

Philosophy 129: Critical Thinking
Term 1, 2002, Sections L04 & L06

Times: TR 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM (L04)

TR 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM (L06)

Location: 118 St. John's College

Instructor: Ben Caplan

Office: 468 University College

Office hours: TR 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM, or by appointment

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Course webpage: Follow the link from

www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/philosophy/Timetable_03R.htm

Course Description

A fuller, more accurate title for this course would be *Critical Reasoning, Reading, and Writing*. In the first part of the course (on reasoning), we will study the theory of arguments. This is the theory that we will apply in the rest of the course. In the second part (on reading), we will learn how to get arguments out of texts. And, in the third part (on writing), we will learn how to put arguments into texts.

Readings

Required

1. Anne Thomson, *Critical Reasoning: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).
2. Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*, Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Optional

3. Robert M. Martin, *There Are Two Errors in the the Title of this Book: A Sourcebook of Philosophical Puzzles, Problems, and Paradoxes*, revised and expanded ed. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2002).

Course Requirements

Basics

There will be two midterms (worth 30% each): an in-class exam after the first part of the course and a take-home exam after the second part of the course. There will be one assignment (worth 40%: 20% for a draft and 20% for a final version). To pass the course, you must complete both midterms and the assignment (including the draft).

Due dates

The dates of the midterms will be announced in class at least one week in advance. The due date for the draft of the assignment will also be announced in class at least one week in advance. The final version of the assignment is due at 1 PM on Tuesday, 10 December 2002 (which is one week after the last class).

Late policy

If they are late, drafts and final versions of the assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per 24-hour period. Drafts will not be accepted after the beginning of the next class. (That is, if they're due at the beginning of class on a Tuesday, they won't be accepted after the beginning of class the next Thursday; and, if they're due at the beginning of class on a Thursday, they won't be accepted after the beginning of class the next Tuesday.) And final versions will not be accepted if they are more than three days late. For example, a final version that is handed in after 1 PM on Tuesday, 3 December 2002 but before 1 PM on Wednesday, 4 December 2002 and that would otherwise have received a B+ will receive a B. And no final version will be accepted after 1 PM on Friday, 13 December 2002.

The midterms are not assignments; they are exams. The late policy for assignments does not apply to exams. To pass the course, you must take the midterms when they are given.

Here's a bit of reasoning. To pass the course, you must complete both midterms and the assignment (including the draft). You must take the midterms when they are given; drafts of the assignment will not be accepted after the beginning of the next class; and final versions of the assignment will not be accepted more than three days late. So, if you don't take both of the midterms when they are given, if you don't hand in the draft before the beginning of the next class, or if you don't hand in the final version before 1 PM on Friday, 13 December 2002, you will not pass the course.

Exceptions can be made in the case of documented medical, psychological, or other exceptionally dire emergencies.

Bonuses

There are two ways to earn bonuses: the simple way and the complicated way. Here's the simple way. In borderline cases, participation can bump you up at most 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from B to B+).

Here's the complicated way. Over the course of the term, you can earn bonus points by answering bonus questions. Each Thursday (except for the last Thursday of the semester), bonus questions will be posted on the course webpage. To earn credit for your answers, hand them in by the beginning of class the following Tuesday. Each week you can earn 1 bonus point. As the term progresses, it will become increasingly difficult to earn bonus points (both because the questions will become harder and because the number of questions you will need to correctly answer in order to earn each bonus point will increase). This is to encourage you to tackle the bonus questions early in the term.

What's a bonus point worth anyway? Well, 12 bonus points will bump you up an entire letter grade (e.g. from a B to an A); 8 bonus points will bump you up 2/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from a B to an A-); and 4 bonus points will bump you up 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from a B to a B+).

A Warning about Academic Dishonesty

It is difficult to overstate the importance of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is the sort of offense that can result in expulsion. So don't commit acts of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about what counts as academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism), ask. You are responsible for knowing the University of Manitoba regulations.

Start by consulting the General Academic Regulations and Requirements, particularly Section 7 (Academic Integrity). See Section 7.1 (Plagiarism and Cheating):

<http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/calendar03/regulations/plagiarism.asp>

and Section 4.2.8. (Examinations: Personations):

http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/calendar03/regulations/exams/exams_personations.asp

Here's something you might not have known: in addition to being an academic offense, personation—that is, having someone else take an exam for you or taking an exam for someone else—is a criminal offense under Section 362 of the Canadian Criminal Code.