

PRINCIPLES OF LOGIC AND ARGUMENTATION

(PHILOSOPHY 2020)

Spring Semester, 2010

Instructor: *Ray Peace*

Office: *Ashley Hall, Room 102*

Office Hours: *2:45-3:05 TR; or by appointment*

Phone: *333-7432 or 333-5949*

e-mail: *jrpeace@valdosta.edu*

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. Be punctual, attentive, and courteous, and try to contribute to class discussion. Some of the issues we examine may be controversial for some of us—so be respectful of opinions and viewpoints that may differ from your own.

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 our BlazeView website. You should read the selections 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 is in Farber Hall (former Student Health building). 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. The online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) evaluation forms can be accessed via BANNER and completed 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 the online project; other classes may still require you to complete a scantron form in class. Please take the time to complete this important evaluation during the designated period. If you do not do so, you may 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.