

Critical Thinking/Philosophy 101 ONLINE Summer A 2021

Course #1280 (Section 1000) **Professor: William Krieger, Ph.D.**

Office Hrs: Wednesday 1400-1500 Online (though I am always online)
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Focus: What is critical thinking? Put another way, why do some arguments work, and why do others fail? You think critically every time you decide not to buy the latest offering from the Home Shopping Channel™. In fact, we continuously make decisions about our lives, our politics, our health, and our fashion (or lack thereof) based on information, neatly packaged and delivered by a variety of stakeholders. In the course of this semester, you will study ways that people try to change your mind, sway your opinion, and sell you products or ideas.

The goal of this course is to use a variety of examples from modern media to get you to recognize and understand this manipulation so that your decisions will be based on solid information, and so that your arguments will be well formed and free of fallacious reasoning.

Outcomes: This course fulfills the following General Education Learning Outcomes:
Math/Stat/Quant Strategies (B3) and Humanities (A3)

To this end, you will:

- identify and work with information on both the atomic (claim) level and in larger structures (arguments). Further, you will be able to differentiate arguments from other parts of speech that are also designed to pass on information
- evaluate pitfalls in reasoning relating to source, content, and audience that can have an impact on our ability to properly analyze information
- analyze deductive and inductive arguments in terms of structure and content, focusing on deductive validity and soundness and on inductive strength and cogency
- identify and bring forward examples of manipulative/fallacious reasoning and show how these rhetorical devices ‘work’ in place of proper reasoning
- contextualize the aforementioned critical thinking skills, applying them to questions from a variety of disciplines, not limited to moral, legal, aesthetic, and scientific reasoning, as well as logical problem solving.

Text: *Critical Thinking 13th ed.* Moore/Parker (online version)

See the **101 Text PPTX file** (on Brightspace) for ordering information.

Our course will ‘happen’ on our MH Course site and Brightspace

In addition, I will use a variety of case studies and media clips to augment the material found in the book. This material, as well as topics brought in by the class, will be the source of our class material.

Structure: **Watch our course site for schedule updates, deadlines, announcements, etc. This info will get to you via your course-linked URI email account. Check it regularly.**

First, in chapter 1 we will look at the purposes of critical thinking We will separate that information into its smallest unit, the claim, and we will put together some simple tools for understanding arguments (which are made out of claims). In chapter 2 we will look at how arguments work, exploring the differences between deduction and induction and learning how to diagram arguments. In chapter 3 and 4 we will examine information as we receive it and examine the differences between arguments and other parts of speech.

After the midterm, we will look at chapters 5-7, learning about logical fallacies, which are examples of bad (and sometimes manipulative) reasoning. We will then, in chapters 10-11 come back to deduction and induction, learning how to analyze and work with these arguments in more depth. We will then spend the rest of the class applying critical thinking to a variety of outside contexts, including chapter 12's treatment of moral, legal, and aesthetics, and we will finish the class by talking about consulting, and tackling a bit of logical problem solving.

Throughout the class we will apply the course material to the outside world. I will bring examples for you to analyze/work with, and you will find some fun stuff for me as well.

Schedule:

Our weekly course schedule will be as follows:

0800 Monday: Chapter and Connect/LearnSmart/Practice Online
 1200 Wednesday: LearnSmart exercises for chapter **must be complete**
 Video Lecture available. **(and Yes. 1200 is NOON)**
 Post-Lecture exercise or assignment available
 1900 Friday: Post-Lecture exercise or assignment due

Based on 14 weeks of actual class, expect to cover these chapters/turn in these major assignments using this chart. **See MH site/schedule for dates.**

Week	Chapter	Week	Chapter
1	Welcome/Chapter 1-2	2	Chapter 2-4
3	Chapter 5-7, Midterm	4	Chapter 10-11, Journal
5	Chapter 12, Puzzles, Final		

Grading:

I use a flat (un curved) grading system.

	A	93-100	A-	90-92.9	
B+	87-89.9	B	83-86.9	B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9	C	73-76.9	C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9	D	63-66.9	D-	60-62.9
F	0-59.9				

Your grade for the course will be calculated using the following assessment tools:

- 25% **Connect/LearnSmart/Practice/Chapter Exercises (yes, I know)**
Believe me, I hate exercises as much as you, but they're important. You should expect to submit work before each online lecture (read the text and **complete the LearnSmart module, labeled 'practice' when you are reading the chapter**), and another one after each online lecture (this way, you get reinforcement from both text and professor) and I will also assign additional work to better reinforce key points in the text, in the lecture, or to explore the impact of critical thinking on current events. If you don't do the homework, you will probably not pass the course. So, take this seriously and there will be no surprises.
- 25% **Midterm Exam**
This will cover the material discussed in paragraph 1 of "Structure." The exam will be in short answer format. Only answers will be required. However, rationale for answers is always welcome and can be used to assign partial credit. All exams in the class are to be taken individually.
- 25% **Fallacy Journal**
I want you to find and identify 10 fallacies in the world around you. (You will be amazed at just how easy this will be.) For each offender, you will show the following: what the piece is trying to say/prove, the target audience, and which fallacy is involved. I will provide rubric to give you more detailed instructions after you turn in your midterm,
- 25% **Final Exam**
This will cover the material discussed in paragraph 2 of "Structure." The exam will be in short answer format. Only answers will be required. However, rationale for answers is always welcome (see above). As with the midterm, exams are to be taken individually.

Please Note: *The work in this course is intensive and may be different than what you have experienced in more traditional, face-to-face courses. For example, you will need to be self-motivated and accountable to stay on track and participate. To ensure your success in this course, please visit the Online Learning website (<http://web.uri.edu/learningonline/>) for study skill strategies, time management tips, and participation guidelines targeted at online and blended students. If you have questions about online learning, contact The Office of Online Education <http://web.uri.edu/learningonline/contact-us/>.*

Miscellaneous: Regular participation is mandatory, so I suggest that you take this seriously. Although we are online (and there is no attendance credit), the class does have a participation component (the exercises), and I promise you that you will do better if you speak up, ask questions, heckle the professor, etc. Late work will only be accepted if there are severe extenuating circumstances. Inform me of these **in advance** and arrange to hand in late work A.S.A.P.

DO THE READING. The book and I have different styles of teaching (we don't always agree), and you will benefit most if you use both sources of information. As you will have a better grasp of the material, this will allow us to focus on applying the material to case studies from the (so called) real world.

Resources:

Please be aware of the following resources. Questions? See me.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS: "Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require the University of Rhode Island to provide academic adjustments or the accommodations for students with documented disabilities." It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for any special needs and the instructor's responsibility to accommodate them with the assistance of the Office of Disability Services for Students. Questions? Contact the office: <http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/>

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All submitted work must be your own. If you consult other sources, these MUST be properly documented or you will be charged with plagiarism and will fail the course. In addition, the charge of academic dishonesty will go on your record in the Office of Student Life. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, visit the URI Student Handbook and the University Manual. If you need help understanding how or when to cite something, ASK.

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT CENTER: The work in this course is complex and intensive. To do the best you can, it's a good idea to visit the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) in Roosevelt Hall. For a complete schedule - including when tutors are available specifically for this class – see <http://www.uri.edu/aec> call (401) 874-2367, or stop by.

The WRITING CENTER: for “all writers, all disciplines, at all levels, and all stages of writing.” <http://www.uri.edu/aec/writing>

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: It is the policy of the University of Rhode Island to accord students, on an individual basis, the opportunity to observe their traditional religious holidays. Students observing a holiday that precludes them from appearing or doing work must provide written notification to each instructor.