

PHI 2108-0M01 (Mixed Mode): Critical Thinking
Spring 2017, Wednesdays, 6:00 p. m.- 7:15 p.m., PSY 226

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Mundale

Office: Dept. of Philosophy, Psychology Building, Room 230

Office hours: M 2-4, Th 9:30-11:30, and by appointment. Chats as needed, or request one individually.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The message below is from The Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:

“As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course.... Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.”

Required Academic Activity:

Take the “Attendance Verification Quiz”, in Quizzes area of course website. This quiz will not count toward your course grade. It opens Monday, January 9, and closes Tuesday, January 17.

Course Description. This course is intended to introduce students to critical thinking, reasoning and analysis, from a broad perspective that includes common biases and barriers, highlights from cognitive studies, some formal elements of logic, as well as a review of common fallacies, and other topics. As an “M”, or mixed-mode course, much of the content of this course is taught online, with limited face-to-face time. In this course mode, it is not possible for me to convey all that you will need to learn during the weekly face-to-face meetings; much of that will need to be done from the online sources. Please try to reserve class meeting time for questions and for reviewing the most difficult material. You are also welcome and encouraged to see me during office hours for any questions you may have or any additional help you may need. From time to time, I will also hold optional, online chats, through the course website.

Required Texts. You are not required to purchase any materials for this course. All required reading materials are available free, electronically through the course website. Note that many of these materials are subject to copyright restrictions, and are only to be used for the purposes of this course. They are not to be sold, shared, or otherwise disseminated except for the purposes of this course.

Preparation. Students are required to carefully read and prepare the assigned materials and remain current with all the assigned lessons, readings, tests, announcements, practice quizzes, lectures, and other components of this course. Checking your email regularly is very important, as I will send course announcements to you this way (see notes about e-mail, below). With respect to the material itself, critical thinking is a subject that requires a sustained and cumulative effort. New lessons build on previous material; therefore, you are well-advised to keep up with the new material as it is released. Failure to read your assignments and work through the lessons in a timely fashion will make it increasingly difficult to regain lost ground.

Makeups. I do not routinely grant makeups. If I do grant a makeup, depending on the circumstances, your makeup may be at the end of the course, and will likely be more difficult than the original test. On the other hand, if you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a test, see me well in advance of the test date, and, if possible, I will arrange for you to take the test early. Cases of extreme or extended duress will be handled on a case-by-case basis, at the instructor's discretion, provided the student discusses the issue with me in a responsible and timely fashion and can provide some documentation of the difficulty. (For example: E-mailing me late in the semester to tell me you missed three tests because you were sick or otherwise unable to take a test is neither responsible nor timely). If you miss a test, you will receive a score of zero for the missed test. **Remember: Your lowest test grade will be dropped, so a missed test isn't cause for panic, assuming you do well with the rest.**

Grades

I use the plus/minus grading convention (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F)

- Best 4 of 5 Tests (20% each, drop lowest/keep 4 best test scores): 80%
- Final Exam: In class, Wed., April 26, 2017, 4:00 PM – 6:50 PM, Cumulative, will not be dropped: 20%

E-mail (NOT CANVAS!)

E-mail is an **essential** part of this course, and you are responsible for its contents. The university requires that student's use their Knight's e-mail account for all official university communication, such as course communications. **Please make sure to check it, as you are responsible for anything I send via e-mail.** Please note that I use **regular e-mail, not Canvas email**, because I find regular e-mail more reliable and convenient. If you send something to me in Canvas email, assume that I will not see it. Send it to my email address directly.

- Use proper grammar and punctuation in your e-mail messages. **Don't use casual e-mail-ese, and don't write as if it were a text message.** We all make a few errors from time to time, but I will not respond to messages that are excessively sloppy. Have enough respect for yourself and your words to write them carefully; if you don't, others likely won't either.

- Be patient. Don't expect an immediate response when you send a message. Generally, two days is considered reasonable amount of time to receive a reply, not counting weekends.

- **Include descriptive "Subject" headings: something that is descriptive** and relevant to the subject of your e-mail. If you just hit reply to my last message, be sure to change the subject; otherwise, it bespeaks lack of proper attention to what you are attempting to say, and it won't readily catch my attention.

- Do not discuss grades or anything confidential in e-mail. Likewise, I cannot send you your grades or test scores in e-mail, as faculty are prohibited from doing so by privacy rules and regulations.

- **Include your name and your class on your e-mail messages** (I may have hundreds of students in a given semester, and surely more than one class, so identify yourself).

Technical Resources

For further assistance:

- UCF Home Page - a search will help find UCF resources - <http://www.ucf.edu>
- Helpdesk - <http://helpdesk.ucf.edu/> - You can also call the helpdesk at 407-823-5117.
- Techrangers - <http://techrangers.cdws.ucf.edu/support/> , or 407-823-3808
- Learning Online - <http://learn.ucf.edu> This URL also includes access to information on study skills for distance learners, the library and the writing center.

If your own equipment fails, there are many computer labs on campus and virtually every public library offers Internet access.

Academic Dishonesty. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are a disgrace. If caught, I will punish cheaters to the fullest extent allowed through the Office of Student Conduct. If you don't have enough integrity to do your own work, drop the class now and re-examine your purpose in life and at UCF. The official UCF guidelines can be found here for your reference: (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu>).

Extra Credit. One opportunity for extra credit comes at the end of course – Critical Thinking Optional Lesson Part I and Part II. The material from these two optional lessons introduces Propositional Logic, and will be included in Extra Credit questions, on the final exam only. This material is not required. There is also a practice quiz for this material, and that practice quiz is also optional, and included just for review.

Advisory Note. Many students find the material in the second half of the course (Lessons 7-12) more difficult than the material from the first half of the course. Please be aware of this, and do not allow yourself to start missing class, to neglect the material, or to fall behind at that point in the semester. This is a natural progression in the material itself, so please be mindful of it, and see me if you find you are having difficulties. I will be happy to assist you during office hours or by appointment.

Lesson Topics: (Detailed schedule posted immediately under these topics)

- 1 – Personal Barriers, Enculturation, Ego Defenses, Attribution Errors, other Common Thinking Errors
- 2 – Salience and Attribution
- 3 – Context Dependence: Contrast Effects, Primacy vs. Recency Effects, Halo Effect
- 4 – Selective Perception: Playing Card Experiments, Potent Expectations, The Dartmouth vs. Princeton Game, Hostile Media Effect
- 5 – Language: Structuring of Thought, Linguistic Determinism Debate, Metaphor, Connotation vs. Denotation
- 6 – Informal Fallacies and Sample Deceitful Techniques
- 7 – Basic Logical Concepts
- 8 – Validity and Counterexample
- 9 – Categorical Syllogisms
- 10 – Mood (not what you think), and Figure (also not what you think) in Categorical Syllogisms
- 11 – Venn Diagrams
- 12 – Validity, Invalidity, and Venn Diagrams

Course Calendar, Spring 2017, PHI 2108, Critical Thinking

Week	Class Meeting Dates – All on Wednesdays	Schedule of Lessons, Readings, and In-Class Tests <i>Lessons and Readings are online, to be studied on your own. Except for the first class meeting, please have readings completed before class so as to make best use of your time in class.</i>	Practice Quizzes <i>Practice quizzes are online, for practice and review only (not part of your final grade). Only In-Class tests count toward your final grade.</i>	Special Notes
1	January 11	Review Syllabus, begin preview of Lessons 1 and 2		Th., Jan. 12, 11:59 p.m., is Drop/Swap Deadline, and Fri., Jan. 13, 11:59 p.m., is Add deadline.
2	January 18	Lessons 1 and 2		
3	January 25	Lessons 3 and 4	Complete Practice Quiz #1 Over Lessons 1-4	
4	February 1	Brief Review, TEST 1 (In Class) Over Lessons 1, 2, 3 and 4		
5	February 8	Lessons 5 and 6	Complete Practice Quiz #2 Over Lessons 5-6	
6	February 15	Brief Review, TEST 2 (In Class) Over Lessons 5 and 6		
7	February 22	Lesson 7		Mon., Jan. 16, is M. L. K. Jr. Holiday
8	March 1	Lesson 8	Complete Practice Quiz #3 Over Lessons 7-8	
9	March 8	Review Lessons 7 and 8 Begin lessons 9 and 10		
10	March 13-19 Spring Break	No class, but continue to study Lessons 7 and 8 on your own		
11	March 22	TEST 3 (In Class) Over Lessons 7 and 8		Wed., March 22 is withdrawal deadline (<i>ends at 11:59 p.m.</i>)
12	March 29	Lessons 9 and 10	Complete Practice Quiz #4 Over Lessons 9-10	
13	April 5	TEST 4 (In Class) Over Lessons 9 and 10		
14	April 12	Lessons 11 and 12	Complete Practice Quiz #5 Over Lessons 11-12	
15	April 19	TEST 5 (In Class) Over Lessons 11 and 12		
<p align="center">FINAL EXAM (In Class): Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 4:00 PM – 6:50 PM * * * The final exam is cumulative, and will not be dropped. * * *</p>				