

PHIL 1500: Logic and Critical Thinking

Peabody Hall 115

Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30 p.m.—1:45 p.m.

Instructor: Ben McCraw

Office: 126 Peabody Hall

Phone: 706-583-8030

Email: mccrawbw@uga.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:00–4:00 p.m.; and by appointment

Course Description/Objectives:

This course aims to develop your skills in critical thinking and argumentation. We all think critically throughout life—that is, we all reflect upon the truth or falsity of a certain claim, statement, or position. Whether we think about the most significant issues possible or the most ordinary, we are all used to giving, receiving, and evaluating truth-claims. Since so much can hang upon what views or claims to which one holds, the reasons or arguments behind one's beliefs are key. Good support for one's beliefs and views comes through good thinking. We give support for a claim or position by giving arguments. This course will give you the tools to pick out, evaluate, and fashion arguments. You will learn how to recognize arguments and distinguish them from rhetoric, explanations, descriptions, etc. and use various tools of logic to determine the merit of any particular argument. You will then have the tools and skills to construct your own argument on behalf of some claim, view, or position. This course will require you to think critically about certain issues as well as evaluate and form arguments. These are skills that require practice for improvement.

Required Text:

Patrick J. Hurley: A Concise Introduction to Logic (10th ed.), Wadsworth Publishing
Supplemental readings made available by instructor.

Course Format:

This class will have some lecture but since you are developing a set of skills, your participation will be a key to your success. I may have material to teach you but you have to do a good bit of work yourself if you are to succeed in this course. Accordingly, I expect and require participation from everyone in this class. Whether you give answers to exercises, answer questions in class, ask questions about the material, or give your thoughts on a particular subject matter, your participation in class is practice for the sort of work I shall require on exams.

Course Requirements:

1. Reading—you are to have read *carefully* all of the materials before the assigned class period. This includes completing all exercises in the assigned selection.
2. Exams—you will take three examinations during the course of the semester. A make-up exam will be offered at the earliest possible date from the original exam only if there is a serious illness or death to the student or the student's immediate family. A student must give notice of the excuse no later than the day of the exam.
3. Paper—there will be a final paper at the end of the semester. This paper is intended to test each student's critical thought and argumentation skills. In this paper, you must analyze arguments and construct your own. In short, this is a dress rehearsal for the sort of critical paper that is required in philosophy (and other) courses.
4. Quizzes—there will be periodic quizzes that I shall use to ensure that each student keeps up with the reading. If you have read the material with care, then these quizzes should present you no problems.
5. Attendance—attendance is mandatory and I will allow only 4 absences without excuse. Anyone absent after calling the roll will be counted absent for the class without a good excuse, so be punctual. The instructor has the right to withdraw a student from the course for violation of the attendance or any other policy.
6. Participation—class participation is required. Participation is key to learning the material and showing me how the class is handling the work. It also gives you vital practice for the exams. If you are not prepared for participating in class, then your participation grade will reflect this. I consider discussing pertinent topics, giving answers to exercises, asking questions about the material, etc. all excellent means of participating in class.

Grading:

Here is the break-down, by percentage, of the various assignments.

Exam 1:	15%	Paper:	25%
Exam 2:	15%	Quizzes:	10%
Exam 3:	25%	Participation:	10%

Grading scale:

100% - 94% = A	89% - 87% = B+	79% - 77% = C+	69% - 60% = D
93% - 90% = A-	86% - 84% = B	76% - 74% = C	59% - 0% = F
	83% - 80% = B-	73% - 70% = C-	

Academic Dishonesty:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Full details of the UGA Academic Honesty Policy, “A Culture of Honesty” are given at http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm and you are encouraged to view it. This means that any cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of work, etc. will not be tolerated. If you have any questions or concerns here, don’t hesitate to see me.

Class Etiquette:

I expect every student to conduct him/herself with respect for every other student. Since we are learning about arguments and thinking about contentious issues, there might be instances of disagreement amongst students. There is nothing wrong with disagreement. However, do not confuse an academic sense of ‘argument’ for a vicious verbal assault. I will not tolerate *any* kind of disrespect—part of learning how to argue well is learning how to argue against some one or some view with respect.

Instructor Availability:

While I list hours in which I am in my office, I understand that they will not fit into most students’ schedules. Please feel free to come by then or meet with me another time if you have any questions, concerns, or problems about the course. In fact, if I am in my office, I am usually able to meet with students. If you need to contact me, then email is the quickest and most reliable way. Don’t hesitate to meet or contact me if you need any help at all.

Schedule*

8/18 Introduction

Basics of Arguments

8/20 Basic Concepts and Terms: Hurley, 1-13.

8/25 Arguments and Non-Arguments: Hurley, 14-30.

8/27 Deductive and Inductive Arguments: Hurley, 31-41.

9/1 Structure of Deductive and Inductive Arguments: Hurley, 41-52.

9/3-8 Reconstructing Arguments: Cederblom & Paulsen, 47-70 (handout).

9/10 Diagramming Arguments: Hurley, 59-70.

9/15 **Exam 1**

Definitions

9/17 Basics: Hurley, 82-85 and 86-94.

9/22 Ways of Defining: Hurley, 94-103.

Fallacies

9/24 Fallacies of Relevance: Hurley, 110-126.

9/29 Fallacies of Induction: Hurley, 128-142.

10/1-6 Other Fallacies: Hurley, 144-165.

Formal Analysis

10/8 Symbolization: Hurley, 280-291.

10/13 **Exam 2.**

10/15 Truth Functions: Hurley, 291-302.

10/20 Truth Tables: Hurley, 302-310.

* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

10/22 Truth Tables: Hurley, 310-320.

10/27 Forms and Fallacies: Hurley, 320-337.

Informal Analysis

10/29 Abductive: Fogelin, 254-263 (handout).

11/3 Analogical: Fogelin, 264- 270 (handout).

11/5 Statistical: Fogelin , 295-300 (handout).

Premises and Usage of Arguments

11/10-12 Premise Acceptability: Feldman, 184-203 (handout).

11/17-19 Uses of Arguments: Fogelin, 405-432 (handout).

11/24-26 Thanksgiving Break

12/1 TBD

12/3 TBD, **Essay Due.**

12/15 **Exam 3** from 12:00-3:00.