

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY**

PHILOSOPHY 100

**REASONING**

**DR JEFFREY MORGAN**

Fall 2011 (AB8)

Friday: 8:30 – 11:20 am

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**OFFICE HOURS:**

**Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 11:30 am - 12:30 pm**

**COURSE TEXT:** Vaughn, L. and C. MacDonald (2010). *The Power of Critical Thinking*. Second Canadian Edition. Oxford.

**Calendar Description:**

Have you ever tried to figure out why someone's reasoning wasn't quite right? Have you ever had your own cherished reasoning demolished? Have your essays, exams, or lab reports ever been torn apart for being illogical? If so, you need this course.

Good reasoning is the basis for successful thought and action. Good methods of reasoning help us to analyze an issue or problem, to assess various solutions, and to understand how to find the correct

answer.

In order to detect and avoid errors in our reasoning, we examine fallacies of reasoning, different forms of arguments, the concepts of truth and validity, proof and evidence, consistency and contradiction, definition and generalization, deduction and induction. Throughout the course, we apply our methods of reasoning to various issues, both practical and theoretical.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To teach students the basic concepts and methods of sound reasoning.
2. To enable students to use these concepts and methods to analyze and evaluate arguments.
3. To develop the abilities of students to construct rational arguments in support of a conclusion.
4. To enable students to express their reasoning lucidly, both orally and in writing.
5. To engage students in reasoned discussion of contemporary public issues.

### **Evaluation:**

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Three Quizzes (25% each) | 75% |
| Take Home Final Exam     | 25% |

- There will be four quizzes. Only the best three marks will count toward the final grade.
- Quizzes will be on any assigned reading as well as any additional material we cover in the class.
- Do not miss quizzes. In exceptional cases, with appropriate documentation, you will be permitted to rewrite a missed quiz. (If you miss without an excuse, you will receive a zero for that quiz. However, note that I do not count your lowest quiz score, so you could still receive an excellent mark for the course.)

## **TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE<sup>1</sup>**

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>TOPIC/EVENT</u>                                 | <u>READING</u>  |
|-------------|--|---|
| Sept 9      | Introduction                                       | Course text website:<br><a href="http://www.oup.com/ca/he/companion/vaughnmacdonald/st_index/">http://www.oup.com/ca/he/companion/vaughnmacdonald/st_index/</a> |
| Sept 16     | The Power of Critical Thinking                     | pp. 2-32  |
| Sept 23     | The 'Environment' of Critical Thinking             | pp. 33-64   |
| Sept 30     | Problems of Meaning<br><b>QUIZ 1</b>               |   |
| Oct 7       | Making Sense of Arguments                          | pp. 65-120  |
| Oct 14      | Making Sense of Arguments<br>(cont.)               |   |
| Oct 21      | Reasons for Belief and Doubt<br><b>QUIZ 2</b>      | pp. 122-169   |
| Oct 28      | Faulty Reasoning                                   | pp. 170-208   |
| Nov 4       | Categorical Logic<br><b>QUIZ 3</b>                 | pp. 244-276   |
| Nov 11      | <b>No Class<br/>(Remembrance Day)</b>              |   |
| Nov 18      | Categorical Logic (cont.) &<br>Inductive Reasoning | pp. 277-330   |
| Nov 25      | Inductive Reasoning<br><b>QUIZ 4</b>               |   |
| Dec 2       | Evaluating Longer Arguments<br>& Conclusion        |   |
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<sup>1</sup> I reserve the right to make changes as necessary.