

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO at COLORADO SPRINGS
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course ID: PHIL 1120

Term: Spring 2019; Monday 1:40-4:20

Course Title: Critical Thinking

Room: Columbine 216

Faculty Information:

Name: Joseph Kuzma, Ph.D.

Email Address: jkuzma@uccs.edu

Office: Columbine Hall, room 4055

Office Hours: T/TR 12:05-1:05 PM, or by appointment

Course Description: In this class we will learn how to put both formal and informal critical thinking skills to use in every-day situations. By familiarizing ourselves with topics including (but not limited to): common logical fallacies, the protocols of sentential and syllogistic logic, as well as strategies for determining the validity of arguments, we will find ourselves in a position to analyze and evaluate arguments from across the spectrum of everyday life.

Course Text:

- *Critical Thinking*, 11th ed. Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker

Student Objectives:

1. Analyze and identify the elements and structure of arguments.
2. Distinguish and describe the claims of inductive and deductive arguments forms.
3. Examine factors that influence and distort reasoning and decision-making.
4. Apply the resources of logic to practical problem-solving situations.
5. Learn to translate sentences into standard-form categorical claims.
6. Learn common syllogistic forms.
7. Construct and interpret Venn-diagrams.
8. Construct and interpret truth tables.
9. Utilize critical thinking strategies to evaluate ethical, political, and aesthetic judgments.
10. Write and speak clearly and logically in presentations and essays about topics related to logic.

Important Dates to remember:

- First Day of Class: January 28
- Exam #1: March 11
- Spring Break: March 25-29
- Essay Due: May 6
- Finals Week: May 13-16

Course Requirements:

1. *Class Participation and Attendance* (50 points): You are expected to attend class (attendance will be taken) and participate in all discussions, group exercises, in-class work, and lectures by attentively listening and/or respectfully contributing. Each student is allowed ONE excused absence per semester. If you miss a second class (regardless of the reason), I will lower your final grade by one full letter grade (e.g. B+ → C+). If you miss a third class, I will drop your final grade by two full letter grades (e.g. B+ → D+). If you miss four classes, you will automatically fail the course.

2. *In-class assignments* (10 points each/100 points total): There will be approximately 10 in-class assignments given throughout the semester based on the topics covered in that session. Many assignments will be group-based, while others may require you to work individually. You will typically need your textbook for these.

3. *Debates and Written Response* (50 points each/100 points total): We will have two in-class debates on current event issues. You will be responsible for reading the debate materials ahead of class and participating actively in the debate. Additionally, I will collect from you a 1-2 page write-up on the topic debated that day. This will include a formal argument (in either the categorical or truth-functional format, along with factual support). Specific guidelines will be provided prior to the first debate.

4. *Exams* (100 points each/200 points total): You will be required to take two exams covering assigned readings and topics from the course text book. This exams will feature both objective, argument-analysis components, and a short answer section. For the short answer section, your answers must be coherent and grammatically correct.

5. *Take-Home Essay* (100 points each): You are required to write one 4 page argumentative essay on any topic of your choice. The argument must be deductive in nature and the premises must be supported with strong factual evidence. Essay topics should be declared in writing at least one week prior to due-date. Detailed guidelines and expectations for this assignment will be provided in class. If you have any questions, let me know.

Grading:

Class Participation/Attendance **50** pts.

In-class assignments **100** pts.

Debates and Written Response **100** pts.

Exams **200** pts.

Essay **100** pts.

Total **550** pts.

Late Assignments: No late-work will be accepted in this course.

Dr. Kuzma - Critical Thinking – Course Schedule
(This is subject to change if we get behind)

- 1/28:** Introductions, Syllabus Distribution
What is Critical Thinking? What is Logic?
Reading for Next Class: pp. 176-215
- 2/4:** Fallacies
Reading for Next Class: pp. 243-254; 263-274
- 2/11:** Introduction to Categorical Logic
Categorical Syllogisms
Rules Method for Testing Deductive Validity
Reading for Next Class: pp. 278-279 (work on as many of these as you can)
- 2/18:** Translating Arguments and Testing for Validity
Homework for Next Class: Prepare Argument; Research Premise Support
- 2/25:** Analyzing Arguments
Debate Preparation
Homework for Next Class: Research for Debate
- 3/4** In-Class Debate
Unit Review
Homework for Next Class: Study for Exam
- 3/11:** **Exam #1**
Reading for Next Class: pp. 284-298
- 3/18:** Truth-Functional Logic
Symbolizing Compound Claims
Reading for Next Class: pp. 299-302

Spring Break – No Class on March 25

- 4/1:** Truth-Functional Arguments
Truth-Tables
Reading for Next Class: pp. 305-308 (work on as many of these as you can)
- 4/8:** Truth-Functional Arguments
Short-Cut Method
Complex Arguments
Homework for Next Class: pp. 388-396
- 4/15:** Ethical Reasoning
Constructing Arguments on Moral Issues
Homework for Next Class: pp. 405-413
- 4/22:** Aesthetic Reasoning
Constructing Arguments on Matters of Style and Taste
Homework for Next Class: Prepare Argument; Research Premise Support
- 4/29:** Analyzing Arguments
Debate Preparation
Homework for Next Class: Work on Essays; Research for Debate
- 5/6:** In-Class Debate
Unit Review
Essays Due
Homework for Next Class: Study for Exam

Final's Week (May 13-16) Exact Day and Time to Be Announced. Check Canvas.