PHIL 1010 Georgia State University Fall 2008
Critical Thinking Department of Philosophy George Rainbolt
CRN 82845 34 Peachtree St., Suite 1100
TR 11-11:50

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CONTACT INFO
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Telephone: 404-413-6109 Office: Room 1119, 34 Peachtree St.
Office Hours: M-F 9-4:30
These are the hours I am on campus. Unless I am in a meeting, I will be in my office. But my life has too many meetings so it is best to email in advance for an appointment.

COURSE FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES
The primary focus of Phil 1010 will be the improvement of those critical thinking skills needed for other college courses. Critical thinking is the skill of recognizing, composing and evaluating arguments. Virtually every college course relies on arguments. Examples include: arguments about business plans, arguments about the qualities of a novel, arguments about the significance of historical events, arguments about the nature and function of genetic material, to name just a few.

The objectives of this course are: to improve your ability to evaluate arguments, to improve your ability to construct arguments, and to improve your ability to present arguments in written form. Because arguments are found in all your other courses, doing well in this course should greatly increase your chances for successfully completing the core curriculum, courses required by your major, and graduating with a bachelor’s degree.

N.B. This course provides a background in critical thinking, including some of the methods of understanding arguments that are useful for many fields of study, including philosophy. However, this course is not an introduction to philosophy and it does not focus on the questions discussed in most philosophy classes (for example, ethical questions, the existence of the will, the nature of knowledge, the history of philosophical ideas, etc.). For an introduction to philosophy, students are encouraged to take Philosophy 2010 (Great Questions of Philosophy). This course (Philosophy 1010) is not required to take Philosophy 2010.
REMINDERS
1. Check your schedule on GoSOLAR today. You must be registered for the correct CRN to receive credit for this course.
2. EMAIL: Email is a primary means of communication for this course. You should check your official Georgia State email at least once every 24 hours. Student email website: [https://www.student.gsu.edu](https://www.student.gsu.edu)
   2.1 Email is also the quickest and preferred method of contacting me outside of class time. By University policy, instructors must use your official Georgia State student email address for all correspondence. If you sent an email from a non-GSU email account, I cannot respond or confirm receipt.
   2.2 If you email me from your GSU account and have not received a reply within 48 hours, you should assume that I did not receive the message, in which case you should contact me in person.
   2.3 If you turn in any assignment by email, it is solely your responsibility to make sure I received it on time. If I do not receive it on time and in a readable form, you will not get credit for the assignment without time-stamped email proof that you sent it at the time it was due. Having trouble with your email or computer will not counteract late penalties.
   2.4 In addition, you are responsible for any material or assignment information I send to your GSU email address.

3. The FINAL EXAM for this course is a SATURDAY common exam. See below for more information.

REQUIRED TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS

*Neither the authors of this textbook nor any unit of Georgia State University receive any money from the sales of this book. The authors have waived their royalties in order to reduce the students’ cost for the book.*

Other handouts available in class or sent by email.

GRADING COMPONENTS
First Essay 100
Second Essay 100
Midterm 100
Final Exam 100
Miscellaneous 100

Miscellaneous is divided 50% each for quizzes and exercises.
GRADING SCALE
Assignments in this class are scored on a scale from 1 to 100. Scores transfer to point scale and letter grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>93 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>90 - 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>86 - 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>83 - 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>76 - 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>73 - 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>70 - 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0 - 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplemental Note on Grading:
To pass the course, students must earn an overall average of 60, in addition to
1. Earning a grade of 60 or better on at least one test (that is, if you do not pass either the midterm or the final exam, you will fail the course regardless of your other grades).
2. Completing the final exam and the second essay (that is, if you do not take the final exam, or do not turn in the second essay, you will fail the course regardless of your other grades).
3. Complete some ungraded assignments such as locating specific types of arguments in other textbooks.
4. I reserve the right to withdraw any student who, prior to October 1, 2008, misses more than 2 classes, turns in fewer than 2 exercises, or takes fewer than 2 quizzes.

COMMON FINAL EXAM
The final exam for this course is a common final. In other words, all students in all sections of Phil 1010 will take the same exam. The final exam is on Saturday, **December 6 2008, at 3pm**, in a classroom to be announced. Students are expected to arrange their schedules to attend this exam. To request an exception, you must submit a Variance Request Form before Friday, September 19, 2008, in order to have sufficient time for approval to be granted or denied before the midpoint (last day to withdraw). See me to request a copy of this form. Exceptions are granted only for those whose religious holy day is on Saturday, for those who have a registrar documented conflicting final exam (that is, your transcript proves that you are registered for another course with the same common final exam time), or for those who have an athletic department documented conflicting GSU-sponsored athletic event (that is, you are an athlete on a GSU sports team which is scheduled for an out-of-town game at the time of the common final exam). End-of-term travel plans and other social events are not granted a variance. The final exam or those who do qualify for variance will be held on Friday, December 5, 2008 at 1pm in the Philosophy Department 11th floor Conference Room, at 34 Peachtree St.
QUIZZES
Some class meetings will begin with a quiz. The quizzes will last 3 minutes and will be composed of two multiple choice questions which cover the reading assigned for that day's class. The questions will be written so that they will be easy if you have done the reading. For merely taking the quiz, you will get 60 of a possible 100 points. You will get 75 of 100 if you get one question right and 100 of 100 if you get both questions right. Quizzes cannot be made up for any reason.

EXERCISES
Exercises are graded for diligent, good faith effort more than accuracy. Therefore, if it is clear that you have made a real effort to complete the exercises, you will receive full credit, 100 of 100. If you turn in a substandard effort, or your exercises are late, you will be given a grade of 60. If you do not turn in an exercise, you will earn a zero. No exercises will be accepted for any reason later than December 3, 2008. Unreadable exercises will not receive credit. It is your responsibility to ensure that I am able to read the exercises you turn in. Exercises must be turned in on hard copy, at the beginning of the class on the day they are due.

Tip: Because of the way grades are computed, it is hard to get less than a C in this course if you take all the quizzes, do all the exercises, take both exams, and write both papers. However, a common mistake made by students is to fail to be present for the quizzes and/or to fail to turn in the exercises. It is easy to get an F if you miss more than 2 quizzes or more than 1 set of exercises. One or two 0s out of 100 can really pull down your average. In other words, effort counts in this course.

MAKE-UPS and LATE ASSIGNMENTS
1. The only possibility for making up the first in class essay or the final exam is a well documented, last minute emergency. The make-up will be in the department office at my earliest convenience.
2. Late second essays are penalized 5 points for each calendar day late, regardless of cause. They will not be accepted after December 3, 2008.
3. Late exercises with a good faith effort will be accepted but will be given a grade of 60. They will not be accepted after the key has been posted.
4. There is no make-up for the midterm. Anyone missing midterm will have final exam count double.
5. Quizzes are never given late and cannot be made up. Any missed quiz for any reason is a zero.
6. If you turn in an assignment in the wrong format, your assignment is not counted as accepted until the date you have formatted it in the proper form (MSWord. NOT Works, Mac, etc.)
ATTENDANCE is required and expected.
1. Everyone’s presence is an intrinsic and vital feature of the class.
2. Even if you do not speak, your presence has an effect on what is said by others.
3. In addition, more than two absences prior to October 1, 2008, makes you liable for administrative withdrawal.
4. If your final course grade is on the borderline, your presence or absence can be the deciding factor.

CLASS FORMAT
The class will be a combination of lecture, discussion and practice. This format demands that students be well prepared for class. You do not have to understand all the readings before class, but you do need to read all the readings before class and be prepared to ask questions about what you do not understand.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
The usual and customary departmental penalty for plagiarism, cheating on a test, copying someone else’s exercises or other work, letting someone else copy your exercises or other work, or any other form of academic dishonesty is failure of the course. Moreover, you are liable for further administrative action, which might include expulsion with notation on your permanent record. See the Policy on Academic Dishonesty, available in the University Student Handbook and online, and ask questions if in doubt.

ESSAYS
First paper: 300—500 words. Provide a summary of the assigned readings. Then standardize one of the assigned arguments in the readings and evaluate it using the true premises test and the good form test. You must find some flaw in the argument you evaluate.

Second paper: 1000—1200 words. The second paper is a revision and expansion of the first paper. This paper will be typed and not written in class. You will be required to demonstrate that you can use more sophisticated argument analysis techniques presented in the second half of the course such as specifically identifying the type of argument used and any fallacies committed. A necessary condition for getting an A on the second paper is attaching your first paper to show that you have completed a proper revision.

More details on the specific requirements of both essays will be discussed in class. You are responsible for acting on those details whether or not you are present that day in class.

The Department of Philosophy reserves the right to use anyone’s essays, in whole or in part, for pedagogical purposes. Students’ names and any other identifying marks will be removed to ensure anonymity.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES
No cell phones, PDAs, pagers, computers, or other electronic devices may be used in the classroom. If you carry such a device, it should be turned off before entering the room. Each occurrence of one of these devices going off during class can result in 2 points deducted from your grade.
FINAL NOTE
Everything in this syllabus can change (and something always does).
You are responsible for all changes given adequate notice, which will be announced in class,
whether or not you are absent on the day it is announced. Therefore it would be wise to
acquire email addresses of several classmates to contact when you miss class.
I have received and read (or agree to read by next class period) the syllabus and policies noted in the syllabus and schedule of assignments. I understand that not following the syllabus and policies can negatively affect my grade in the course. I also understand that the departmental default policy for cases of academic honesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, is failure of the course. I also understand that I am responsible for using and checking my GSU email account, and that my instructor is required by university policy to use my GSU email account for all academic correspondence.