

PHIL 115: Critical Thinking

Winter 2016

Instructor: Andrea Sullivan-Clarke

Class Time/Location: M-F 8:00-8:50 a.m. Salish Hall 254

Overview: The primary focus of this course is the study of argumentation. Information is a valuable commodity in today's world. However, there are a lot of bad arguments out there. Critical thinking includes being able to recognize good/bad arguments, identify fallacies (errors of reasoning), and develop an awareness of common rhetorical devices. These skills will not only help you to avoid being a victim of bad reasoning, but it will also prevent you from making such errors in your own arguments. This course is designed to introduce you to the various forms of argumentation and the ways philosophers assess the strengths/limitations of those arguments.

Goals and Objectives:

- Identify Different Forms of Argumentation
- Extract and Reconstruct Arguments from Different Media
- Develop Strategies for Critically Evaluating Each Form
- Construct Arguments in Support of a Particular Position
- Present Original Arguments as a Presentation and a Paper

Text: Richard Feldman, "Reason & Argument," 2nd edition (Prentice Hall, 1999).

Electronic sources to supplement weekly objectives; provided on Canvas.

Overview of Requirements:

Homework (9 @ 5 points each)	45 points
Participation	75 points
Weekly Quiz (9 @ 15 points each)	135 points
Plagiarism Quiz	15 points
Critical Draft	45 points
Final Paper	85 points
Final Exam	<u>100 points</u>
Total	500

Homework: Weekly homework assignments will be posted on the course web site and due each Thursday. Homework problems will be discussed and "corrected" by peers on Fridays. Ultimately, homework assignments will be graded for completion. You must attend lecture in order to turn in your homework. **No late homework will be accepted.**

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in class. This can be accomplished by actively listening, asking good questions, participating in class discussion/exercises, and attending office hours. Please note that the use of electronics, such as phone/computer/music players during class, may result in a lower participation grade. **Missed participation exercises cannot be made up.**

Weekly Quiz: Each Friday, there will be a quiz on the week's material (with the exception of Week 7). The format of each quiz will vary. A good way to prepare for them is to do the homework and learn why a problem is incorrect.

Plagiarism Quiz: This quiz covers the basic concepts regarding plagiarism and is intended to help the student distinguish between what should be cited as someone else's idea and their own original work. It is a short quiz and the student is expected to retake the quiz until they earn a 90% or above.

Critical Draft: Students are expected to write a 2-3 page paper, which will be assigned during Week 6. The first draft is due on Monday February 29th during class. At that time, the papers will undergo peer review for a grade of 45 points (30 points is for a completed draft and 15 points is for proofreading another student's paper).

Critical Paper: The final paper (worth 85 points and no longer than 5 pages) is due March 7^h in class. It should be printed, stapled and use 12 point font.

Final Exam: The Final Exam is comprehensive and will be held on March 16th. It will cover lecture material, readings, as well as in-class discussion. No Blue Books or Scantron sheets needed!

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.

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: After the first week, attendance will not be taken. However, attendance is very important for doing well in this course. We will be discussing numerous cases, examples, issues, and theories. In addition, philosophy cannot be done adequately in isolation. Thus, attendance, participation, discussion, and asking questions, are all very important for academic success. In addition, be on time and stay for the entire class. If you must leave early, do not disrupt the class. **Should any circumstances cause you to miss more than one week of class, you should consider retaking the course at a more convenient time- since you will miss too much of the material to grasp content or meet learning expectations.**

Computer and Course Management System Skills: This course relies on the college's management system, Canvas. You are responsible for having or acquiring the needed computer skills **BEFORE** course begins. Basic skills include navigating the course site, open documents, post comments, upload assignments, and send/receive e-mail. Please check out the Canvas tutorial for help or ask other students about specific issues. **Lack of an internet connection for any reason including power outages, computer problems, or having trouble with Canvas will NOT excuse you from deadlines.** If you have problems, contact eLearning at x3354 or elarning@greenriver.edu or visit the library help desk.

Cheating and Plagiarism: You are responsible for upholding the College'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 College's standards of academic honesty, you will be reported to the

appropriate channels regarding Academic Conduct.

Electronic Devices: *All* electronic devices may only be used in the classroom with the permission of the instructor or Disability Services to meet an accommodation. Activities that are not related to the course, such as checking e-mail, texting, on-line gaming, and social networking, are disruptive to the class.

Snacks: Beverages and/or snacks are allowed in class. Please notify the instructor if you have a food allergy or religious observation/restriction that needs to be considered. Be considerate and clean up any spills/messes.

E-mail Policy: I reserve the right to have 24 hours to respond to student e-mails, especially if the e-mail is over the weekend or late at night. Also, the student should regularly check her/his Green River e-mail account. This will be how I contact you in the event of class cancellation.

Learning Assistance: Students who require assistance with reading and/or writing are more than welcome to set up an appointment with the instructor at their earliest convenience. Further aid can be found at the College's Tutoring and Resource Center located in Holman Library on the 2nd floor and the Writing Center located in RLC 173.

Students Seeking Accommodation: ADA statement- if you believe that you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact Disability Support Services Coordinator in the LSC and provide the appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition through the GRC Disability Support Services office or if you have emergency medical information or special needs that I should know about, please notify me the first week of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Campus-Wide (CWLO): Green River College has identified ability areas, which the college believes encompass knowledge and are the most important skills, behaviors, attitudes, and values that students will need in order to be successful in and after leaving the college. This course will address the following student learning outcomes and campus-wide areas:

- Critical Thinking finds expression in all disciplines and everyday life. It is characterized by an ability to reflect upon thinking patterns, including the role of emotions on thoughts, and to rigorously assess the quality of thought through its work products. Critical thinkers routinely evaluate thinking processes and alter them, as necessary, to facilitate an improvement in their thinking and potentially foster certain dispositions or intellectual traits over time.
- Written Communication encompasses all the abilities necessary for the effective expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in written form.

Course Content (CCLO): Students will gain a basic understanding of the history of thought and of the enduring questions of philosophy, and learn how to utilize this knowledge to evaluate and develop their own philosophy in life.

TENTATIVE COURSE READINGS AND CALENDAR

Week 1 **CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS**

01/04 Introduction, Syllabus, Exercise

01/05 Arguments, Rhetoric

Feldman pp. 1-23

01/06 Truth and Rationality

Feldman pp. 24-54

01/07 HOMEWORK 1 DUE

01/08 **QUIZ 1**

Week 2 **DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS**

01/11 Well-Formed Arguments & Validity

Feldman pp. 55-80

01/12 Monty Python Exercise

No Reading Assigned

01/13 Deductive Strength

Feldman pp. 94-102

01/14 HOMEWORK 2 DUE

01/15 **QUIZ 2**

Week 3 **INDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS**

01/18 Holiday- No Class!

01/19 Well-Formed Arguments & Cogency

Feldman pp. 80-92

01/20 Inductive Strength

Feldman pp. 102-110

01/21 HOMEWORK 3 DUE

01/22 **QUIZ 3**

Week 4 **AMPLIATIVE FORMS**

01/25 Analogy

Bassham, *et al.* pp. 303-313

01/26 Mill's Methods

pdf, see Canvas

01/27 Abduction/IBE

pdf, see Canvas

01/28 HOMEWORK 4 DUE

01/29 **QUIZ 4**

Week 5	RECONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS	
	02/01 Identifying Arguments	Feldman pp. 113-148
	02/02 Problems with Premises	Feldman pp. 149-166
	02/03 Advertising and Persuasion	Vaughn pp. 157-161
	02/04 HOMEWORK 5 DUE	
	02/05 QUIZ 5	
Week 6	EVALUATING ARGUMENTS	
	02/08 The Basics	Feldman pp. 167-188
	02/09 Semantics & Ambiguity	Feldman pp. 189-215
	02/10 Practice with Arguments	No Assigned Reading
	02/11 HOMEWORK 6 DUE	
	02/12 QUIZ 6	
Week 7	WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER	
	02/15 Holiday- No Class!	
	02/16 Critical Thinking & Writing 1	Vaughn pp. 31-34
	02/17 Critical Thinking & Writing 3	Vaughn pp. 116-119
	02/18 Critical Thinking & Writing 4	Vaughn pp. 170-174
	02/19 OUTLINE & PLAGIARISM QUIZ	
Week 8	STATISTICAL & CAUSAL ARGUMENTS	
	02/22 Statistical Arguments & Predictions	Feldman pp. 232-276
	02/23 Causal Arguments, Video	Feldman pp. 277-294
	02/24 Analysis of Causal Arguments	Feldman pp. 294-327
	02/25 HOMEWORK 7 DUE	
	02/26 QUIZ 7	
Week 9	TESTIMONY & ARGUMENTS	
	02/29 Paper Peer Review	

03/01 Testimonial Arguments Feldman pp. 216-231

03/02 Loose Change Video No Assigned Reading

03/03 HOMEWORK 8 DUE

03/04 QUIZ 8

Week 10 **FALLACIES OR ERRORS IN REASONING**

03/07 FINAL PAPER DUE

03/08 Fallacies Bassham, *et al.* "Logical Fallacies-I"

03/09 Fallacies, cont. Bassham, *et al.* "Logical Fallacies-II"

03/10 HOMEWORK 9 DUE

03/11 QUIZ 9

WEEK 11 **FINALS WEEK**

03/14 REVIEW (?)

03/15 STUDY DAY- NO CLASS!

03/16 FINAL EXAM 8:00-10:00 A.M.