

PHIL 1XX: CRITICAL THINKING

sample syllabus

OVERVIEW

This course provides an introduction to the analysis and evaluation of actual arguments, to the practice of constructing logically sound arguments, and to logic as the theory of argument. It adopts a two-pronged emphasis: (1) abstract and general rules for argumentation, including the basics of symbolic logic as a formal language; and (2) concrete arguments of current interest, such as real-life problems of immediate applicability.

TEXTBOOKS

Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin – *Understanding Arguments, 9th Ed., Concise* – ISBN: 9781285197395

Kwame Anthony Appiah – *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* – ISBN: 9780872204201 (or similar book to read in its entirety and analyze with the tools learned during the rest of the semester)

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes – Five, online, one at the end of each unit. Multiple choice and essays. **10% x 5 = 50%**

Final exam – In class. Multiple choice and essay. You can use one letter-sized “cheat sheet.” **20%**

Homework – Worksheets on symbolic logic, formal and informal fallacies, and argument analysis. **15%**

Participation – Both frequency and quality count, and your attendance is factored in as well. **15%**

FORMAT

Each class period contains both lecture and discussion, though often more of the latter. I lecture in a Socratic way, meaning that I frequently ask you to interject and you are responsible for supplying the material as I explain it.

For each day we read one or two papers, essays, or articles. Each day I call upon two students to briefly summarize the day’s readings. These summaries contribute to your discussion grade.

The reading load is about 10-15 pages per class period. Most papers are technical and take 1-2 hours to read, depending on your prior philosophical reading experience.

POLICIES

Laptops and tablets are permitted; phones are not. Use common sense and do not bother yourself or others.

Arriving over 15 minutes later is considered an unexcused absence. If I am over 15 minutes late, you may leave.

Attendance and participation are graded subjectively. The more you talk, the more quickly I learn your name.

Late assignments incur a 10% penalty (one letter grade) for each day, unless I have granted an extension.

Extensions, grade disputes, and requests for incomplete grades will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

E-mail is my preferred method of communication. I reply within 48 hours. If I do not, e-mail me again.

The First Rule of Good Discussion: “**Keep an open mind, but not so open that your brain falls out.**”

ACCOMMODATION

Please inform me by the end of the first week of class of any health concerns or documented physical, mental, or learning disabilities. We will work together to help you succeed according to your abilities.

HONOR CODE

I take the Honor Code very seriously. Suspected violations will be reported to the Honor Court and pursued.

READING SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Most readings are in the *Understanding Arguments* book by Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin.

Other readings can be found on Canvas (see under "Files") or on the Internet (click the underlined link).

We will read the *Cosmopolitanism* book by Appiah at the end of the term.

All readings must be completed by class time. All reading outlines must be submitted before class begins.

(1) ARGUMENTATION		
Week 1 Justification	Course presentation	M 8/21
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 1 (pp. 3-9)	W 8/23
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 1 (pp. 10-16)	F 8/25
Week 2 Language	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 2 (pp. 17-27)	M 8/28
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 2 (pp. 28-40)	W 8/30
	Scholz et al.: Philosophy of Linguistics (click link and read the table in section 1)	F 9/1
Assignment	Quiz #1 due online	F 9/1

(2) ARGUMENT ANALYSIS		
Week 3 Validity, Truth	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 4	M 9/4
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 5 (pp. 90-95)	W 9/6
	Descartes: Meditation One (find PDF file on Canvas)	F 9/8
Week 4 Reconstruction	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 5 (pp. 96-110)	M 9/11
	Group work #1 in class: argument reconstruction from visual sources	W 9/13
	Group work #2 in class: argument reconstruction from written sources	F 9/15
Assignment	Quiz #2 due online	F 9/15

(3) DEDUCTIVE LOGIC		
Week 5 Propositional	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 6 (pp. 114-133)	M 9/18
	No reading: lecture and proofs in class	W 9/20
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 6 (pp. 134-145)	F 9/22
Week 6 Categorical	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 7 (pp. 151-166)	M 9/25
	No reading: lecture and proofs in class	W 9/27
	No reading: lecture and proofs in class	F 9/29
Assignment	Quiz #3 due online	F 9/29

(4) INDUCTIVE LOGIC

Week 7 Explanation	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 9 (pp. 195-203)	M 10/2
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 9 (pp. 204-214)	W 10/4
	Vogel: Cartesian skepticism & inference to the best explanation (find PDF file on Canvas)	F 10/6
Week 8 Probability	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 11 (pp. 239-252)	M 10/9
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 11 (pp. 253-262)	W 10/11
	Goddard: Introduction to Bayesian Statistics (find PDF file on Canvas)	F 10/13
Week 9 Problems	Hume: <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (find PDF file on Canvas)	M 10/16
	Russell: The problem of induction (find PDF file on Canvas)	W 10/18
	Strawson: Induction without a problem (find PDF file on Canvas)	F 10/20
Assignment	Quiz #4 due online	F 10/20

(5) FALLACIES

Weeks 10-11 Fallacies	Read PDF file “ Syllogistic Fallacies ” on Canvas	M 10/23
	No reading: lecture and proofs in class	W 10/25
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 13 (pp. 275-290)	F 10/27
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 14 (pp. 291-306)	M 10/30
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 15 (pp. 307-314)	W 11/1
	Sinnott-Armstrong & Fogelin: chapter 16 (pp. 323-332)	F 11/3
Assignment	Quiz #5 due online	F 11/3

(6) APPLIED ARGUMENT ANALYSIS: VISUAL SOURCES

Week 12	Watch movie: <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> + fill out argument analysis worksheets in groups	11/6-10
Week 13	Watch movie: <i>Supersize Me</i> + fill out argument analysis worksheets in groups	11/13-17

Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 20 – Nov. 26

(7) APPLIED ARGUMENT ANALYSIS: WRITTEN SOURCES

Weeks 15-16 Book	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 2 and 3 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	M 11/27
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapter 4 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	W 11/29
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapter 5 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	F 12/1
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 6 and 7 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	M 12/4
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapter 8 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	W 12/6
	Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> , chapters 9 and 10 (read and annotate on assigned worksheet)	F 12/8
Assignment	FINAL EXAM IN CLASS	M 12/11