

Principles of Sound Reasoning

Fall 2021

Basic Syllabus

Course: PHI 103

Course Prerequisite: ENG 101

Course Description: we shall learn to evaluate deductive and inductive arguments

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Bolton Office: 3332 Coor e-mail: cjbolton@asu.edu You can use the inbox on Canvas	Office hours Tuesday: 12-2 Thursday: 12-2 You may also make appointments. Extra office hours are scheduled before exams and papers. I may also hold office hours on Zoom on days other than Tuesday and Thursday
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Text: *Basic Principles of Sound Reasoning* by C.J. Bolton

The book is available at the bookstore on the Tempe campus; but you can also order it directly from the publisher:

<http://Kendallhunt.com/bolton/>

A version is available as an e-book (and this is cheaper.) The textbook began as a course packet. I have placed the first two chapters of the course packet on Canvas. These two chapters correspond roughly to chapters 1 and 2 from the textbook.

Academic Honesty and Title IX

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions, and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. For more information, see

<http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person is excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes that they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassment on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support from the university. If someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at

<https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU counseling services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling> is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

LI Requirement

This class meets the L1 requirement for critical discourse. In this class, your critical discourse is handled by two papers worth 100 points each.

Papers

During the semester, four paper assignments will be provided. Each student is required to write two papers from the four assignments. If you choose, you may write three papers. If you write three papers, only the top two scores count towards your overall grade. You will notice a 0 on the paper score that was dropped. If you write on all four papers, you will receive a 0 on the fourth paper as well. **DO NOT WRITE ON ALL FOUR TOPICS.** In fact, ideally, you should only write two papers.

Each paper requires that you analyze one or two arguments in terms of validity and soundness. To analyze these arguments, you will be using tools that we learn in class. You will be required to use particular techniques to prove the validity or invalidity of an argument. You will also be using various techniques to explain why each statement in the assigned argument is true or false. It is not enough to claim a statement is true or false. You need to justify your claim and you do this by providing examples, definitions, or other techniques. Think of these papers as take-home exams. They are not your typical essay papers.

I am willing to discuss papers by e-mail (you can use the inbox on Canvas up until the end of my office hours the day before a paper is due. I will hold extra office hours before papers are due; and I am willing to help you during this time. It is fine to send me drafts of your paper, even during the weekend before it is due. But do not send me an e-mail the day the paper is due requesting help. Do not procrastinate.

Due Dates for Papers

Paper 1: September 21

Paper 2: October 5

Paper 3: October 19

Paper 4: November 2

Note that the papers are due on Tuesdays. The link on Canvas will remain open until 11:59 PM. Once this link closes, you are out of luck. Do not send me a paper by e-mail after this deadline. If you are worried that your paper did not submit on Canvas, send me an e-mail to ask. I will check. Send me the paper ONLY IF I ASK YOU TO SEND IT AFTER THE DUE DATE.

How to earn 0 points on a paper

1. If you write on four topics, you will earn an automatic 0 for paper topic 4 and a 0 for the paper that earned the lowest score among the first three topics. This means that you will see two zeros in your grades.
2. If you write on 3 topics, your lowest paper score is dropped. You will see a 0 for this paper. The 0 does not affect your grade, but it lets me know that you wrote the paper and that I dropped the score. Remember, what you see for grades is NOT what I see.
3. You wrote a paper on some other topic than the assigned topic. Students occasionally turn in the sample paper. This is an automatic 0. Why would I give you credit for a paper that I wrote as an example? Students occasionally write on a topic that was given some other semester. The topics change every semester. This is a 0. Students create their own arguments to discuss. This is an automatic 0. Students sometimes turn in paper 2 when paper 3 is due. This is a 0. You don't get rewarded for taking more time than anyone else to write on an assignment.
4. Students turn in papers that are remarkably similar to papers written by other students. Sometimes, this is due to the fact that one student helped another student, or it is due to the fact that two or more students worked together, or it is due to the fact that students independently used google. **GOOGLE IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.** If you do not understand how to handle these papers, very often, you end up with the wrong definitions or information from google. In such cases, I have these options:
Option 1: I may inform you that your paper is remarkably similar to someone else's paper. I may let this slide, but if both your papers are similar to another person's paper, I may give you a 0 for both papers.
Option 2: I give you a 0 but I allow you to write on three topics. This 0 counts as the lowest paper score.
Option 3: I give you a 0 and this 0 does not count as your lowest score. If you write three papers, this 0 still counts as one of the two higher scores. You committed plagiarism.
Option 4: I give you a 0 for the paper and I will also require you to retake every exam.

It is easy to avoid plagiarism in this class. Don't show your work to anyone else. Discuss your paper only with me (or the tutor or the person handling the SHPRS workshop.) If your friends are having problems, tell them to set up an appointment to see me or send me an e-mail asking for help. You should not help. These papers are different and I will help students.

Examinations

There will be six examinations. Each is worth 50 points. None is dropped. Each exam corresponds to one chapter in the textbook or one module on Canvas. A good way to prepare for the exams is to take the self-check quizzes and the sample exams in each module. The sample exams are located at the end of each module; and these have the same format as the real exams. Exams 1-5 are open on two dates. You must take it on one of these two dates; and you cannot take the exam twice. If you take the exam early; and you are unhappy with your score, you are out of luck. This score counts. But some students like to get exams out of the way before we start new material.

Exams 1-5 are open for a 24-hour period. They open at 11:59 PM on a Wednesday and close at 11:59 PM on Thursday. Canvas will submit your exam at 11:59 PM; so, don't wait until 11:58 PM to start the exam. Exam 6 is open for five days.

Examination 1

Dates: September 2 and September 9

This covers the material in module 1 on Canvas and chapter 1 in the textbook.

Examination 2

Dates: September 23 and September 30

This covers the material in module 2 on Canvas and chapter 2 in the textbook.

Examination 3

Dates: October 7 and October 14

This covers the material in module 3 on Canvas and chapter 3 in the textbook.

Examination 4:

Dates: November 4 and November 11

This covers the material in module 4 on Canvas and chapter 4 in the textbook.

Examination 5:

Dates: November 11 and November 18

This covers the material in module 5 on Canvas and chapter 5 in the textbook.

Examination 6

Date: this will be open from Thursday, December 2 until Monday, December 6

This covers the material in module 6 on Canvas and chapter 6 in the textbook.

Exam do-overs: I allow students to retake one exam at the end of the semester. You may request to retake an exam starting Wednesday, December 1 until noon, Monday, December 6. If you missed an exam, you may request it as a do-over. If you missed two exams, you only get to retake one exam. Take exams seriously. Do-over exams all close Tuesday, December 7.

Extra Credit

This is minimal. I may give one point or two for attending meetings or events sponsored by the Undergraduate Philosophy Club.

Homework and Quizzes

Homework does not count directly towards your grade. Rather, homework problems prepare you for the examinations. There are homework problems in the textbook and online self-check quizzes on Canvas. Solutions for homework problems in the textbook are provided at the end of the chapter. Solutions for the quizzes on Canvas are given immediately once you submit the quiz.

In the face-to-face class, I often give quizzes in class. I will post these quizzes on the Community Forum. These quizzes do not count directly towards your grade. Students can give incorrect answers on every single quiz and yet still earn an A or A+. The quizzes give me feedback on how well students are understanding the material. The quizzes give students practice for exams and papers.

Grades

This course is graded using a regular letter score from A through E. The grading scale is this:

grade	Points
A+	490-500
A	460-489
A-	450-459
B+	440-449
B	400-439
C+	390-399
C	350-389
D	300-349
E	0-299

These points are based on the six examinations and two papers. Notice that the grading scale is based on 500 points. If you write an extra paper, your version of grades may tell you that you have a percentage based on 600 points. Ignore this. Remember, my version of grades is not your version.

I grade solely on points. I do not base the grade on percentages. So, at the end of the semester, do not send me an e-mail mentioning that your average is 89% and this is just a point shy of an A-. In this class, 89% could be 445 points. This is 5 points shy of an A-, not one point. Granted, 5 points is close, considering that we have a 500 points scale; but I need to draw the lines somewhere.

Since I grade on points, I do not grade on effort. If you earn a low score, it may indeed be true that you worked much harder and expended more effort than other students, but this does not mean that you should earn more points. I have had students who earned a C in the class that I know worked much harder than students who earned an A. These students may be more successful in life—after all, they know the value of hard work. But this also means that they did not understand the material as well as an A student.

Syllabus Disclaimer

I will make every effort to avoid changing the syllabus or calendar, but I reserve the right to make changes if necessary.

I generally post a weekly schedule that you will receive by e-mail. This gives you information about material that will be covered in the face-to-face classes, upcoming quizzes, exams, and papers. If I need to change a due date, I will let you know by these announcements. This means that you need to read all those e-mails that I will be sending out.

If I change a date and I have posted an announcement, do not send me an e-mail that you missed the deadline because you checked this version of the syllabus and it said the date was something different. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK YOUR E-MAIL MESSAGES AND TO READ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS. If I change the date for an exam, do not tell me that you made time to take it at the original date and you did not see the announcement that the date changed.

There are also multiple places where due dates are provided on Canvas. Occasionally (ok, quite often), I will slip up and type in a wrong date. If you see two different dates, don't assume that you get to choose the date unless I specifically give you a choice (exams 1-5.) Ask me which date applies or pay attention to the announcements.