

I do not feel obligated to believe that the same God who endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect had intended for us to forgo their use...

- Galileo Galilee (1564 – 1642)

• **Philosophy 004 – Critical Thinking**

Section 01

Fall 2016 (August 29<sup>th</sup> – December 16<sup>th</sup>)

M/W 4:30 PM – 5:45 PM

Room: Mendocino Hall 3009

Satisfies General Education Area A3 (see course objectives/requirements below)

Instructor: J. P. Carboni

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Office Hours: Office Hours: Mon & Wed 11AM – 11:50 AM and Fri 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM  
Mendocino Hall 3022

**Course Description**

**Course Catalogue:** “Study of the basic skills of good reasoning needed for the intelligent and responsible conduct of life. Topics include: argument structure and identification, validity and strength of arguments, common fallacies of reasoning, use and abuse of language in reasoning, principles of fair play in argumentation.”

When questioned about the beliefs that one holds, many individuals will claim that their beliefs are strong, secure and qualify as knowledge. This makes sense. After all, the beliefs that we hold (which number far more than we may initially think) form the basis of our understanding of the world around us. In essence, our beliefs determine how we interact with that world and how we interact with others whom we live with. However, there is a problem. Many of these beliefs that are determined to be true are either outright false or based on faulty reasoning. The question is how do we know this? How *can* we know this? How *can* we evaluate beliefs that are so vital to our daily lives? How can we evaluate the beliefs of others? To state that it is often confusing and, more than not, difficult is certainly an understatement. It is important to understand, however, that difficulty does not necessitate ignoring the problem.

This class is designed to help us understand the proper forms of reasoning and the methods we can use to determine the strength of our beliefs and the beliefs of others through an understanding of proper and improper argument forms. We will discuss what good reasoning is, different argument forms, effective methods of communication (both verbal and written) how to evaluate information and we will review various logical fallacies that we often encounter but fail to recognize.

• **Required Textbook:**

The textbook for this class can be found at the following link:

<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/d/dowdenb/#logicalreasoning>

It may also be linked through Prof. Dowden's personal webpage at <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/d/dowdenb/index.htm>)

• **Departmental Learning Objectives for Phil 004:**

Students will be able to:

1. Describe, explain and distinguish key concepts in critical thinking.
2. Identify an argument in a passage of ordinary text, including identifying the premises and conclusions and distinguishing them from extraneous information.
3. Identify errors of reasoning and explain what the error in reasoning is.
4. Engage with peers in cogent and respectful discussion.
5. Analyze specific arguments for consistency and credibility.
6. Apply good reasoning to issues and problems in professional and personal contexts.
7. Evaluate evidence and draw inferences from that evidence.
8. Determine what evidence is necessary to support a conclusion and identify and apply key strategies to find that evidence.
9. Construct and defend arguments in support of or in opposition to particular propositions.
10. Analyze and solve complicated strategic challenges in various areas of life.

• **Area A-3 Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to:

1. Students study about and consciously develop skills in critical thinking.
2. Knowledge through logical analysis and argument construction is pursued throughout the course.
3. Instruction develops understanding of logical relationships between premises and conclusions.
4. Instruction develops ability to recognize more common formal and informal fallacies.
5. Grading reflects emphasis on logical processes.
6. Develops basic skills, applicable to a variety of academic subjects and to the fulfillment of such roles as citizen, consumer, leader and moral agent.
  - a. Skill in evaluating the validity, strength and relevance of arguments.
  - b. A sense of logical structure of both inductive and deductive forms.
  - c. Awareness of uses and abuses of argument language, including connotation, ambiguity and definition.
  - d. Skill in handling a variety of arguments in variety of contexts.

- e. Ability to argue fairly and to handle bias, emotion, and propaganda.

These outcomes include the student's ability to:

1. Locate the argument in a passage
  2. Detect errors of reasoning and explain how the reasoning is in error.
  3. Evaluate evidence and make appropriate inferences from that evidence.
  4. Construct and defend an argument in support of or in opposition to a proposition
- Student Learning Objectives for Area A3 courses can be viewed at:  
<http://www.csus.edu/acaf/Portfolios/GE/geareaA3.stm>

These learning objectives will be met through a variety of practical assessments including quizzes, group work, essay writing and verbal communication (class/group participation).

#### • Student Standards of Conduct:

**Plagiarism and/or cheating** will not be tolerated in this class. All those who engage in these activities will receive a zero on the associated assignment. In addition, all incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported to the department chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs. It is your responsibility to both know and adhere to Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy. This policy can be found at the following address:  
<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMAO0150.htm>

**In-Class Participation:** Purposely "obstructing" the viewpoint of another student in the classroom during classroom discussions is prohibited. This class will involve many discussions concerning the material assigned for homework and the material presented during the classroom lectures. This being a philosophy course, many of these discussions *may* challenge certain beliefs that you hold. Open dialog and proper methods of argumentation are not only expected but required for this class.

**Attendance/Participation:** Students are expected to attend each class session. This class will involve many in-class discussions and in-class group work. Students are expected to have completed the readings and participate in all in-class discussions.

**Cell Phones and Computers:** Please set your phone to vibrate before class. Cell phones are not to be used in class for any reason. If you must take a call (which I discourage unless an emergency) please step outside before you answer. No texting or Internet use will be allowed in class (unless directed by me).

**Email Correspondence:** Monday through Friday I check my Sac State and Gmail accounts a minimum of two times each day. If I do not respond to an email that you have sent within one day, please feel free to resend the email. In order to ensure a prompt reply, all emails that you send must be formatted according to the following link:  
<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20correspond%20with%20your%20professor.html>

#### • Disability Accommodations:

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you will need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Information can be found at the

following link: <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/ApplicationProcess-Forms.html>. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours *before* the end of the third week of the semester.

**Special Note:** All instructors employed by CSU, Sacramento are ‘mandatory reporters’ of suspected child abuse or neglect according to the *California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act*. As such, I am bound to the requirements established by CSU Executive Order 1083 which can be found at the following link: <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1083.html>

• **Evaluation/Homework Assignments:**

**In-Class Group Assignments:** There will be a number of randomly assigned, short in-class assignments throughout the term. These assignments will be worth a total of 5 – 10 points each. At the end of the term, a total of 55 points will be possible. There are no make-ups on missed in-class work.

**Quizzes:** As outlined on the weekly course breakdown below, there will be two types of quizzes in this class.

- (1) **Reading Quizzes:** Prior to each new section lecture/new topic, there will be a quiz to be completed in class prior to the lecture on that reading/subject (see weekly breakdown below for details). These quizzes must be completed in class. No make-ups will be given for missing a quiz. These quizzes will be multiple choice and/or true and false. Each Reading Quiz will be completed using an 815-E scantron. Each quiz will be worth 10 points.
- (2) **Lecture Quizzes:** During each lecture there will be 3-5 questions that students will be required to write down and answer in their notes. These questions will be based on the lecture material. At the conclusion of the *lecture on Wednesday*, there will be a quiz where I choose 5 questions out of all the questions provided during that week’s lectures (between 6-10 possible questions). You will then need to answer these questions using an 815-E scantron. To clarify, if there are two lectures during the week, you will have 6-10 *study* questions and I will choose 5 of those to be your quiz for that week. Each Lecture Quiz will be worth 10 points.

There will be no make-up quizzes if you miss a quiz (either type). I will, however, drop the lowest score received on each type of quiz at the end of the semester (one reading quiz and one lecture quiz). To do well on these quizzes and thus to do well in the class as a whole, you should make sure to attend class, to actively participate in the lecture and to complete the assigned readings.

**Essays:**

There will be three short essays in this class. For each assignment, you will be provided with assignment topics, structural details and a grading rubric two weeks prior to the due date for each essay. Essays must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Late essays will be docked 5 points for every class session that they are late. If your essay is late, you must arrange a method to hand in the essay with me after the class that the essays are due.

- Essay #1 Due: **Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**
- Essay # 2 Due: **Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>**
- Essay #3 Due: **Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**

Students are expected to adhere to the guidelines posted in “How to Analyze a Philosophical Essay” that is located on the CSUS Department of Philosophy webpage. This information will be reviewed in class on *Monday and Wednesday of Week 5* (prior to the first essay being due). Below is the link to the webpage:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20Write%20an%20Analysis.htm>

**Examinations:** There will be two in-class examinations in this class (a midterm and a final exam). There will be a comprehensive review held on the Friday before each exam. There will be no make-ups on exams - except with “extraordinary” circumstances - so schedule outside activities accordingly. Note: Extraordinary circumstances do not include personal athletic activities, vacations, car not starting, not feeling like it, etc. A doctor’s note (or something similar) will be required to schedule a make-up exam.

Midterm Exam: **Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> (Week 8)**

Final Exam: **TBA**

• **Grading Scale:**

All exams/essays will be graded based upon an 80-point scale according to the following breakdown:

<b>A</b> Outstanding (75 - 80 pts)	<b>A-</b> Very Good (72 - 74 pts)
<b>B+</b> Above Satisfactory (68.5 - 71 pts)	<b>B</b> Satisfactory (67 - 68 pts)
<b>B-</b> Below Satisfactory (64 - 67 pts)	<b>C+</b> Above Average (61 - 63 pts)
<b>C</b> Average (58 - 60 pts)	<b>C-</b> Below Average (56 - 57 pts)
<b>D+</b> Poor High (53 - 55.5 pts)	<b>D</b> Poor Low (48 - 52 pts)
<b>F</b> Unacceptable (47 and lower pts)	

• **Total Point Breakdown:**

**Blackboard Quizzes (x16 = 160 pts) – 150 after 1 dropped quiz**

**In-Class Quizzes (x14 = 140 pts) – 130 after 1 dropped quiz**

**Essay #1: 80 possible pts**

**Essay #2: 80 possible pts**

**Essay #3: 80 Possible Points**

**Midterm Examination: 100 possible pts**

**Final Examination: 100 possible pts**

**In Class Work: 55 possible points**

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Total Points Possible 775

**Final Grade Breakdown:** A 775 – 725 pts; A- 724 – 691 pts; B+ 690 – 663 pts; B 662 – 648 pts; B- 647 - 616 pts; C+ 615 – 586 pts; C 585 - 562 pts; C- 561 – 539 pts; D+ 538 – 500 pts; D 499 – 485; D- 484 – 461; F 460 or lower points

**Reading/Assignment Schedule**

Week 1: (Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Class Introduction – What Is Philosophy, What Is Critical Thinking and Why We Are Not Entitled to Our Opinions?*

*For Mon: Class Overview, In-Class Exercise*

*For Wed: Are We Entitled to Our Opinions? (No Reading) – In Class Assignment*

- Week 2: (Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>)  
*How to Reason Logically*  
 For Mon: Labor Day Holiday – No class  
 For Wed: Chapter 1 Cont. - “How to Reason Logically”  
 • **Reading Quiz #1**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #1**
- Week 3: (Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>)  
*Effective Communication*  
 For Mon/Wed: Chapter 5 – “Obstacles to Better Communication”  
**Mon:** • **Reading Quiz #2**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #2**
- Week 4: (Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>)  
*Evaluating Information*  
 For Mon/Wed: Chapter 4 – “How to Evaluate Information and Judge Credibility”  
 For Mon: • **Reading Quiz #3**  
 • **Review for Essay #1**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #3**
- Week 5: (Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>)  
*Claims, Issues and Arguments: what is an argument?*  
 For Mon: Chapter 2 – “Claims, Issues and Arguments”  
 • **Reading Quiz #4**  
 For Wed: Chapter 2 Continued – When It Comes to Arguments, What’s Important ... What’s Not? & In-Class Practice  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #4**
- Week 6: (Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>)  
*Writing Logically*  
 For Mon: Chapter 6 (Additional Materials for Your Review Posted on Blackboard)  
 • **Reading Quiz #5**  
 For Wed: Lecture on Chapter 3 - Vagueness and Ambiguity  
 • **Reading Quiz #6**  
 • **Due: Essay #1 - Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #5**
- Week 7: (Oct. 10<sup>rd</sup> – Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>)  
*Understanding That Bad Information Is All Around Us*  
 For Mon/Wed: Chapter 7 – “Defending Against Deception”  
 • **Reading Quiz #7 (Monday)**  
 For Wed: Midterm Exam Study Guide Provided  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #6**
- Week 8: (Oct. 17<sup>rd</sup> – Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>)

*Do We Know What We Know and Midterm Exam*

*For Mon:* In-Class Exercises (How Consistent Are Our Beliefs - materials provided in-class) & *Midterm Exam Review*  
*For Wed:* **Midterm Exam (bring a #2 pencil – I will provide the scantron)**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #7**

Week 9: (Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> – Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>)

*Fallacies and Being Consistent*

*For Mon:* Chapter 8 – “Detecting Fallacies” – Formal vs. Informal & *Midterm Exam Review*  
• **Reading Quiz #8**  
*For Wed:* Continue Chapter 8: Detecting Fallacies  
• **Review Essay #2**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #8**

Week 10: (Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> – Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>)

*Consistency & Inconsistency & Deductive vs. Inductive Reasoning*

*For Mon:* Chapter 9 “Consistency and Inconsistency”  
• **Reading Quiz #9**  
*For Wed:* Two Argument Forms: Deductive vs. Inductive Reasoning (No Reading Due)  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #9**

Week 11: (Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>)

*Logical Forms and Evaluations*

*For Mon:* Chapter 11 – “Logical Form and Sentential Logic” Pgs 330 – 351  
• **Reading Quiz #10**  
*For Wed:* Chapter 11 – “Logical Form and Sentential Logic” Pgs 351 – 363  
• **Reading Quiz #11**  
• **Due: Essay #2 (Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>)**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #10**

Week 12: (Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>)

*Sentential Reasoning and Truth Tables & Aristotle: The First Logician*

*For Mon:* Sentential Logic Continued – In-Class Exercises: Truth Tables  
*For Wed:* Chapter 12 – “Aristotelian Logic and Venn-Euler Diagrams” Pgs. 374 – 380 and Lecture on General Claims from Chapter 3  
• **Reading Quiz #12 (Chapter 12 and 13)**  
**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #11**

Week 13: (Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> – Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>)

*The Birth of Logic in Aristotle and How to Evaluate Using Venn Diagrams*  
For Mon: Chapter 12 Continued – “Aristotelian Logic and Venn Euler Diagrams” Continued Pgs 380 – 393

• **Reading Quiz #13**

• **Review of Essay #3**

For Wed: **Thanksgiving Holiday Break (No Class  
November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>)**

**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #12**

Week 14: (Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Venn/Euler Diagrams Continued – Learning to Diagram Arguments*

For Mon: Categorical Reasoning and Venn Diagrams - *Reading on Venn Diagrams Posted on Blackboard*

• **Reading Quiz #14**

For Wed: In Class Work: Venn Diagram Practice

**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #13**

Week 15: (Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>)  
Inductive Reasoning

For Mon: Chapter 13 – “Inductive Reasoning” Pgs. 404 – 422

• **Reading Quiz #15**

• **Due: Essay #3 (Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>)**

• **Provided: Final Examination Study Guide**

For Wed: Chapter 13 – “Inductive Reasoning” Pgs. 422- 441 &  
Chapter 14 – “Reasoning about Causes and Their Effects”

• **Reading Quiz #16**

• **Review for Final Examination**

**Wed:** • **Lecture Quiz #14**

Week 16: (Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>)

Final Examination Week – Examination Date TBA