INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: LOGIC AND REASONING

Arguments are the vehicles for the linguistic expression of reasoning. As such, arguments are important elements of many familiar practices -- they serve to inform many of the judgments and decisions we make. When made on the basis of good arguments, our judgments and decisions are responsible ones.

In this course, students will learn to recognize, analyze, evaluate, and compose arguments, which are primary objects of study for both the logician and, more generally, the critical thinker. We will investigate a variety of the many forms arguments take, addressing both formal and informal methods of argumentation and distinguishing between good arguments and bad arguments. In our study of formal logic, we will focus upon the methods of syllogism, the Aristotelian square of opposition, propositional logic, and basic predicate logic. Our study of informal logic will address the strengths and weaknesses of arguments as they occur in ordinary, nontechnical writing and speech, with particular emphasis on the informal fallacies.

REQUIRED MATERIALS


ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

(1) 16%? Seven problem sets. These will be turned in to receive a check (full credit), a plus (full credit, exceptional work), a minus (partial credit, incomplete or error-ridden work), or a zero (no credit, material that doesn't qualify as work). A history of pluses will help elevate a borderline grade. Together, the seven problem sets will determine 25% of your grade. As the Honor System requires, all work you submit must reflect your own understanding. You may discuss problems with classmates, but write out every solution on your own. Do not give anyone permission to copy your work.

(2) Each 18%? Three in-class exams. There will be an exam in class approximately every three weeks. Each of these exams will determine 15% of your grade.
(3) A comprehensive final exam. The final exam will determine 30% of your grade.

Any student with a disability who needs assistance with these assignments or other accommodations in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

Problem sets submitted late and make-up exams

I will accept a late problem set or schedule a make-up exam only in the event of illness or a genuine emergency. Whenever possible, please notify me in advance if you will be unable to take an exam at the scheduled time.

Problem set and exam schedule

Week 1; Friday, 1/5: Problem set due
Week 2; Friday, 1/12: Problem set due
Week 3; Friday, 1/19: Exam #1
Week 4; Friday, 1/26: Problem set due
Week 5; Friday, 2/2: Problem set due
Week 6; Thursday, 2/8: Exam #2
Week 7; Friday, 2/16: Problem set due
Week 8; Friday, 2/23: Problem set due
Week 9; Thursday, 2/29: Exam #3
Week 10; Friday, 3/8: Problem set due

Exam week: Comprehensive final exam during the scheduled exam period.

Note: There will be no class on Friday, February 9.

Class Schedule for Week 1 through Week 3

1
Wednesday: Introduction. Chapter 1 ("Basic Concepts"), §§ 1.1 and 1.2.
Thursday: §§ 1.3 and 1.4.
Chapter 3 ("Informal Fallacies"), § 3.1 and fallacies of relevance 1-3.
Friday: §1.5
   * Problem-set due: 1.1, Part I, #2, 3, 5, 6; 1.2, Part I, #2, 3, 5, 8; 1.3, Part I, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11; 1.4, Part I, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8; Part II, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8.

2
Monday: Chapter 4 ("Categorical Propositions") §§4.1 and 4.2.
Wednesday: §4.3.
Thursday: §4.4
Chapter 3 ("Informal Fallacies"), fallacies of relevance 4 & 5.
Friday: §4.5
   * Problem-set due: 1.5, Part II, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9; 4.2, Part I, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8; Part
IV, #2, 3; **4.3**, Part II, #2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9; Part III (for numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9).

3  
**Monday:** §4.5  
**Wednesday:** §4.6 (selected material)  
**Thursday:** Review exercises  
Chapter 3 ("Informal Fallacies"), fallacies of relevance 6-8.  
**Friday:** Exam #1