



University of Central Florida  
College of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Philosophy

**Course Information: Syllabus**

PHI 2108: Critical Thinking, (FALL 2017), 3CR

Location/Time: WebCourses@UCF (on the Canvas LMS)

**Syllabus Change Policy:**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

**Contact Information**

- **Professor:**

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## Required Textbook

- Douglas Walton, *Informal Logic* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. NY: Cambridge, 2008-2010. ISBN: 978-0-521-71380-1

## Course Description, Goal and Rationale:

- The course surveys the logic of conversation, informal fallacies, and reasoning about human action.
- The student will benefit from this course by learning the background and circumstances of critical thinking as applied to sociopolitical, cultural and artistic phenomena.
- Students will cultivate an ability to analyze and critique the logic of conversation, informal fallacies, and reasoning about human action.

## Learning Objectives:

- Conceptualize a variety of issues within the subject of critical thinking.
- Recognize conflict within critical thinking, and ways to examine solutions to complex issues.
- Apply personal perspectives and expectations to a variety of phenomena in a critical theoretical way.
- Evaluate different ways that people express critical thinking.
- Form a theory about what critical thinking may be, and how such a philosophical enterprise may be used to make sense of complex issues and artifacts which surround all of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Student Responsibilities

- **Participation:** Students are expected to submit their discussions and essays for online courses in a timely manner. Learning activities are organized via Canvas discussions and students are expected to be full partners in this process. Students are also expected to be attentive to

the Canvas site's announcements and assignments on a continuing basis. Checking with the Canvas site at least three times each week will be necessary. Learning is facilitated by online discussion forums. There may be some online group work and students are expected to be full partners in this process.

- **NOTE ON FINANCIAL AID and PARTICIPATION:** As of Fall 2014, all faculty members 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 first discussion forum post during the first week of class. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.
- **Homework:** Assignments will be given requiring the student's own writing and responses to articles, films, and outside stimuli brought into the course for the purpose of student responses.
- **Other daily responsibilities:** Students will be encouraged to enrich their learning environment by bringing into course discussions items from newspapers, radio reports, television coverage, the latest films, and anecdotes from their own life experiences.
- **Tests/Exams:** There will be a midterm and final (non-cumulative) essay exam for the course.

## Course Content & Outline

August 21

### Argument as Reasoned Dialogue

(1) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.1-37

August 28

### Questions and Answers in Dialogue

(2) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.38-77

September 4

### Criticisms of Irrelevance

(3) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.78-105

September 11

### Appeals to Emotion

(4) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.106-135

September 18

**Valid Arguments**

(5) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.136-169

September 25

**Personal Attack in Argumentation**

(6) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.170-208

October 2

**Appeals to Authority**

(7) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.209-245

October 9

**Inductive Errors, Bias and Fallacies**

(8) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.246-288

October 16

**Midterm Exam**

October 23

**Natural Language Argumentation**

(9) Walton, *Informal Logic*, p.289-332

October 30

**Review**

November 6

**Review**

November 13

**Review**

November 20

**Review**

November 27

**Review**

December 4

**Final Exam**

**Grading Method:** Evaluation is based mainly on essay writing and therefore a competency in such writing is expected. Students' writing will be judged by its clarity and precision in manuscript execution (all essays must be word-processed and submitted digitally) with evidence of: proofreading before submission; correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar; focus on a point, topic, or subject that is congruent with the scope of the assignment; appropriate synthesis and analysis; logical progression of ideas, arguments, counter arguments, and conclusions; and assertions and statements supported by evidence and discussion.

**Grading Scale:**

A	100%	to 94%
A-	< 94%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 87%
B	< 87%	to 84%
B-	< 84%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 77%
C	< 77%	to 74%
C-	< 74%	to 70%
D+	< 70%	to 67%
D	< 67%	to 64%
D-	< 64%	to 61%
F	< 61%	to 0%

**Assessments:**

- **The Midterm and Final Exam (approx. 1000 words each) count for 65% (30% for the Midterm; 35% for the Final Exam) of the grade.**
- **Discussion boards (approx. 1600 words total) count for 35% of the grade.**

**Policy for late work:** Tardiness in posting to Canvas and assignment submission will be penalized as follows. There will be **10% deduction** for work submitted after the due date. **One week** from the due date is the last date for which an assignment will be accepted without documented evidence for an excused absence. The professor reserves the right to amend this policy where the situation warrants it.

**UCF Golden Rule:** Plagiarism of any kind is a violation of the "Golden Rule" as published in the UCF Catalog. Academic honesty and integrity are expected of everyone. Academic dishonesty results in at least an "F" for the particular assignment concerned and may be subject to further action as appropriate.

ADA Policy: To register for services contact Student Disability Services at [ada@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:ada@mail.ucf.edu) or 407-823-2371.