

Prof. Matthew Lockard
Southern Methodist University
May Term 2015

PHIL 1300: Introduction to Critical Thinking

Syllabus

Overview:

This course provides an introduction to techniques for analyzing, presenting, and critically evaluating arguments. We will learn how to assess whether or not an argument validity, as well how to identify both formal and informal fallacies of reasoning. The benefits of taking this course include:

- Developing the ability to reason clearly and persuasively
- Learning how to solve the kinds of analytical puzzles prevalent in standardized tests like the GRE and LSAT
- Students taking the class will satisfy Pillar I of the Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics (PRIE-1) University Curriculum requirement.

Instructor:

Dr. Matthew Lockard is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at SMU. Professor Lockard earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from UCLA in 2008 and has won several prizes for excellence in teaching. Professor Lockard has more than a decade of experience teaching logic at both introductory and advanced levels.

Meeting time & place:

Classroom location: TBD

Meeting times: M-F 10a-12p; 1-3p.

May 14th – 15th, May 18th – 22nd, and May 26th – 29th.

Assignments:

There will be regular, brief in-class and take-home practice exercises, two quizzes, and a final exam. In calculating your grade for the term, these assignments will be weighted as follows:

Practice exercises	= 15%
Quiz #1	= 25%
Quiz #2	= 25%
Final exam	= 35%

Office hours and contact info:

Office: Hyer Hall 209

E-mail: mlockard@smu.edu

Office hours: TBA

Tel: 214-768-4620

Miscellaneous:

The use of laptops and other electronic devices (phones, iPads, etc.) is not permitted in class. Exceptions will of course be made for students with disabilities who need to use such devices. (See next item.)

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Director, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations (such as: extra time to complete assignments, permission to use a laptop for note-taking, permission to record lectures, etc.). I will be happy to accommodate any such needs.

Religious holidays, sporting events, & extracurricular activities: Notify me at the **beginning** of the term if you know you will miss class for one of these reasons, being sure to provide documentation of your anticipated absences. We can then work out ways to accommodate you. Note, however, that given the compressed May Term schedule, we only have 10 days of instruction prior to the final exam, so with each absence you miss 10% of the class!

This course satisfies Pillar I of the Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics component of the University Curriculum. The associated Student Learning Outcome for this class is:

- Students will be able to describe and explain some of the general features and principal theoretical methods of one of the fields of philosophy, religious studies, or ethics.

Tentative schedule:

Informal reasoning (May 14th – 18th)

Argument types: deductive, inductive, abductive

Validity, soundness, and informal fallacies

Quiz on informal reasoning: Monday, May 18th

Deductive reasoning I: sentential logical forms (May 18th – 22nd)

Truth tables, validity

Common sentential argument forms

Symbolization and derivation in sentential logic

Quiz on deductive reasoning I: Friday, May 22nd

– No class Monday, May 25th (Memorial Day) –

Deductive reasoning II: quantified logical forms (May 22nd – 29th)

Categorical forms

Venn diagrams and other models of categorical statements

Models and tests for validity

Final Exam: Friday, May 29th