

PHL 320U
CRITICAL THINKING

*"Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought."
~John F. Kennedy*

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough

Class Time / Location: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00 pm – 3:50 pm, Broadway 222

Email: Scar4@pdx.edu

Office Hours/Office: NH 057, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Required Texts:

- *A Workbook for Arguments: A Complete Course in Critical Thinking*, 2nd Edition (Morrow & Weston)
- Handouts via D2L
- PDF will be assigned throughout class, available on D2L

Recommended Texts:

- Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman

I have many **learning objectives** in teaching this course, but a few main objectives include your ability to:

- 1 identify the basic structural elements of an argument (premises, conclusions, assumptions);
- 2 identify the components listed in (1) in verbal, visual, and written forms;
- 3 demonstrate skills in elementary deductive and non-deductive reasoning;
- 4 identify and understand basic formal and informal fallacies of language and thought;
- 5 identify the strength or weakness of the evidence used to support an argument;
- 6 re-organize the arguments of others into a form which makes them more logically understandable;
- 7 build your own well reasoned, well-supported argument.

Grading: The graded work will consist of quizzes, homework, and assignments.

Quizzes: There are 5 quizzes, each corresponding to the 5 units the course will cover. Each quiz will be worth 50 points.

Assignment: There are 3 assignments; each assignment will be worth 40 points.

Homework: Each week there will be a set of brief homework exercises. These exercises will be due Tuesday before class via our class dropbox (found on D2L). There will be a total of 8 homework assignments each worth 3 points. You will receive a grade of a ✓+ (3 points), ✓ (2 points), ✓- (1 point), or 0.¹

Your final point total (out of a possible 400) will be divided by 100 and rounded up to the nearest tenth. This will be your grade.

Grading Scale and Standard:

The final weighted percentages will translate to letter grades as follows:

- >93%=A
- 89.5-92.9%=A-
- 87.5-89.4%=B+
- 83-87.4%=B,
- 79.5-82.9=B-
- 77.5-79.4%=C+
- 73-77.4%=C
- 69.5-72.9%=C-
- 67.5-69.4%=D+
- 59.5-67.4%=D
- <59.5%=F

I reserve the right to bump grades up (1-3%) based on two factors: constant class improvement and class participation.

¹ If you've been paying attention you'll notice that the numbers don't exactly add up to 400. The remaining points will be allocated toward your class participation.

Schedule: At the end of the quarter, in place of the final exam, there will be a “Retake Day” during which you will be allowed to make up one of the five quizzes. Here I will provide quizzes for all of the units that are of the same approximate difficulty of the ones initially given. Naturally they will have different questions. Any score you receive on a “Retake Quiz” will, if higher, replace the score you received when you first took the quiz. Any quizzes missed for personal reasons will be subsumed by this Retake Day. Other than this Retake Day with its Retake Quizzes, *there are no make-up quizzes*. Because I put this in italics, there are no exceptions – quizzes are serious business.

Here is a tentative weekly schedule of our material, with reading assignments. I will announce any changes and put them on D2L.

Unit 1: Extracting Arguments from Texts (A Beginning)

On your own time, finish Part I of *Thinking Fast and Slow* by 4/5.

Tue 3/29: First Day! Class Policy, Conduct and Focus [**Syllabus**]

Thurs 4/31: Arguments: Form and Purpose (**Chpt 1: Rule 1&2**)

Tues 4/5: Argument Extraction and Clarity (**Chpt 1: Rule 3-6**)

Homework #1 due before class, Practice Quiz 1 in class

Thurs 4/7: Argument Extraction and Charity Practice

Review Unit 1: **Quiz Unit 1**

Unit 2: Argument Forms – Deductive

On your own time, finish Part II of *Thinking Fast and Slow* by the end of this unit.

Tues 4/12: Deductive Arguments (**Chpt VI: Rule 22-26**)

Homework #2 due before class, **Assignment 1 handed out**

Thurs 4/14: *Reductio ad absurdum* (**Chpt VI: Rule 27**)

Tues 4/19: Extended deductive arguments (**Chpt VI: Rule 28**) (**Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality PDF**)

Homework #3 due before class, Practice Quiz 2 in class

Thurs 4/21: Review deductive arguments

Review Unit 2: **Quiz Unit 2**

Unit 3: Argument Forms – Non-Deductive

On your own time, finish Part III of *Thinking Fast and Slow* by the end of this unit.

Tues 4/26 Generalizations (Chpt II: Rule 7-11)

Assignment 1 due

Homework #4 due before class,

Thurs 4/28 Arguments by Analogy (**Chpt III, Rule 12**)

Tues 5/3 Arguments about Causes (**Chpt V, Rule 18-21**)

Homework #5 due before class

Thurs 5/5 Review non-deductive arguments

Review Unit 3: Quiz Unit 3

Unit 4: Justifying Premises and Objecting

On your own time, finish Part IV of *Thinking Fast and Slow* by the end of this unit.

Tues 5/10 Citing good sources (**Chpt IV: Rule 13-17**), Defending your premises (**Chpt VII: Rule 29-31**)

Assignment 2 due, Assignment 3 handed out

Homework #6 due before class

Thurs 5/12 Objections (Chpt VII: Rule 32-33)

Tues 5/17 Fallacies (Appendix I)

Homework #7 due before class

Thurs 5/19 Review justifying premises and objecting

Review Unit 4: Quiz Unit 4

Unit 5: Applying what we've learned to political, ethical, and aesthetic arguments

On your own time, finish Part V of *Thinking Fast and Slow* by the end of this unit.

Tues 5/24 Moral argument overview: topic picked by the class (**Chpt VIII: Rule 34-39**)

Assignment 3 Due

Homework #8 due before class

Thurs 5/26 PDF assigned

Tues 5/31 Course Evaluations / Unit 5 Quiz

Thurs 6/2 Retake Day

Retake Day will occur on the last day of class, 6/2. There is NO FINAL EXAM, the Retake Quizzes will instead happen at this time.

Academic Conduct: Cheating on exams or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an F in the course to expulsion from the university. It is best if you avoid these avenues altogether when meeting the requirements for the course. The Portland State University student code of conduct and academic integrity will be honored in this classroom. Please see the following link if you are unfamiliar with this code:

<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>

Information Technology Statement:

Students in this course will be submitting all work via the D2L system. All submitted work must be submitted in .doc format. Failure to submit work in this format will count as a failure to complete the assignment. Should assistance be needed in learning this system, please contact the information technology help desk. It is the student's responsibility to develop the digital literacy required to successfully complete the assignments online. Ignorance will not excuse a failure to submit work.

Disability Services:

Students in this course shall have access to disability services pursuant to the university disability policy found at: <http://www.pdx.edu/drc/> Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-725-4150.

Disability Resource Center
Portland State University
116 Smith Memorial Student Union
1825 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97201

Phone: (503) 725-4150
Fax: (503) 725-4103
TTY or Relay: (503) 725-6504
<http://www.drc.pdx.edu/>
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