

PHILOSOPHY 107: CRITICAL THINKING

Western Washington University, Winter 2017
MWF 9:00-9:50am or 10:00-10:50am
Bond Hall 106

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Required Texts

1. *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to Analytical Reading and Reasoning*, 2nd ed., by Larry Wright (Oxford University Press, 2013).
 - It is crucial that you have the 2nd edition of this book.
 - This book is on 2-hour reserve at the WWU library.
2. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes, vols. 1 & 2*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Bantam Classics, 1986).
 - You will need access to the Sherlock Holmes stories, but you do not need to have this precise edition. There are many editions, and the stories can also be found online for free. (For example: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1661>.)

Course Description

As the title of our book says, this course is an introduction to analytical reading and reasoning. Both of these activities are integral parts of our day-to-day lives, so much so that we hardly stop to reflect on them. But reflecting on them and learning how to articulate what they involve will help us become more aware of the mechanisms that make these activities possible in the first place, and also of what can go wrong when we reason together. This will lead to a deeper understanding of reasoning, which in turn will help us become better at it. After spending some time brushing up on and honing our reading comprehension skills (yes, you're in college, but you're probably not as good at this as you think you are), we'll learn how to extract and evaluate arguments found in the sort of expository writing we encounter in our daily lives. We will pay particular attention to *diagnostic reasoning*, or reasoning by explaining, and we will develop a model to articulate how this sort of reasoning works, with an eye toward practical applications.

Note that the philosophy department offers two introductory reasoning courses: this one and also Phil 102 (Intro to Logic). Phil 102 focuses on formal methods for assessing the deductive validity of patterns of reasoning using an artificial symbolic language; this course focuses on informal, inductive reasoning in everyday conversational contexts.

Learning Outcomes

The main goal of this course is to develop a vocabulary and a framework for articulating and understanding the sort of reasoning employed in everyday conversational contexts. In order to do this, we'll need to learn how to summarize, how to paraphrase, how to distinguish between explanation and inference, how to evaluate evidence, how to deal with disagreement, and more.

The philosophy department expects its courses to help students develop and hone a wide range of skills. Phil 107 in particular can help with the abilities to think critically and read critically. This course is also a BCOM GUR, and GURs are intended to help students develop a wide range of competencies. Phil 107 in particular can help students learn how to: (1) analyze and communicate ideas effectively, (2) identify and analyze complex problems, and (3) understand and evaluate assumptions. For more information, visit <http://www.wvu.edu/gened/index.shtml>.

Course Requirements

- 30% *Quizzes.* There will be a quiz every Friday (\approx 15 minutes) where you'll be asked to apply the course concepts to a practical reasoning problem, and these will be graded on a scale of 0 to 3 points, with half-points possible.
- 15% *Homework.* There will be one homework assignment due every Monday. An electronic copy (.docx, .pdf, or text entry) will need to be uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of class on the day each assignment is due. It will be graded on completion only, and each assignment is worth 1 point. We will go over the assignment in class.
- 15% *Midterm Exam.* Our midterm exam will be during class on **Wednesday February 8th**. It will be graded on a 6-point scale (half-points are possible). It will be exactly the same format as your Friday quizzes, but twice as long. You will not need to bring a Blue Book.
- 30% *Final Exam.* Our cumulative final exam will be graded on a 12-point scale (half-points are possible). It will be exactly the same format as your midterm, but twice as long. Check the Registrar's Final Exam Schedule to determine the date/time of our exam: https://www.wvu.edu/registrar/finals_index.shtml. Again, you will not need to bring a Blue Book.
- 10% *Case Analysis.* Using a Sherlock Holmes story of your choice, you will write a roughly 5-page analysis of the reasoning Holmes used to solve the case, demonstrating your competence with the technical argumentative vocabulary that we will develop over the course. This will be due at the beginning of the final exam time slot, and will be graded on a 10-point scale. To be submitted via Canvas, where I'll soon post assignment details.

Other Policies & Information

- Makeups.* No makeups quizzes or exams will be allowed, though I will drop your two lowest quiz scores, and your lowest homework score. Note, however, that if you have a documented disAbility, you may receive testing services through the disAbility Resource Office (<http://www.wvu.edu/drs/>).
- Missed Classes.* Attendance is not an official part of your grade. This means that you do not need to email me if you will be missing class. However, if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. It is not possible for me to meet with you to “go over what you missed”, though of course once you do get notes, you are welcome to come chat with me about any residual questions you have. However, since there will be a quiz every week, you should plan to be in class every day.
- Email.* Email is the most efficient way to contact me (either directly or via the Canvas interface). It is an appropriate venue for brief questions and comments; it is not an appropriate venue for asking about missed classes or for detailed discussions about your grade. Note that your emails should always have my name at the top and your name at the bottom, as if you were writing me a letter.
- Canvas.* There is a Canvas page (<http://canvas.wvu.edu>) for our course where you can access this syllabus and your grades throughout the quarter. Please check it frequently to ensure that I haven’t made any errors inputting your grades.
- Phil7.com.* The author of our textbook has put together an online tutorial for the book, which can be found at <http://phil7.com>. It’s free to register and use the site.
- Honesty.* Academic integrity is demanded, and academic dishonesty at Western Washington University is a serious infraction dealt with severely. Although instructors should make every effort to ensure that students are aware of the policies for academic dishonesty, it is the responsibility of students to read, understand, and uphold the standards of academic honesty. See Appendix D of the catalog:
<http://catalog.wvu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2373>.
- Accommodation.* Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities should be established within the first week of class and arranged through Disability Resources for Students: telephone 650-3083; email drs@wvu.edu; and on the web at <http://www.wvu.edu/drs/>.
- Student Services.* Western encourages students to seek assistance and support at the onset of an illness, difficulty, or crisis.
- In the case of a medical concern or question, please contact the Health Center: 650-3400.
 - In the case of an emotional or psychological concern or question, please contact the Counseling Center: 650-3400.
 - In the case of a health and safety concern, please contact the University Police: 650-3555.
 - In the case of a family or personal crisis or emergency, please contact the Dean of Students: 650-3450.

Grading Scheme. No rounding.

92.5-100	A	80-82.4	B-	67.5-69.9	D+
90-92.4	A-	77.5-79.9	C+	62.5-67.4	D
87.5-89.9	B+	72.5-77.4	C	60-62.4	D-
82.5-87.4	B	70-72.4	C-	0-59.9	F

Tentative Reading Schedule (subject to change)

1.4	First Day	2.13	Ch. 5
1.6	Ch. 1	2.15	Ch. 5
		2.17	Ch. 5
1.9	Ch. 1		
1.11	Ch. 2	2.20	<i>Presidents' Day</i>
1.13	Ch. 2	2.22	Ch. 5
		2.24	Ch. 6
1.16	<i>MLK, Jr. Day</i>		
1.18	Ch. 2	2.27	Ch. 6
1.20	Ch. 2	3.1	Ch. 6
		3.3	Ch. 6
1.23	Ch. 2		
1.25	Ch. 3	3.6	Ch. 7
1.27	Ch. 3	3.8	Ch. 7
		3.10	Review
1.30	Ch. 4		
2.1	Ch. 4		
2.3	Ch. 4	M 3.13	10am section Final Exam @ 10:30am Case Analysis Due
2.6	Review		
2.8	Midterm Exam	R 3.16	9am section Final Exam @ 10:30am Case Analysis Due
2.10	Ch. 5		

Note for 10am section: Your final exam will be in a different room (TBA), so that we can allow students from the 9am section to take it at that time too, if they wish.

Note for 9am section: If you'd like to take the final exam early, with the 10am section, you are welcome to do so. But the regularly scheduled 9am section final exam will still be held as usual, in our normal classroom, on Thursday March 16th.