

Philosophy 210-2
Reason in Communication
Spring 2010

Instructor: Michael Goldsby

Office: 5166 Helen C. White

Office Hours: 1:30 – 2:30 Mondays and
Fridays or by appointment

Email: goldsby@wisc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Jeff Pretti

Office: 5146 Helen C. White

Office Hours: 11:00 – 12:00 Wednesdays
and Thursdays or by appointment

Email: pretti@wisc.edu

Required Texts:

(1) *Critical Thinking* (7th Edition) by Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker

(2) *Logic Primer* (2nd Edition) by Colin Allen and Michael Hand

Both texts are available at the University Book Store.

Course Description and Goals:

This course will focus on basic reasoning skills. Over the next 15 weeks, you will learn to identify and critically analyze arguments, which will enable you to better evaluate the arguments of others as well as enabling you to better construct arguments of your own. In other words, the goal of this course is to develop your ability to think critically. Specific topics that we will cover include: common fallacies, deductive and inductive arguments, categorical logic, and truth-functional logic.

Course Requirements:

Your grade in this class will be determined by your performance on exams, your timely completion of the homework assignments and your participation in lecture and discussion section, as indicated by the following breakdown:

Exams	90%
Homework	(see below)
Participation	10%

1. *Exams* – Over the course of this semester, you will take five (5) unit exams that correspond to each of the five units of this course (see the tentative schedule for projected dates) and each will count for **18%** of your final grade. The **final exam** for this course is *cumulative* and will be administered at **7:45 am on the 10th of May**. Your score on the final exam will supersede your score on any of the five unit exams provided that (1) your score on the final exam is higher than your score on the unit exam, *and* (2) you did not receive a zero for failing to take the unit exam.
2. *Homework* – Homework will be assigned each week on Friday, and it will be due the following Wednesday (in lecture). **No late homework will be accepted.** The homework will be marked as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Homework that is not turned in is unsatisfactory as is any homework that does not demonstrate a serious effort. Correct answers are not required to receive satisfactory marks. All that is necessary is a demonstration of a sincere effort to complete the assignment. You

can receive two unsatisfactory marks without penalty. However, **two percentage points will be taken off of your final grade for each unsatisfactory mark that you receive in excess of two.**

3. *Participation* – Your participation grade will be based on attendance, preparedness, engagement, effort, and attitude in both discussion section and lecture. Jeff and I will be keeping track of how well each of you meet these standards in lecture. Jeff will provide you with further guidance about the level of participation that he expects in discussion section.

Guidelines and Policies:

Attendance – Attendance is mandatory for both lecture and discussion section. Failure to attend lecture or discussion section will impact your grade both directly and indirectly. Much of the material in the latter half of this class will most likely be new to you – not to mention difficult – meaning that your likelihood of success decreases with every absence. Furthermore, your participation grade directly depends upon your showing up to class – one cannot participate if one is not present. So, the policy will be that **more than two (2) unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade.**

Lecture – Our time together is very precious, and as such, I expect you to attend the lectures having read the assigned readings and generally ready to learn. This also means that during class time there should be nothing on your desk that is not required for class (e.g. no newspapers, cell phones, etc.). All cell phones should be silenced and stowed away – that of course means no texting. Laptops may be used for note-taking if you wish, but you should not be checking email, tweeting, facebooking or doing anything else distracting while in lecture. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

Discussion Section – Jeff and I expect you to attend discussion section and to come prepared. Discussion section is very important as it provides you a smaller venue for getting your questions answered, digesting the material through discussion, getting feedback on your homework and preparing for the exams. You'll get further instructions from Jeff concerning discussion section expectations and policies.

Respect in the Classroom – Over the course of the semester, we may discuss some very sensitive issues – ones that may cause your blood to boil. I think J.S. Mill said it best when he said, “there is nothing that offends no one, and no one who is offended by nothing.” It is possible that you may leave lecture very upset about the day's discussion – good! I hope that I challenge you to think about issues of such import that they would make us angry, sad and wanting to make a change in our lives or the world. However, I expect everyone to treat every other member of this class with the highest degree of respect. Acting otherwise will result in dire consequences for the transgressors.

Special Arrangements – Any student who requires special arrangements for attending class or doing assignments must let me know by the end of the second week of class. I will work with the McBurney Center to make any reasonable accommodations.

*Changes to this syllabus may be made during the course of the semester.

Tentative Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change.

Week 1: Jan 19 – Jan 22

W – Introduction

F – *Critical Thinking* (pp 1-20) Chapter 1 (claims, arguments, objective vs. subjective); HW1 assigned

Week 2: Jan 25 – Jan 29

M – *Critical Thinking* (pp 41-68) Chapter 2 (definitions, ambiguity, fallacies of composition and division, vagueness, comparisons)

W – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 2 (cont.); HW1 Due

F – *Critical Thinking* (pp 124-141) Chapter 4 (rhetorical devices: slanters); HW2 Assigned

Week 3: Feb 1 – Feb 5

M – *Critical Thinking* (pp 152-171) Chapter 5 (rhetorical devices: fallacies)

W – *Critical Thinking* (pp 181-200) Chapter 6 (more Fallacies); HW2 Due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 6 (cont.) HW3 assigned

Week 4: Feb 8 – Feb 12

Monday February 8th Exam 1

W – *Critical Thinking* (pp 226-245) Chapter 7 (arguments: deductive and inductive, validity, soundness, strong arguments, unstated premises) HW3 Due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 7 (cont.); HW4 assigned

Week 5: Feb 15 – Feb 19

M – *Critical Thinking* (pp 247-253) Chapter 7 (argument structure, evaluating arguments)

W – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 7 (cont.); HW4 Due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 7 (cont.); **No Homework this week.**

Week 6: Feb 22 – Feb 26

Monday February 22nd Exam 2

W – *Critical Thinking* (261-271) Chapter 8 (categorical logic, square of opposition)

F – *Critical Thinking* (272-275) Chapter 8 (conversion, obversion, contraposition); HW5 assigned

Week 7: Mar 1 – Mar 5

M – *Critical Thinking* (281-291) Chapter 8 (categorical syllogisms, Venn diagrams)

W – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 (Venn diagrams); HW5 Due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 (cont.); HW6 assigned

Week 8: Mar 8 – Mar 12

M – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 (cont.)

W – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 (cont.); HW6 due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 (cont.); **No homework this week**

Week 9: Mar 15 – Mar 19

M – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 8 Review

Wednesday March 17th Exam 3

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 9 (pp 306-320) **and** *Logic Primer* (pp 1-16) (introduction to truth-functional logic); HW7 assigned

Week 10: Mar 22 – Mar 26

M – *Logic Primer* (pp 1-16) (logical connectives, conditionals, translations)

W – *Logic Primer* (pp 1-16) (translations); HW7 due

F – *Logic Primer* (pp 39-54) (truth tables) HW8 assigned

Spring Break March 27th – April 4th

Week 11: Apr 5 – Apr 9

M – *Logic Primer* (pp 39-54) (truth tables)

W – *Logic Primer* (pp 17-26) (primitive rules of proofs); HW8 due

F – *Logic Primer* (pp 17-26) (primitive rules of proofs); HW 9 assigned

Week 12: Apr 12 – Apr 16

M – *Logic Primer* (pp 17-26) (primitive rules of proofs)

W – *Logic Primer* (pp 28-35) (derived rules); HW9 due

F – Truth-functional review; HW10 assigned

Week 13: Apr 19 – Apr 23

Monday April 19th Exam 4

W – *Critical Thinking* (pp 357-380) Chapter 10 (inductive generalizations); HW 10 due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 10 (cont.) (analogical arguments); HW11 assigned

Week 14: Apr 26 – Apr 30

M – *Critical Thinking* (pp 394-436) Chapter 11 (causal reasoning)

W – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 11 (cont.) (mistakes in causal reasoning); HW 11 due

F – *Critical Thinking* Chapter 11 (cont) (review and intro to moral reasoning); **No homework this week**

Week 15: May 3 – May 7

Monday May 3rd Exam 5

W – Moral Reasoning (cont.)

F – Review for final

Final Exam: Monday May 10th 7:45 am.