Philosophy 9: Principles of Critical Reasoning

Summer 2025

Instructors:

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Course Description:

This course will introduce both the theory and practice of critical reasoning. Reasoning is both something we do in every area of life and something for which we think there are standards that must be met if it is to be done well. Our course examines the ways we reason, the ways we ought to reason, and seeks to harmonize these perspectives.

The curriculum is divided into two modules. Module One will focus on the fundamentals of argument, through an exploration of informal and formal logic. It addresses the methods for identifying and evaluating inductive and deductive arguments while highlighting common errors humans tend to commit when reasoning and making decisions. Module Two will focus on the connection between argumentation and academic writing and assist students to translate critical reasoning techniques into effective communication.

Required Texts and Supplies:

All required readings will be freely available on our BruinLearn/Canvas site.

Course Requirements/Grading:

- Problem Sets:
    - Week 2: 30%
    - Week 3: 30%
- Final Exam – 40%

Learning Objectives:

- Learn to evaluate claims and arguments
- Learn to construct effective arguments
- Acquire skills and tools for avoiding reasoning traps
- Develop meta-cognitive reasoning skills
- Advance academic writing skills
- Learn to thoughtfully review peer work
- Learn to frame a research question
- Learn to prepare an article for publication

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

A list of topics and readings will be posted on our BruinLearn/Canvas site closer to the course start date.

Accommodations:

Students with learning needs that require special accommodations are encouraged to consult with UCLA's Center for Accessible Education (CAE). Details of the services CAE provides, including the protocol for letters of accommodation, can be found on their website: https://www.cae.ucla.edu. Your instructor or teaching assistant also remain readily available for any assistance required to enhance the accessibility of the class; so, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to know and to follow the university's guidelines for academic honesty. Academic misconduct can occur in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. When in doubt about whether some academic practice is acceptable, ask your instructor for assistance. Always err on the side of caution. Any suspected violation of university policy regarding academic conduct will be reported directly to the Office of the Dean of Students, without exception. UCLA's policies on academic and intellectual integrity can be found at:

- https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconductcode
- https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity