

Phil 115: Introduction to Practical Reasoning

Instructor: Andrea Sullivan-Clarke

Office Hours: Weds. 1:30-2:30, Friday 10-11, and by appt.

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Overview: We encounter arguments in all spheres of our daily lives. Arguments, whether made by family members, scientists, politicians or the media, are tendered in support of some position or other. This course is designed to introduce you to the various forms of argumentation and the ways to assess the strengths/limitations of those arguments. By the end of the course, you should be able to extract arguments from a variety of sources and offer a philosophical analysis of each.

Goals and Objectives:

- Identify the Different Forms of Argumentation
- Extract and Reconstruct Arguments from Different Media
- Develop Strategies for Critically Evaluating Each Form

Text: Richard Feldman, "Reason & Argument," 2nd edition (Prentice Hall, 1999).
Electronic sources to supplement weekly objectives

TENTATIVE COURSE READINGS AND CALENDAR*

Week 1	CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS Reading: Feldman pp. 1-52
Week 2	DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS Reading: Feldman pp. 55-80, 94-102
Week 3	INDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS Reading: Feldman pp. 80-92, 102-110
Week 4	AMPLIATIVE FORMS/ Exam 1 (April 18th) Reading: Electronic Sources
Week 5	RECONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS Reading: Feldman pp. 113-166
Week 6	EVALUATING ARGUMENTS Reading: Feldman pp. 167-213
Week 7	TESTIMONY/ Exam 2 (May 9th) Reading: Feldman pp. 216-231
Week 8	CAUSAL ARGUMENTS Reading: Feldman pp. 277-323

Week 9 **FALLACIES, ERRORS IN REASONING**
Reading: Electronic Sources

Week 10 **SCIENCE AND PSUEDOSCIENCE/ Exam 3 (June 3rd)**
Reading: Electronic Sources

Overview of Requirements:

Requirements:

Homework	50 points
Participation	75 points
Exam 1	125 points
Exam 2	125 points
Final	125 points
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	Total 500

Exams: Tentative dates for Exams 1 & 2 are April 18th & May 9th respectively. Exam 3 will be held on the last day of class, June 3rd. All exams will cover lecture material, readings, as well as in-class discussion. You may be tested on readings that were not covered in class.

Homework: Weekly homework assignments will be posted on the course web site. Homework problems will be discussed in lecture and “corrected” by peers. However, homework will ultimately be graded for completion. You must attend lecture in order to turn in your homework. No late homework will be accepted.

Participation: Short assignments, group work, pop-quizzes, and discussion in class will be considered as part of one’s class participation. No make-up work will be assigned for work done in class.

Scales and Criteria for Grading:

When converting total points to decimal grades the following scale will be used. To determine your overall class grade, add up all of the points you earned for each assignment, **double that total**, and then use the following chart.

Total Assignment/Decimal Points

1000-930 1000-965 = 4.0, 964-930 = 3.9
929-900 929-920 = 3.8, 919-910 = 3.7, 909-900 = 3.6
899-870 899-890 = 3.4, 889-880 = 3.3, 879-870 = 3.2
869-830 869-860 = 3.1, 859-840 = 3.0, 839-830 = 2.9
829-800 829-820 = 2.8, 819-810 = 2.7, 809-800 = 2.6
799-770 799-790 = 2.4, 789-780 = 2.3, 779-770 = 2.2
769-730 769-760 = 2.1, 759-740 = 2.0, 739-730 = 1.9

729-700 729-720 = 1.8, 719-710 = 1.7, 709-700 = 1.6
699-670 699-690 = 1.4, 689-680 = 1.3, 679-670 = 1.2
669-630 669-660 = 1.1, 659-640 = 1.0, 639-630 = 0.9
629-600 629-615 = 0.8, 614-600 = 0.7
599-0 599-0 = 0.0

There will be no curves and no extra credit in this class. You will not be graded relative to your fellow students. What this means is that it is possible for *everyone* to get an A (4.0) or an E (0.0) or anything in-between. In order to pass the course you must complete all assignments with an additive percentage of 60% or higher.

General Information

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is very important for doing well in the course. We will be discussing numerous cases, examples, beliefs, issues, and theories. Moreover the class builds upon itself — meaning that the cases, examples, and theories will come up again and again. Thus, attendance, participation, discussion, and asking questions, are all very important.

Cheating and Plagiarism: You are responsible for upholding the University's standards of academic honesty. Therefore, you should avoid engaging in illegitimate forms of help, looking at copies of exams from current and previous years, and/or peeking at someone else's work during an exam. If you are caught violating the University's standards of academic honesty, you will automatically fail the course and be reported to the Dean's Representative for Academic Conduct.

Students with Disabilities & Student Athletes: Be sure to identify yourself to the instructor so that reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made.

General Class Rules

- No disruptive behavior (no newspapers, texting, laptops, etc.)
- Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, ipods, etc.
- Try not to be late or leave early- if you must, then take a seat quickly and quietly.
- Do not talk while others are speaking, be polite and make this a great experience for everyone.

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time during the quarter.