

PRINCIPLES OF LOGIC AND ARGUMENTATION

(PHILOSOPHY 2020)

Fall Semester, 2009

Instructor: Ray Peace

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Text: Critical Thinking by B.N. Moore and R. Parker, 9th ed., (McGraw Hill Pub.)

Welcome to the class! Please be aware of this information and keep it handy, as the class progresses.

Objectives and goals of the Course:

1. To increase our abilities to think logically and critically through the examination and practice of various techniques of logic, critical thinking, and argumentation.
2. To examine the nature of critical thinking, logic, and classification, and related topics such as argument, explanation, definition, and meaning.
3. To consider problems associated with ambiguity, vagueness, pseudo-reasoning (fallacies), and techniques of persuasion.
4. To gain familiarity with particular approaches to logic, including categorical and propositional logics, and the nature of deduction and induction.
5. To apply our reasoning skills through the techniques developed to a variety of problems and issues, many of which are in our text, and others we will examine from current topics.

Grading:

Your overall grade will be based primarily on the average of the graded exercises (tests) and projects we will plan to have. There are no “makeup” tests, in case you happen to miss one. Instead, one major grade will be “dropped”, when the averages are figured. For example, if we have 6 major grades (tests, papers, etc.), you would add the total points together and divide that total by 5, to figure your average. Your letter grade would be based on a “straight scale” (90 or above is an A, 80-89 is a B, etc.)

You are encouraged to take every test and quiz, and to do all the assignments, thereby giving yourself a better opportunity on your grade. There is a penalty for unexcused late

work. Your attendance is a factor in your grade (see below). Also, you are encouraged to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion.

Attendance:

If you attend each day, 2 points will be added for perfect attendance to your total average; 1 point will be added for missing only 1 or 2 days. After 3 days, a point for each day missed will be taken off your average. Also, you should familiarize yourself with the university's attendance policy, and apply it. Please be punctual, attentive, courteous, and prepared. Make sure cell phones or similar items are turned off prior to classtime, or avoid bringing them to class.

Regarding excuses for absences: for official absences, retain your documented excuses until the announced day near the end of the semester, when you can turn copies of them in to the instructor; accordingly, there is no need for e-mails or phone calls from the students concerning these prior to that day.

Roll:

Sign legibly only your name (do not Print). It is your duty to sign the roll each day. If you leave before class is dismissed, your name is deleted from the roll. If initially the roll gets by you, remember to sign it before you leave. If you arrive late or leave early, indicate which and the time on the roll sheet.

Assignments:

The assignment sheet will also be posted on the website. You should read the selection and do the assigned problems and exercises prior to class. After class, go back over those problems you missed, if any, in conjunction with your notes. Keep up; this material is not easy to "cram". Keep a record of your test scores and your attendances.

Students with Special Needs:

If you are a student with a documented disability that might require classroom accommodations or modifications, you should contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities (here's a link: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>). The Access Office office will be moving to Farber Hall (former Student Health building) during January 2009. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty). Also, inform your instructors about this need at the beginning of the semester. .

Other Links: You can access many philosophy-related websites by using this [link to the homepage of the Department of Philosophy at Valdosta State University](#)

Course Evaluations: Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. This course may be part of a pilot project this semester, testing a new online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) form. If so, rather than completing these evaluations during class time, students will need to access evaluation forms via BANNER and complete them in a period of time to be announced near the end of the semester. You will only complete evaluations online for the classes that are part of this pilot project; other classes may still require you to complete a scantron form in class. Please take the time to complete this important evaluation (or opt

out of providing an evaluation) during the designated period. If you do not do so, you will not be able to access the final grade for this class until a later time.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

1. Use more advanced logical and critical reasoning techniques through the examination of various methods of logic from formal and informal traditions.
2. Discuss such topics as: the nature of critical thinking, classification, meaning, and definition; ambiguity and vagueness; categorical logic; explanation and argument; techniques of persuasion; propositional logic; deduction and induction; and pseudo-reasoning (fallacies).
3. Apply these critical reasoning principles to a variety of problems and contexts, including writing and analysis in other courses.
4. Use the truth table method to determine the truth-value of compound sentences and to distinguish among tautologies, contingent sentences and contradictions.
5. Distinguish between valid and invalid argument forms, using the truth table method and the proof method.
6. Translate ordinary-language statements and arguments into the language of sentential logic and/or predicate logic, and *vice versa*.
7. Demonstrate that a given argument in symbolic form is valid or invalid.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Major by enabling students better to

1. Incorporate philosophical positions in oral and written communications
2. Critically outline and analyze a philosophical question

[And here is a link to the Valdosta State University General Education Outcomes;](#)

In this course we will emphasize #'s 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8.