

Cabrillo College - Fall 2005

**Philosophy 49 – Critical Thinking**  
**W 6:00-9:10 Room 432**

Instructor: Zachary Fruhling  
Office Hours: MW 4:50-5:50 p.m. & Th 9:40-11:00 a.m. in 452b  
Email: zacharyfruhling@gmail.com

Spring 2005: 3 units

**Course Description:**

*Official Description:* “Presents techniques for analyzing arguments used in political rhetoric, advertisements, editorials, scientific claims and social commentary. Develops the ability to create and refine written arguments. Topics include inductive and deductive arguments, the validity and consistency of arguments, the relationship between evidence and conclusions, persuasive writing strategies, the concerns of style and audience, and impediments to good reasoning....”—Course Catalog

*Description Unpacked:* The purpose of this course is to learn how to write well-developed, logically sound thesis defense essays. To this end, we will begin by understanding what makes arguments for a position “logically sound”. The first half of the course will be focused on argumentation, logic and fallacies. In the second part of the course we will work on incorporating our new understanding of good argument into the process of writing a good thesis defense paper.

When evaluating your work, the focus will be on strength of your reasoning (your ability to state an argument clearly and logically); the focus will not be on grammar. *HOWEVER:* it will be assumed that you have mastered the English language. So, even though grammar is not stressed as a grading criterion, I will not read writing that has severe grammatical flaws. To demonstrate clear reasoning to me, you must be able to communicate your ideas clearly in English. Therefore, if you turn in writing that has severe grammatical flaws, your grade for that assignment will suffer.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- \*Distinguish between various types of inductive and deductive arguments
- \*Evaluate both inductive and deductive arguments for cogency and strength using a variety of methods
- \*Use a system of natural deduction to demonstrate the validity of deductive arguments
- \*Recognize common fallacies as they occur in various domains, such as media, politics, etc.
- \*Extract the structure of arguments as they occur in primary sources
- \*Construct sound arguments to argue for a position
- \*Compose a logically sound thesis defense essay

**Course Format:**

Class sessions will be a combination of lecture, group activities, and discussion.

**Required Texts:**

- *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., **Patrick J. Hurley** (Wadsworth, 2005).
- *Writing Philosophy Papers*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., **Zachary Seech** (Wadsworth, 2000).

**Course Requirements:**

*Reading Assignments:*

- Below is the schedule indicating what material from the book will be covered in each class session.
- *You are expected to have read the assigned readings by the time you arrive at class* on the day for which the reading is scheduled
- Lectures are designed to supplement the reading assignments, not replace them.

*Exams:*

- There will be two in-class exams, each worth 30% of your final grade.
- Exams will cover material from lectures, readings, and discussion.
- We will review for each exam during the class meeting preceding the exam day.

*Final Paper:*

- The final paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.
- The paper will be due on the last day of class.
- Detailed instructions for the final paper will be given later.

\*Other assorted short writing assignments to be assigned.

*In-class Mini-Projects and Homework:*

- The mini-projects and homework together will be worth 10% of your final grade.
- Mini-projects will be done in class, although there may be related homework that must be done before class. Some will be done individually and others with partners or groups.
- The aim of these projects is to help you learn the material and make the class a little more interactive and fun. Sometimes you will be working on specific logic exercises. Other times I may ask you to draw a picture or diagram or write something about the topic at hand. Sometimes I will have you share your work with your neighbor for critical analysis, after which you will respond to the critique.
- Bring a container (manila folder, envelope, plastic sleeve) to keep your mini-projects and homework in. Although we will be going over the homework together in class, these assignments must be turned in with your final paper to receive credit for this work. You do not, however, need to hand in homework daily.

#### **Grading:**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Exams = 2 x 30%

Final Paper = 30%

Mini-Projects and Homework = 10%

\*Note: To pass the course, all assignments must be completed. For example, supposing perfect work on everything in the course except the final paper, if you do not complete the final paper you cannot pass the course.

#### **Grading Scale:**

<u>Final %</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
< 60	F

#### **Tentative Course Schedule\*:**

##### **Date:      Reading Assignment**

8/31	First Class
9/7	Hurley 1.1-1.4
9/14	Hurley 1.6, 3.1
9/21	Hurley 3.2, 3.3
9/28	Hurley 3.4 – Review for exam #1
10/5	Exam #1
10/12	Hurley 6.1, 6.2
10/19	Hurley 6.3, 6.4
10/26	Hurley 7.1, 7.2
11/2	Hurley 7.3, 7.4
11/9	Review for exam #2
11/16	Exam #2
11/23	Seech 1,2,3,4; Paper topics due
11/30	Seech 5,6,7,8; Paper outline due
12/7	Rough Draft Due
12/14	Final papers due by 7:00 p.m. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstances.

\* Note that anything on this syllabus is subject to change.

#### **Other Important Considerations that May Affect Your Grade:**

- i) **Make every effort to attend class. This class is designed to be a relatively easy “B” if you (a) read the material carefully before class, (b) you attend every class and (c) you do every homework assignment. On the other hand, people who neglect to do these things tend to do poorly in my critical thinking classes. Aside from this tendency to do poorly, there is no direct consequence to your grade for being absent. Be forewarned, however, that this material is exceedingly difficult to master when working alone, so regular attendance is strongly encouraged. If you miss class, ask a classmate about any assignment instructions, due dates, and/or exam schedules you may have missed information about. You are responsible for finding out if you missed anything important during your absence and for being present on exam dates.**
- ii) **Make every effort to be at class on time. If you must be late, enter as quietly and inconspicuously as possible - don’t distract others who have arrived on time. If you are consistently late to meetings, I will ask you to drop the class. Class will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m., so please plan accordingly.**
- iii) **Please make sure you hand in all work on time. I will not accept late work. Having been absent from class will not be an adequate excuse for not being prepared for class - if you miss class, ask a classmate about any assignment instructions and due dates you may have missed information about. Some class sessions, such as those during the composition portion of this course, depend on your being prepared each week for class activities.**

- iv) Participation, both oral and written, is required for this course. This course is interactive by nature and is not merely a lecture course (although I will lecture regularly). If you are uncomfortable with participation, this may not be the class for you (although I attempt to make the participation as painless, albeit as challenging, as possible).
- v) No makeup exams will be given, although the exam dates may be modified depending on class progress.
- vi) I will drop any enrolled students who do not attend the first course meeting. Other than this, however, any student who wishes to drop the course is responsible for dropping himself or herself. If you neglect to drop the course by the required deadline (September 24 or November 19, depending on whether you receive a "W"), you will receive a failing grade.
- vii) If you have a disability and will require special accommodations, please notify me soon after the start of classes. Any request for special accommodations must be accompanied by proper documentation.
- viii) Finally, and most importantly, *any* form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All out-of-class assignments are to be done independently (though you are encouraged to seek help - *not answers* - whenever necessary) and all tests will be closed-book/closed-notes. Any student determined to have practiced academic dishonesty will receive an automatic failing grade and will be referred to the dean.