

University of Toronto Mississauga, Philosophy Department
PHL247H5S Critical Reasoning

Lecture Time: Tuesday, Thursday 6:00–9:00pm

Lecture Location: IB150

Lecturer: Chris Dragos (chris.dragos@mail.utoronto.ca)

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 5:15–5:55pm

Office Location: NB6154

Course Description:

This course is intended to foster the skills necessary for clear and critical reasoning and argumentation, as well as accurate and charitable interpretation of others' arguments. In Unit 1, we will lay the theoretical groundwork for the course. We will study the concept of knowledge. To this end, we will explore models of truth and of justification. In Unit 2, we will identify what makes an argument logically well-formed. We will also explore what additional features of arguments make them stronger or weaker. In Unit 3, we will study rules and guidelines for accurately interpreting and reconstructing arguments. We'll also explore the relationship between arguments and subarguments. In Unit 4, we will learn how to effectively evaluate arguments and to identify and avoid certain common fallacies of reasoning.

Required Texts:

- (1) Custom Print of Richard Feldman (2014). *Reason and Argument* (2 ed.). Pearson.
- (2) Any supplemental material will be provided by the instructor on the course page.

Evaluation:

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| 1. Test 1 | 25% | In Class, July 11 |
| 2. Test 2 | 25% | In Class, July 25 |
| 3. Test 3 | 25% | In Class, Aug. 8 |
| 4. Test 4 | 25% | Aug. 17, 1:00pm, KN137 |
- Attendance will be taken in class. **0.5% will be deducted from the final grade for each unjustified absence from lecture.** Be in touch with the instructor ahead of time if you believe you have a good reason for missing lecture. It will be very difficult to excel in this class without attending lectures and doing readings, which is why I institute this policy only for this class. If you don't attend, your grade will probably suffer a lot more than the 0.5% automatic reduction.
 - **Tests 1-3** will cover only the material since the previous quiz, though background knowledge from previous units will be necessary at times.
 - **Test 4** will cover material from Units 2 and 3.
 - **Tests 1-3** will be written at the beginning of class. A one hour Review Session in preparation for Test 4 will follow Test 3 on Aug. 8. Attendance will not be taken.
 - **Policy for Rescheduling Tests:** Students can reschedule a test with the instructor only if **emergency circumstances** do not permit them to write at the originally scheduled time. In such a case, **documentation must be provided.** Instructions and the proper form (Special Consideration Form) are available at the philosophy department website: <https://philosophy.utoronto.ca/utm/utm-philosophy-undergraduate/special-consideration-requests/>

Course Page: Materials for the course (including lecture slides) will be available on the course page, and all announcements will take place through the course page. It is your responsibility to check the course page on a regular basis and to keep up-to-date with the course. It is also your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving emails sent through the course page.

Email Policy: Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. However, emails might not be answered if (1) the relevant information is available on the course webpage or syllabus, or (2) if the question is best addressed during class or office hours (e.g. a detailed philosophical question). Contact the grading assistant only if you have questions about grading or feedback. Direct all other enquiries to the lecturer.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services Office (Davis 2037) as soon as possible. I will work with you and Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential.

English Language Learner (ELL): ELL resources can be found at <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/online-resources/english-language-learner-ell-resources>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from a university is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the university treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The university outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences (<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/students/scenarios/plagiarism>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Copyright in Instructional Settings: If a student wishes to reproduce lecture presentations, course notes or other course materials, the student must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

NOTES:

- (1) This schedule may change. Any changes will be announced on the course page.
- (2) You are expected to have the readings completed prior to the lecture. It is also strongly recommended that you review readings after lecture.

UNIT 1: Knowledge & Thinking Critically

Tues. July 2: Introduction; The Concept of Knowledge

Reading: ch. 1

Thurs. July 4: Realism, Relativism, Nihilism, & Skepticism; Models of Truth
Reading: ch. 2, pts. I-II

Tues. July 9: Belief & Justification
Reading: ch. 2, pts. III-IV

Thurs. July 11: TEST 1
Reading: none

UNIT 2: Good vs. Bad Arguments

Tues. July 16: Well-Formed Arguments (Deductive)
Reading: ch. 3

Thurs. July 18: Well-Formed Arguments (Inductive)
Reading: none

Tues. July 23: Strong Arguments (Deductive and Inductive)
Reading: ch.4

Thurs. July 25: TEST 2
Reading: none

UNIT 3: Reconstructing & Evaluating Arguments

Tues. July 30: Interpretation/Reconstruction
Reading: ch. 5

Thurs. Aug. 1: Arguments & Subarguments
Reading: ch. 6

Tues. Aug. 6: Guidelines for Evaluating Arguments
Reading: ch. 7

Thurs. Aug. 8: TEST 3
FOLLOWED BY 1-HOUR REVIEW SESSION (no attendance)

Sat. Aug. 17: TEST 4 @1:00pm Location—KN137
Test 4 is CUMULATIVE.