



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy

PHIL 145 – 002
WINTER 2022
Critical Thinking
Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 10:00 am – 11:20 am
Room SJ2 2002

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Professor Nikolaj Zunic
Office: SH 2003 [Sweeney Hall on the St. Jerome's Campus]
Phone: 519-884-8111 ext. 28229
Office Hours: By appointment only. Contact the professor to schedule a personal meeting.
E-mail: nzunic@uwaterloo.ca

The best and most effective way of contacting the professor is by e-mail.

E-mail messages will normally be answered within 24 hours.

Office hours will normally be conducted remotely by means of Microsoft Teams. Depending on circumstances during the winter term, in-person office hours may be possible. However, these in-person meetings will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

COURSE FORMAT

Since March 2020 university courses have been conducted for the most part remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was supposed to change in winter 2022 with the plan that most courses were to be delivered in-person for the first time since the pandemic began. However, in December 2021 the University decided to return to remote learning for at least the first 3 weeks of the winter term because of fears related to the spread of the Omicron variant. Then on January 4 the University made another announcement that remote learning was to be extended until January 27.

Therefore, from January 5 until at least January 27, in accordance with University policies, **PHIL 145-002** will be delivered remotely through LEARN (<https://learn.uwaterloo.ca/d2l/home>).

After January 27 it is our expectation to commence with in-person lectures at the university until the end of the winter term on April 5.

However, since the situation regarding COVID-19 continues to be unpredictable and uncertain, this may change during the winter term. So, we need to be prepared for any eventuality.

The mode of delivery and instruction in **PHIL 145-002** will be modified only if the University makes an official, public declaration of a change in policy. The course will not change procedures and format on its own without the senior administration of the University dictating such a change.

If at some point after January 27 there is another return to remote learning, then we will revert to the mode of instruction with which we began the winter term, that is, delivered entirely through LEARN.

The professor will post all relevant course material – e.g., the course outline, assignments, links, announcements – to the LEARN site.

LEARN will be a pivotal program that we will use in this course in both the remote and in-person learning environments. Therefore, all students enrolled in this course will need access to LEARN.

The course will be divided into four components:

1. **Lectures**
2. **Readings**
3. **Exercises and Discussions**
4. **Assignments**

1. *Lectures*

There will be two different types of lectures delivered in this course: recorded and live.

(a) Recorded Lectures

For the duration of the online/remote delivery of the course—that is, from January 5 until at least January 27—all lectures will be recorded by the professor and posted to LEARN in the **Content** section.

The mode of content delivery for this first part of the course (until January 27) will be entirely asynchronous (= there is no set time to listen to and view lectures) instead of synchronous (=

when a scheduled time is set for live instruction). All the lectures will be recorded, and students will have the opportunity to listen to the lectures on their own time.

Each recorded lecture will be a narrated PowerPoint presentation.

Each lecture will be typically 30 minutes in duration, although the lectures may be longer from time to time (for example, 40 or 50 minutes).

There will be two MP4 files posted regularly each week, one on Tuesdays and the second on Thursdays, by 10:00 am. If for some reason the professor will be late in posting a lecture, he will announce this in LEARN.

If the University decides to return to online/remote learning later in the course, then we will follow this same procedure with recorded lectures as outlined here.

(b) Live Lectures

It is our expectation that lectures will be delivered in person starting the week of January 31.

We will, therefore, meet in person for regular live lectures at that point until the end of the winter term on April 5, unless there is a formal announcement from the University of a change to this format.

Lectures will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 11:20 am in room SJ2 2002 which is located on the St. Jerome's University campus.

The PowerPoint slides that will be used during the live lectures will be posted to LEARN, but without any added recorded narration.

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In both the recorded and live versions, the lectures will focus on the important concepts from the prescribed readings. However, the lectures will also include material that may not be in the textbook and will expand on ideas from the textbook.

2. Readings

Students are required to read the prescribed text in accordance with the schedule contained in this course outline.

The textbook for this course is *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills* by William Hughes and Jonathan Lavery.

The readings for which students are responsible for studying are given in a weekly schedule.

The readings play a pivotal part of this course, as all the lectures and assignments will deal with them centrally.

Students are strongly advised to follow the readings schedule and diligently to do the prescribed readings.

Please be sure to acquire a copy of the textbook.

3. Exercises and Discussions

(a) Exercises

Each week students will be expected to work on exercises from the textbook.

These exercises are in the “Self-Test” sections of the textbook. The answers to the Self-Tests are located at the back of the book in Appendix II, pp. 397-441.

To develop critical thinking skills, students must practise the techniques and knowledge that are learned. These exercises are intended to develop the habits of mind for logical and rational thinking.

These Self-Tests will not be graded and will not constitute any portion of the student’s final grade. They are to be done for the students’ own benefit and to prepare students for completing the assignments.

(b) Discussions

Each week fora for discussion on the week’s main topics will be open for student engagement on LEARN.

- In LEARN go to **Connect → Discussions**.

The discussion fora will be classified according to the chapter headings in the textbook.

These discussions are not intended to be solely a forum between students and the professor. Instead, they are mainly to be a site where students can discuss course material among themselves. The professor’s involvement here is marginal.

The purpose of the discussion fora is to allow students to dialogue with each other, to pose and answer questions related to the week’s topics, especially the Self-Tests, and to facilitate the comprehension of course material. In short, it is an opportunity for students to ask questions and

to offer and receive responses from each other.

Participation in the discussions is optional and will not constitute any part of the student's final grade.

If you wish to ask the professor a question, you can either send the professor an e-mail or pose a question in the "Ask the Professor" Discussion forum, if it is a question that other students in the course would benefit from.

Please be aware that e-mails sent to the professor will be answered more quickly than posts to the Discussion boards.

A Note on Discussion Fora Etiquette:

All posts made on the Discussion fora must be polite, civil, and respectful.

Any posts that are impolite, uncivil, or disrespectful will be removed.

4. *Assignments*

There are four written assignments in this course. The entirety of each student's final grade will be based on these four written assignments.

Each assignment will be an application of ideas that are learned in the different parts of the course.

There will be an emphasis on reading and interpreting texts as well as analyzing and composing arguments.

The instructions and topics for each assignment will be posted to LEARN approximately 3 weeks before each of the respective due dates.

All assignments must be submitted electronically to LEARN in the Dropbox section.

- In LEARN go to **Submit → Dropbox**.

Each written assignment will also be submitted to Turnitin, a program that scans assignments for academic integrity infractions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

PHIL 145 – Critical Thinking will equip students with the necessary skills on how to think logically, rationally, and critically.

The phrase “Critical Thinking,” which is the title of this course, is rather broad and encompasses several components within its purview. A misleading impression is that a critical thinker is usually negative and detracting in his dealings with others, as if criticism were tantamount to aggressive refutation. In reality, to be critical means to approach a rational form of discourse with an educated, penetrating, and alert intelligence with the intention of knowing the truth. This speaks more to an overall frame of mind than to a particular mode of conduct. If we recall the root meaning of the word “critical” which is the Greek word “*krinein*,” which means “to judge,” we can better see that critical thinking essentially involves the ability to judge correctly and to discern clearly.

The chief aim of this course is to foster this intellectual ability to think critically in the sense of judging correctly. To be successful in this venture one needs to fulfill certain requirements.

First, one needs to be informed about the various kinds of discourse and the ways in which they succeed or falter. Being educated about how human language is used to communicate ideas is the starting point.

Second, understanding what is said requires that one have a good command of language and the nuances of expression which can often impede a proper comprehension. If one is aware of the difficulties and pitfalls inherent in language itself, one will be better prepared to understand what the meaning of a certain expression is.

Third, it is not enough simply to understand, but one must actively interpret a discourse. Interpretation demands the application of knowledge and rules, taking into account circumstances, conditions, the audience, and other aspects of a communication which influence meaning. Most importantly, interpretation involves the participation of the interpreter himself who is attempting to come to terms with a form of speech.

Fourth, to reason is to connect ideas and concepts in determinate patterns of thought. Reasoning helps us to recognize relations between propositions and is at the basis of all logic.

Fifth, critical thinking also deals with the ability to formulate an appropriate response to the discourse which is being analyzed.

Finally, regularly practising these critical thinking skills in a methodical manner is essential to developing that frame of mind which characterizes this discipline.

Being informed, understanding, interpretation, reasoning, constructive response, and practice are the key elements to critical thinking. As can already be gathered from this explanation, critical

thinking does not deal predominantly with formal logic, that is, the abstract analysis of human reasoning by means of symbols. Rather, this course concentrates on informal logic, the kind of reasoning that we exercise with ordinary, everyday language. Nonetheless, there will be some reference to formal and propositional logic in this course, but the emphasis will be primarily on natural language logic.

Although we will examine the structure of different kinds of human discourse, our principal concern will be with rational argumentation. We will discuss the nature, strength, purpose, and validity of arguments. Our approach to argumentation will be two-pronged. As a negative appraisal, we will study various types of fallacies or errors of reasoning. Looked at positively, however, the focus will be on assessing arguments with the help of some constructive criteria. It is our belief that it is not enough merely to point out the deficiencies and shortcomings in arguments, but one must also know how to improve them. This criterial approach to the assessment of arguments will help us to be able to construct arguments of our own, especially in response to arguments already made.

Some of the topics we will discuss in the course include the nature of language, concepts of truth, deductive and inductive reasoning, the criteria of a sound argument, scientific reasoning, moral reasoning, legal reasoning, detecting media bias, how to respond to arguments, and typical fallacies that are committed.

It must be borne in mind that this is a philosophy course and as such the discussions in the readings and lectures will be of a philosophical nature, that is, rigorous, penetrating, and questioning. Students must be prepared to think philosophically in this course.

The concepts that will be covered in the lectures must be complemented by regular practice. Students are expected and highly urged to do the exercises in the textbook to develop these skills in critical thinking. One cannot fully benefit from this course simply by learning the ideas in a purely theoretical manner, but one must also perfect the skills which can only happen if one actually practices them in a consistent and regular fashion.

A course in critical thinking is valuable for many reasons. It deepens one's understanding of how we use language and how we communicate ideas. This theoretical knowledge is fascinating in its own right. But there is also a practical component here that will benefit one's intellectual life. Students will find their communication skills, both oral and written, greatly improved as a result of taking this course. Your ability to write incisive and coherent university essays and to engage critically with scholarship will undoubtedly be enhanced. These critical thinking skills are also very useful in many professions, such as law, journalism, teaching, science, and business, where constructing and assessing rational arguments is the common practice. Certainly, every university graduate should be able to read, speak, and write intelligently, and this course makes an important contribution to this pedagogical goal.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to fulfill the following pedagogical objectives:

- To learn about the nature of language and different kinds of human discourse.
- To examine different conceptions of truth.
- To understand the nature and use of arguments.
- To develop critical thinking and interpretive skills in the assessment of arguments.
- To learn how to construct sound arguments.
- To recognize the distinct kinds of arguments which are used in scientific, moral, and legal reasoning.
- To recognize prominent fallacies in argumentation.
- To learn how to read texts in a rigorous, precise, and analytical manner.
- To develop analytical writing skills in the composition of essays.
- To inculcate a critical thinking frame of mind which will persist beyond this course and will be useful in other domains of life.

REQUIRED TEXT

William Hughes and Jonathan Lavery. *Critical Thinking. An Introduction to the Basic Skills*. Canadian Edition. 7th edition (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2015). ISBN 978-1-55481-199-1

There is both an e-book format as well as a regular printed format for this textbook.

It may be purchased at the University of Waterloo Bookstore or through some other book seller, such as Amazon, or even directly from the publisher, Broadview Press (<https://broadviewpress.com/product/critical-thinking-an-introduction-to-the-basic-skills/#tab-description>).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

There are four written assignments for this course.

This course uses the Turnitin software, so all written assignments will be checked for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

There is no final exam in this course.

The breakdown of the assignments with their corresponding due dates and weightings is given in the table below:

| ASSIGNMENT | DUE DATE | VALUE |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Assignment #1 | January 27 @ 9:00 pm EST | 25% |
| Assignment #2 | February 17 @ 9:00 pm EST | 25% |
| Assignment #3 | March 17 @ 9:00 pm EST | 25% |
| Assignment #4 | April 8 @ 9:00 pm EST | 25% |

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a weekly schedule for this course. It lists the readings that students are responsible to study each week. The lectures will relate to the readings as they are listed in this schedule.

All readings in this schedule refer to the prescribed textbook: *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills. Canadian Edition. 7th edition* by William Hughes and Jonathan Lavery.

Please consult this schedule throughout the winter term.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1: January 6

Introduction to the course

Reading: Chapter 1: Reasoning and Critical Thinking, pp. 3-15.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 1, pp. 12-14.

PART TWO: MEANING

WEEK 2: January 10-14

Reading: Chapter 2: Meaning and Definition, pp. 19-45.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 2, pp. 29-30.
Self-Test No. 3, pp. 43.

WEEK 3: January 17-21

Reading: Chapter 3: Clarifying Meaning, pp. 47-66.
Chapter 4: Reconstructing Arguments, pp. 67-88.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 4, pp. 53-54.
Self-Test No. 5, pp. 56-57.
Self-Test No. 6, pp. 58-59.
Self-Test No. 7, pp. 63-64.
Self-Test No. 8, p. 72.
Self-Test No. 9, pp. 77-78.
Self-Test No. 10, pp. 84-85.

PART THREE: ASSESSING ARGUMENTS

WEEK 4: January 24-28

Reading: Chapter 5: Strategies for Assessing Arguments, pp. 91-97.
Chapter 6: Assessing Truth-Claims, pp. 99-125.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 11, p. 113.
Self-Test No. 12, pp. 123-124.

**ASSIGNMENT #1 is due on Thursday, January 27 at 9:00 pm EST.
Please submit the assignment electronically to the LEARN Dropbox.**

WEEK 5: January 31-February 4

Reading: Chapter 7: Assessing Relevance, pp. 127-140.
Chapter 8: Assessing Adequacy, pp. 141-159.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 13, pp. 137-139.
Self-Test No. 14, pp. 156-158.

WEEK 6: February 7-11

Reading: Chapter 9: Deductive Reasoning, pp. 161-177.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 15, pp. 175-176.

WEEK 7: February 14-18

Reading: Chapter 10: Inductive Reasoning, pp. 179-197.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 16, pp. 194-196.

**ASSIGNMENT #2 is due on Thursday, February 17 at 9:00 pm EST.
Please submit the assignment electronically to the LEARN Dropbox.**

WEEK 8: February 21-25

READING WEEK

**There is no course activity from February 19 to 27.*

PART FOUR: APPLICATIONS

WEEK 9: February 28-March 4

Reading: Chapter 11: Scientific Reasoning, pp. 201-231.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 17, pp. 217-219.

WEEK 10: March 7-11

Reading: Chapter 12: Moral Reasoning, pp. 233-251.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 18, p. 241.
Self-Test No. 19, p. 246.

WEEK 11: March 14-18

Reading: Chapter 13: Legal Reasoning, pp. 253-279.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 20, pp. 268-269.
Self-Test No. 21, pp. 275-278.

**ASSIGNMENT #3 is due on Thursday, March 17 at 9:00 pm EST.
Please submit the assignment electronically to the LEARN Dropbox.**

WEEK 12: March 21-25

Reading: Chapter 14: Arguing Back, pp. 281-290.
Chapter 15: Irrational Techniques of Persuasion, pp. 291-308.

Exercises to Do: Self-Test No. 22, pp. 288-289.
Self-Test No. 23, pp. 305-306.

WEEK 13: March 28-April 1

Reading: Chapter 16: Critiquing the Media, pp. 309-341.

WEEK 14: April 5

Reading: Appendix I: Paradoxes and Puzzles, pp. 385-395.

*The last day of lectures for the winter term is April 5.
There will be only one lecture this final week.*

**Assignment #4 is due on Friday, April 8 at 9:00 pm EST
Please submit the assignment electronically to the LEARN Dropbox.**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 5: Beginning of classes

February 19-27: Reading Week: No lectures or course activity

April 5: End of classes

April 18-26: Final exam period [Please note that this course does not have a final exam]

COURSE POLICIES

Lateness Penalty: The penalty for late assignments is 3% deducted from the grade of the paper for each day that the paper is late.

Absolute Deadline: The maximum allowable amount of time for submitting assignments beyond the due date is one week. So, for example, if the first assignment is due on January 27 at 9:00 pm EST, then this assignment may be submitted late, with the lateness penalty applied, until February 3 at 9:00 pm EST. After February 3 the first assignment will no longer be accepted.

Illness: If a student is unable to participate in the course because of an illness, the student must complete a Verification of Illness form and report the illness to the instructor so that appropriate measures or accommodations made be made. For more information, please visit the following webpage: <https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/current-students/accommodation-due-to-illness>

Assignment Feedback: Essays will normally be returned to students graded and with feedback two weeks after the submission deadline.

Student Conduct: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and polite manner. Rude, obnoxious, or disrespectful forms of behaviour will not be tolerated.

CORRESPONDENCE

As indicated at the beginning of this document, the best way to contact the professor is by e-mail at nzunic@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, feel free to contact the professor.

When you write to the professor, please be sure to indicate your name and the course that you are enrolled in.

Use formal language and proper grammar in your correspondence.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about

their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.