. Assigned non-starred exercises must be turned-in in person at the end of tested sections (instructor to provide details).

Exams: there will be two exams composed primarily of multiple-choice questions. The best preparation includes: starred and assigned exercises, class notes, and text review.

Paper: there is a short philosophy-style, argumentative paper (2-3 pages) for this course (instructor will provide further details). Turn in in-person. Instructor will provide more detail regarding the argumentative paper as part of the course.

Presentation: each student will be required to give a ten-minute oral presentation of their argumentative papers to the class during the scheduled philosophy conference (see course schedule). The presentation of the paper will be a persuasive argument using premises and conclusion, as well as responding to questions, logical evaluation, and objections raised by the class afterward.

Attendance and Participation: philosophy courses in general are discussion and question driven. Regular, punctual attendance is strongly recommended. Remember that attendance and participation are worth 10% of your total grade. Excessive unexcused absences will reduce a student's attendance and participation grade. In cases where excessive unexcused absences impair a student's ability to do the required course work, he or she may need to consider withdrawal from the course and should meet with instructor to further discuss his or her situation.

GRADING SCALE:

100 – 90.1% A 90.0 – 80.1% B 80.0 – 70.1% C 70.0 – 60.1% D 60.0 - 0% F

ATTENDANCE, FOOD, CELLPHONES, ETC.

- **You are permitted to miss two class meetings (one week worth of class) with no effect on your grade. Beginning with your third unexcused absence, you will lose points from your final attendance and participation grade for every class meeting you miss.** This policy applies to the first week of class, even for days on which you have not yet registered for the class. I will make exceptions for absences necessitated by UWG-sponsored events or by other circumstances that were absolutely outside your control. However, I will make these exceptions **only if ALL of your absences can be accounted for in one of these ways** (e.g., if you miss seven classes and you have documented, acceptable reasons for missing only six classes, then your seventh absence will still count against you, no matter the reason for that absence, even if it is for a UWG-sponsored event). Documentation will be required in all cases in which I make an exception to this absence policy. **Do not squander the two absences you are allowed: they are to be saved for when you *must* be absent, not to be burned through when you simply don't feel like coming to class.**
- Each student is responsible for everything which happens in class and is responsible for making specific arrangements with the instructor for the work missed, including that missed during illness or university-sponsored activities. Any student who is unable to continue attendance in class should either drop the course, withdraw from the University, or make appropriate arrangements with the instructor; any student who must be absent for more than three successive days is required to notify the Student Development Center, Parker Hall, telephone 678-839-6428. It is also recommended that the student notify the instructor or department.
- **Students who miss 8 or more class meetings (four weeks, or one month, worth of classes) will receive a grade of "F."** In this case the reason for your absences is irrelevant, even if many of your absences are necessitated by participation in UWG-sponsored events. If participating in UWG-sponsored events will require that you miss one month's worth of class meetings, you should drop this class immediately, before the end of the drop-add session. If you are unable to attend class for a month due to medical reasons, a family emergency, or any other reason, you should withdraw from class; if the withdrawal date has passed, you should apply for a hardship withdrawal from all of your classes.
- An early departure or late arrival may be counted as an absence, depending on the circumstances. I will decide in each case whether an early departure or a late arrival counts as an absence. If you know before class that you will not be able to stay for the entire class session, please inform me of this before class and sit as close to the door as possible, so as to be minimally distracting when you leave.
- **Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others.** Such behavior includes – but is not limited to – arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or surfing the web, using personal audio or visual devices, leaving the classroom while class is in session (e.g., to visit the restroom) is both disrespectful and distracting (do not leave the room during class unless it is

absolutely essential that you do so). Constantly talking while an instructor or other student is talking is also considered rude and disruptive behavior and could result in student class dismissal and/or other disciplinary action. **Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy above.**

- Do not study **material from other classes** while this class is in session. While you are in this class, I expect your attention to be focused on it rather than on your other courses. Do not **eat** while class is in session (drinks are OK). **You must keep all cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices off during class; this implies that you may not send text messages during class.** You may use a laptop computer to take notes during class, but I reserve the right to change this policy during the semester if your laptop use becomes distracting to me or to other students, or if you abuse this privilege by looking at material during class that has nothing to do with class.
 - If you know that you will need to miss class on a day on which a test is scheduled (for example, due to a UWG sponsored event), you must let me know about your absence as far in advance as possible so that we can schedule another day and time for you to take the test (or a make-up test). If you miss a test without receiving my explicit permission beforehand and making arrangements for a make-up test, you will be permitted to take a make-up test only if one of the following conditions applies: (a) Your absence was due to illness or injury serious enough to require professional medical care and which prevented you from contacting me before the test; or (b) Your absence was due to other extenuating circumstances beyond your control. I will determine on a case-by-case basis what constitutes "extenuating circumstances beyond your control." You may be required to provide documentation pertaining to your absence before you are allowed to take a make-up test. **Make-up tests will usually be different than the original test that you missed.**
 - **QUIZZES MAY NOT BE MADE UP IN THIS COURSE.**
 - **Extra-credit work will not be given under any circumstances. Work completed for other courses will not be accepted in this course.**
- ***Late papers will be deduced one letter grade for each calendar day they are late.*****
- **From the *UWG Undergraduate Catalog*:** "Class attendance policies are determined by each instructor for his or her own classes, subject to the following principles: class attendance policies shall be stated clearly during the drop-add period; each student is responsible for everything which happens in class and is responsible for making specific arrangements with the instructor for the work missed, including that missed during illness or university-sponsored activities; students absent from class while officially representing the University should not be penalized in the calculation of final grades; students may be dropped from the class by the instructor for violation of the instructor's attendance policy with a grade of W up to the midpoint of the semester or with the grade of WF following the midpoint of the semester; any student who is unable to continue attendance in class should either drop the course, withdraw from the University, or make appropriate arrangements with the instructor; any student who must be absent for more than three successive days is required to notify the Student Development Center, Parker Hall, telephone 678-839-6428. It is also recommended that the student notify the instructor or department. Faculty members have the authority to drop students who do not contact them or attend the first two class meetings for classes which meet daily (or the first class meeting for classes which meet less frequently). Faculty do not, however, automatically drop students who miss these first classes. Students who do not intend to remain in a course must drop the course before the end of the official drop/add period. Failure to drop a course during the drop/add period may result in grades of F in courses not attended."
 - **Academic Honor.** "At West Georgia, the student is expected to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and excellence. Not only does academic honesty preserve the integrity of both the student and the institution, but it is also essential in gaining a true education. The West Georgia student, therefore, pledges not to lie, cheat or steal in the pursuit of his or her studies and is encouraged to report those who do." **Students who commit plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without attribution of credit) will receive an "F" for the entire course and may be reported to the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for additional action.**

Disability Pledge

I pledge to do my best to work with the University to provide all students with equal access to my classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc.

If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make these known to me, either yourself or through Disability Services in 272 Parker Hall.

Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. This is not only my personal commitment: it is your right, and it is the law!

For more information, please contact Disability Services at the State University of West Georgia.

Week of 1/09:

Mon: Introduction to Course

Wed: Arguments, Premises, and Conclusions/Recognizing Arguments, 1.1-1.2

Week of 1/16:

Mon: NO CLASS *** Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday *****

Wed: Deduction and Induction, 1.3

Week of 1/23:

Mon: Validity, Truth, Soundness, Strength, and Cogency, 1.4

Wed: Proving Invalidity, 1.5

Week of 1/30:

Mon: Varieties of Meaning

Wed: Definitions and Their Purposes/Definitional Techniques, 2.3-2.4

Week of 2/06:

Mon: Criteria For Lexical Definitions, 2.5

Wed: Catch-Up/Review/****Chapter 1 & 2 Exercises Due****

Week of 2/13

Mon: ****Mid-Term Exam****

Wed: Fallacies in General/Fallacies of Relevance, 3.1-3.2

Week of 2/20:

Mon: Fallacies of Weak Induction, 3.3

Wed: Fallacies of Presumption, Ambiguity, and Grammatical Analogy, 3.4

Week of 2/27:

Mon: Fallacies in Ordinary Language, 3.5

****Fallacy Exercises Due****

Wed: Analogical Reasoning, 9.1

*****FRIDAY, MARCH 2ND: Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W."*****

Week of 3/5:

Mon: Legal Reasoning/Legal Class Debate, 9.2

Wed: Moral Reasoning/Moral Class Debate, 9.3

Week of 03/12:

Mon: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Wed: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Week of 03/19:

Mon: SPRING BREAK ***** NO CLASSES

Wed: SPRING BREAK ***** NO CLASSES

Week of 3/26:

Mon: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Wed: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Week of 4/2:

Mon: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Wed: **PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE (Attendance Required)**

Week of 4/9:

Mon: Cause and Necessary and Sufficient Conditions, 10.1

Wed: Mill's Five Methods, 10.2

*****Argumentative Papers Due*****

Week of 4/16:

Mon: Catch-Up

Wed: Final Exam Review/****Causal Exercise Due****

*****FINAL EXAM: Monday, April 23rd, 5pm-7:30pm, same room**