

CRITICAL THINKING

Philosophy 111, Summer 2014

Online Course

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Community
College
of Philadelphia

This syllabus serves as an introduction and a guide to the course.
As needed, some non-essential sections may be modified during the term.
Contact the instructor if you are unclear about any part of it.

Course Description:

The College Catalog describes the course in the following way: "Principles of critical thinking and problem solving, deductive and inductive logic, and fallacies. Includes the analysis of formal and informal arguments."

This course serves to promote the College Core Competencies of Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and Technological Competence.

Student Learning Outcomes state that successful completion of the course enables you to:

- Identify premises and conclusions using Aristotelian and Modern logic
- Analyze the relationships among premises and conclusions
- Reconstruct an argument eliminating irrelevant statements and arranging statements into premises and conclusions

This course is an introduction to the study and practice of critical reasoning and problem solving. You will learn several historical and contemporary critical thinking strategies and logical approaches. The course will help you improve your ability to compare and evaluate complex ideas, explanations, and arguments. Upon successfully completing this course you will have enhanced your fundamental reasoning skills, with an emphasis on argumentation. This will contribute to your improved ability to read, write, and think systematically and rigorously about a wide range of topics. In addition, it will improve your capacity for quantitative reasoning, particularly in the areas of categorical and probabilistic analysis.

Required Technology and Textbook:

This course is being offered entirely online. Computer literacy is assumed. You are not required to appear in person for any meetings or exams, and you are not required to be online at particular times. However, you will need several hours of access every week to a computer or mobile device with some minimal system requirements, including internet access and an approved internet browser or Canvas app. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are able to connect fully and properly to our course site.

If you are new to online courses at CCP, become familiar with how the Canvas system works and where to go if you need help. Visit the College's Online Learning website for details: www.ccp.edu/academic-offerings/online-learning. For technical assistance, contact the Office of Online Learning at onlinelearning@ccp.edu, or contact the College's IT Support team: (215) 496-6000 or 4itsupport@ccp.edu.

No textbook or workbook is required for this course. All the necessary materials are provided through the online course itself.

Activities and Assignments:

As you might expect, the value you gain from the course depends directly on the time and effort you put in. This is a challenging course. It takes considerably time and effort each week to succeed. You will get support and assistance along the way, but plan ahead and be prepared to commit. If you go more than one week without any activity in the course, you may automatically fail the course for lack of participation.

The course requires that you spend a significant amount of time reading and studying the assigned lessons and topics. It is also essential that you log in regularly to read all relevant updates, comments, and questions from the instructor and your classmates. In addition to the General Discussion area available for questions and comments about the overall course content and structure, each unit of focused study has a dedicated discussion area where you can ask questions about the lesson, post your attempts at resolving the practice problems, or participate in a broader philosophical discussion concerning the topic. These discussion areas are an important part of the course. They are used in various ways, but mostly they are used to practice and review the lessons covered in the assigned reading each week. The instructor regularly posts supplementary information on a topic or suggests some extra content and activities to help you improve your understanding and skill. Participation in each week's discussion will account for 10% of your overall course grade. No particular number of posts are required each week, but you should expect to contribute to the discussion at least twice during the week to earn full credit.

There is no Mid-Term or Final Exam in this course. Instead, every week includes a quiz covering the material assigned that week. Quizzes account for 90% of your overall course grade. Take care to verify that you are in a secure location with a stable internet connection before sitting down to take a quiz. They cannot be restarted if they are stopped or interrupted. The types of problems on each quiz vary. The quiz problems will always match very closely the practice exercises or preview questions introduced during the week. Each quiz has a time limit of two hours. The number of questions on each quiz may vary, depending on the type of question. Each quiz will also give you the opportunity to earn extra credit by answering one or more additional questions beyond those required.

Over the length of the semester, extra credit can be a significant help in raising your course grade. It is also the way to make up for missed assignments.

Grading:

The following percentage scale is used to determine your quiz grades, and your overall course grade:
0 – 12 = F 13 – 32 = D 33 – 67 = C 68 – 87 = B 88 – 100 = A

Course grades reflect the following guidelines:

A is indicative of excellent work. It requires a demonstrated mastery of the material. You must understand and apply the relevant concepts, theories, and analytical skills with a high level of precision.

B indicates a strong competency and overall a job well done. However, there are some elements that are missed or skills that are not fully developed.

C corresponds with a satisfactory, but basic level of demonstrated understanding and analytic ability. There is evidence of some valuable thinking strategies and at least a general understanding of the relevant concepts. Your work is acceptable, but not good or great.

D indicates a level of work that is quite minimal. The quality is lacking in all respects. There is only a bare understanding of the material and often your work is missing intellectual depth.

F is reserved for situations where no work at all is done or the work is significantly below even a minimal measure of quality. Comprehension and skill application are entirely, or almost entirely, absent.

If you have a documented disability or other need requiring special accommodations for any course assignment or activity you should contact the Center on Disability at (215) 751-8050 and inform the instructor as soon as reasonably possible. This information is kept strictly confidential.

Academic Integrity:

The Community College of Philadelphia is dedicated to the intellectual and personal development of its students, and to promoting an environment that exemplifies the College's core values, including Integrity, Academic Excellence, and a Commitment to Teaching and Learning. Academic integrity requires respect for and acknowledgement of the work and efforts of others. It is essential to a high level of teaching and learning. Academic integrity emphasizes fairness, honesty, and responsibility in all academic endeavors and communications, on the part of both faculty and students.

Violations of academic integrity may involve a variety of acts, including, but not limited to, plagiarism and cheating. Anyone who assists another person in an activity that constitutes a violation of academic integrity is also responsible and accountable for such a violation. Plagiarism is the act of appropriating all or part of the work of another person or persons and passing it off as one's own. Cheating may occur as an intentional effort at deceiving the instructor, or an attempt to gain an unfair advantage over classmates.

Even one violation of academic integrity results in your automatic failure of the course. In addition, all violations of academic integrity are reported to the Dean of Students. There are no exceptions. Take this policy very seriously. Ignorance and carelessness are not acceptable excuses. If you are unsure about what is or is not appropriate, please contact the instructor.

Contact:

The instructor is available to address questions and concerns, but before asking a question it is wise to read the syllabus carefully and completely. Many common questions are answered here. Also, keep up to date by reading the instructor's posts in the Discussion areas of the course site as well. Questions are often covered there too. If you are still unsure, please ask. Most student questions or concerns are handled within the Discussion areas of the current week. This will be like raising your hand and asking a question in class. This allows students with similar questions to benefit from the instructor's answers.

You should contact the instructor through Canvas email if the matter you wish to discuss is private, personal, or confidential.

Public posts or private mail messages for the instructor will normally receive responses within 48 hours or less.

All communication with the instructor should be through Canvas. However, if you cannot log into Canvas and need to contact the instructor you may use College email or phone: oacostamorales@ccp.edu and (215) 751-8655. These methods of communication usually receive slower responses and should only be used if you are unable to access Canvas.