

PHILOSOPHY 100
REASONING: CRITICAL and CREATIVE THINKING

Section AB 5 — Fridays, Jan - April 2007

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Peter B. Raabe
CLASSROOM: D 203
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COURSE OUTLINE

OBJECTIVES: To develop our ability to do the following.

- 1) to understand arguments made by others
- 2) to detect reasoning mistakes and strategies meant to mislead
- 3) to think creatively and discover different perspectives
- 4) to respond effectively to arguments
- 5) to advocate your own point of view with a well-constructed argument.

TEXT: *Becoming a Critical Thinker*, Sherry Diestler, Prentice-Hall, 2005.

EVALUATION: Critical and creative thinking take practice, therefore the classes contain a minimum amount of lecturing and a maximum amount of discussion and other in-class activities. Requirements for this course include two 2–3 page critiques of a published letter to the editor, a midterm, and a final exam.

Distribution of marks:

Critique 1	25%
Midterm examination	20%
Critique 2	25%
Final examination	30%

CRITIQUES: Assignments sent by e-mail will **not** be accepted. You are expected to submit two 2-3 page critiques of a letter to the editor from a newspaper of your choice. Please **DO NOT** put a plastic cover on your work. (1) Cut out and paste the newspaper letter onto a sheet of paper and hand it in with your critique. (2) Standardize the letter's argument on a separate sheet of paper. (3) Write a letter in response.

NOTE: for Critique 2: Standardize, and list and explain any **fallacies** on a separate page. Also, submit one copy of your letter to the instructor, put a **second copy** in an unsealed stamped and addressed envelope ready for mailing or e-mail or fax your letter to the newspaper and submit a **print-out** with your critique. Your name and phone number must be on your letter, but you may ask the Editor not to publish your name.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: All critiques are due before the beginning of class. Late assignments will be given an automatic 0%.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

- 1) Jan 12 Welcome and Introduction
- 2) Jan 19 Chap. 1 Foundations of Arguments
- 3) Jan 26 Chap. 2 Value Assumptions and Ethics
- 4) Feb 2 Chap. 3 Reality Assumptions
- 5) Feb 9 Chap. 4 Inductive Arguments (Critique 1 due)
- 6) Feb 16 Chap 5 Inductive Generalizations
- 7) Feb 23 Chap. 6 Fallacies Part 1
- 8) March 2 Chap. 6 Fallacies Part 2
- 9) March 9 MIDTERM EXAM
- 10) March 16 Chap 6 Fallacies -- continued
- 11) March 23 Chap 7 The Power of Language (Critique 2 due)
- 12) March 30 Chap 8 Suggestion in Media and
Chap 9 Fair-mindedness and review for final exam

MARKING GUIDE: FIRST CRITIQUE

Your critique will be judged by the following criteria:

1. Does the letter contain a good quality argument? And is there a copy attached?
2. Does your standardization include all the reasons (premises) given by the writer?
3. Have you identified the conclusion accurately (the point of the argument)?
4. Is your critique organized logically?
- (4. Have you identified and responded to all the fallacies **** for second critique only*)
5. Is your response fair and thorough?
- (6. Mailing envelop, or e-mail or fax? **** for second critique only*)

MARKS:	COMMENTS:
1 LETTER QUALITY ____ /5	
2 STAND. & PREMISES ____ /5	
3 CONCLUSION ____ /5	
4 LOGICAL ____ /5	
5 FAIR & THOROUGH ____ /5	
TOTAL MARK ____ /25	

(* * * NOTE: FOR YOUR SECOND CRITIQUE YOU WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO LIST AND EXPLAIN ANY FALLACIES, AND TO SUPPLY A LETTER AND A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE **OR** A PRINT-OUT OF THE E-MAIL OR FAX YOU HAVE SENT TO THE NEWSPAPER)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PHILOSOPHY”?

Philosophy involves examining the reasons we have for the values we hold as good, and the beliefs we hold as true, so that we can free ourselves from blindly following tradition, obeying the dictates of some authority figure, or simply acting on our emotions.

Personal philosophy: my philosophy; my approach to life; my “Weltanschauung;” what leads me to act the way I do; what I believe, not just spiritual.

Being philosophical: critical and creative thinking and discussion; good reasoning about an issue; a thoughtful and thorough exploration; a learned skill.

History of philosophy: the study of the origin and evolution of ideas; what great thinkers have said on various important topics.

Academic philosophy: structured courses studying philosophers and their theories and ideas; systematic examination of various, mostly abstract, issues.

Applied philosophy: discussion and research into problems arising in specific areas such as medicine, business, the environment, etc.

Philosophical counselling: A philosopher helps a non-philosopher resolve real-life issues and problems by examining conflicting values, problematic assumptions, dubious beliefs, unjustified biases, things learned as a child, etc.

Epicurus (341 B.C.–271 B.C.): “Empty is the argument of the philosopher which does not relieve any human suffering; for just as there is no benefit in medicine if it does not drive out bodily diseases, so there is no benefit in philosophy if it does not drive out diseases of the soul.”