

## Reasoning & Rational Decision-Making

PHILOSOPHY 1250-601, Thursdays 4:30 – 7:30pm (UT St. Correctional Facility)  
Salt Lake Community College, Fall 2024

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This class is an introduction to informal logic, focusing on issues of logical form, standards of good and bad reasoning, and argumentative writing. More specifically, this course is intended to strengthen reasoning, reading, communication, and argumentative skills through analyzing and evaluating argument structure, understanding fallacies, and by identifying the various reasoning methodologies that ground knowledge claims in a variety of professional, scientific, and public contexts.

**TEXTBOOKS:** *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction*, 7th ed., by Bassham, Irwin, Nardone, & Wallace. Plus, a few articles to be made available to you.

**GRADING:** Your grade will reflect your completion of five general assignments:

1) **ATTENDANCE** – Attendance will count for 10% of your total final grade.

Please note: You are expected to be attentive, engaged, and show up prepared by having done the readings for that week.

2) **HOMEWORK** – When it comes to becoming a good critical thinker, the only way to learn is to practice, practice, practice. As such, you will be assigned various homework exercises out of the textbook or on Canvas. Please do the exercises and bring them with you to class. This work will together count for 30% of your total final grade. See the “Schedule of Readings & Assignments” for the due dates and exercise numbers of your various assignments.

2) **WEEKLY QUIZZES** – Expect to have a short quiz at the start of every class meeting. Anything that you are expected to know up until that point in the semester will be a possible topic for a question, including material from your assigned reading for that week. Your eight best scores will be recorded, and together they will count for 20% of your total final grade.

4) **EXAMS** – There will be 2 longer in-class exams that you must take. These exams will count for 25% of your total final grade. See the “Schedule of Readings & Assignments” for the dates of each exam.

5) **ESSAY** – For a final assignment, you must write an argumentative essay. Specific instructions will be given on Canvas. This essay will be worth 15% of your total final grade. See the “Schedule of Readings & Assignments” for the due date.

In figuring grades, please note that all non-whole numbers will be rounded up only at .5 or higher. Cheating on any assignment will result at least in your failure of that assignment. All grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A =93+, A- =92-90, B+ =89-87, B =86-83, B- =82-80, C+ =79-77,  
C =76-73, C- =72-70, D+ =69-67, D =66-63, D- =62-60, F =59-0

#### **STANDARDS FOR GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

In general, A-grades in this course imply an excellent understanding of the material; B-grades imply a good understanding of the material; and C-grades imply some understanding of the material. Don't expect an A-grade for the course just because you showed up for class and tried hard. You must also demonstrate that you have mastered the material.

As much as possible, good spelling and grammar are expected for all writings submitted for a grade. Points will be taken off for submissions that are sloppy or poorly-written.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Class discussions should be handled with a respectful tone. But please be forewarned that this class will at times encourage critical thinking when it comes to religion. Keep in mind that challenging a belief is not the same as disrespecting a person.

But, if you do feel disrespected by something that your instructor or a fellow student has said or done, please come talk to your instructor. Sometimes these things are the result of simple misunderstandings that can be cleared up with a short conversation.

SLCC values inclusive learning environments and strives to make all aspects of the College accessible to our students. If you have a disability and believe you need accommodations to improve access to learning materials or the learning environment, please reach out to the Accessibility and Disability Services contact and/or reach out to a member of the PEP team.

General Education – This course fulfills the Humanities Distribution requirement for the General Education Program at Salt Lake Community College. It is designed not only to teach the information and skills required by the discipline, but also to develop vital workplace skills and to teach strategies and skills that can be used for life-long learning. General Education courses teach basic skills as well as broaden a student's knowledge of a wide range of subjects. Education is much more than the acquisition of facts; it is being able to use information in meaningful ways in order to enrich one's life. While the subject of each course is important and useful, we become truly educated through making connections of such varied information with the different methods of organizing human experience that are practiced by different disciplines. Therefore, this course, when combined with other General Education courses, will enable you to develop broader perspectives and deeper understandings of your community and the world, as well as challenge previously held assumptions about the world and its inhabitants.

This syllabus is subject to change.

## ***SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS***

The readings for this course will either be from *Critical Thinking*, seventh edition, by Bassham, et al., or they will be given to you in class. Students are expected to have done all readings prior to class. Please be aware that all of these dates are subject to revision.

August 22nd	intro to the class
August 29th	chap 1 from textbook <b>Due: written reflection</b>
September 5th	chap 2 from textbook & Clifford <b>Due: exercises 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 (Part 1 only on each of these)</b>
September 12th	chap 3 from textbook <b>Due: exercises 3.2, 3.5</b>
September 19th	chaps 5 & 6 in textbook <b>Due: exercises 5.2 part 1, 6.1 parts 1 &amp; 2</b>
September 26th	chap 7 ( <u>169–180 only</u> ) in textbook <b>Due: exercises 7.1</b>
October 3rd	no class
October 10th	<b>First Exam</b>
October 17th	no class
October 24th	chap 8 in textbook & Nichols <b>Due: starting my essay</b>

October 31st	Smith & Sheehan & Hempel <b>Due: homework exercises</b>
November 7th	Haack & Kitcher <b>Due: first draft of essay</b>
November 14th	Moral Reasoning <b>Due: homework exercises</b>
November 21st	Course Review
November 28th	no class
December 5th	<b>Second Exam</b> <b>Submit Final Essay</b>