

Syllabus
PHIL 1250 (3 Cr.)
Reasoning and Rational Decision Making
Summer 2020

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips
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Office Hours: Zoom, by appointment

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Class Meets:

This is an asynchronous online course.

I will be available frequently for zoom meetings or phone chats if that's easier. Your best bet is to email me, and I will respond within 24 hours. Also please make liberal use of the discussion boards, as your classmates may be able to help.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this class we will discuss and explore some of the methods and principles that distinguish logically good reasoning from bad. We will also learn how to use formal systems to recognize, construct, and evaluate every-day argumentation. We will spend most of our time ensuring that the student has a ready grasp of the difference between inductive and deductive standards of argument evaluation; a distinction which is central to understanding the enterprises of the sciences. Logical skills are not only instrumental in students' success on aptitude tests such as the GRE and the LSAT, but also in nearly any course or job that utilizes analytic skills.

This is an accelerated course in basic logic. The material will likely be a little tricky, especially given the short time we'll have together. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I'll make liberal use of Canvas to offer tips, guidance, and to help answer questions. Ultimately, a lot of the learning is going to be up to you – but that's okay, because I am confident that you can do it, and again, I'm here to help.

This course fulfills the *Humanities Knowledge Area* for the General Education Program.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- **Critical Thinking:** The successful student will begin to be able to differentiate between good and bad reasons for holding philosophical beliefs and will be able to seek out and identify the assumptions that lie at the basis of philosophical positions.
- **Inquiry and Analysis:** The successful student will begin to be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- **Communication:** The successful student will increase their capacity for written expression of difficult philosophical positions and arguments clearly, concisely, and thoroughly.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be done through homework, and a paper.

TEXT: *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (12th ed), by Patrick Hurley (Cengage Learning, 2015). ISBN: 9781285196541
This can be found at the College Bookstore, and is *required*.

Materials not available in the required texts will be provided on Canvas.

A Brief note on the textbook: You'll notice that I listed the 12th edition. This is the one I have. I'm sure you've also seen that there is a 13th edition available. Any edition after the 10th is fine. Textbook publishers often take advantage of students in a way that I find immoral. The last substantive revision of the book happened between the 9th and 10th editions. Editions 10-13 are, for all intents and purposes the same. Please find yourself the most affordable edition you can.

SCHEDULE:

We meet from June 24th – August 7th. August 6th will be the last day to turn in work.

Specific reading assignments will be given on a week-to-week basis.

We will take on a brisk pace in order to cover a fair amount of material. It is critical that you keep up with the material.

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Week 1 (June 24-29) Introduction to Philosophy and Logic

Chapter 1 (1.1-1.5): *Basic Concepts*

Homework: Exercises 1.4.I (1-10); 1.4.II (1-10); 1.4.V (1-15); 1.5.I (1-10)

Week 2 (June 30- July 5) Fallacies, Formal and Informal

Chapter 3 (3.1-3.5) *Fallacies of all kinds*

Homework: Exercises 3.4.I (1-25); 3.4.II (1-15); 3.4.III (1-30)

Week 3 (July 6-12) Formal Logic 1 – Propositional Logic

Chapter 6 (6.1-6.6) *Symbols and Translation, Truth-Tables, and argument forms*

Homework: Exercises 6.1.I (1-10); 6.2.I (1-5); 6.2.III (1-10); 6.4.II (1-5); 6.5.II (1-10)

Week 4 (July 13-19) Formal Logic 2 – Natural Deduction

Chapter 7 (7.1-7.7) *Natural Deduction, Conditional Proof, and Indirect Proof*

Homework: 7.5.I (1-5); 7.6.I (1-10); 7.7.I (1-10)

Week 5 (July 20-26) Hypothetical and Scientific Reasoning

Chapter 13 (13.1-13.4) *Hypothetical Reasoning, Examples, and Extra-Empirical Virtues*

Homework: 13.I (1-5); 13.II (all); 13.VI (1-20)

Week 6 (July 27-Aug 2) Science and Superstition: The Demarcation Problem

Chapter 14 (14.1-14.5) *Distinguishing Science from Superstition*

Homework: Provide an outline of your critical response paper.

Week 7 (Aug. 3-7) Final Paper

I will look at drafts until Tuesday (Aug. 4). The paper is due Thursday the 6th at 11:59p.

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, POLICY:

Homework: You will be expected to complete 6 homework assignments. Each homework assignment will be worth 10 points. You will be expected to show your work, and to upload it each week by Sunday night at 11:59p. I will post the answer keys to the assignments, but I strongly encourage you to do your best to work through the homework *before* looking at the answer key. You will also notice that the starred questions have answers in the back of the book. Try your hand at those first, and check your work. If you're having trouble with the material, reach out to me; I'm here to help you.

Paper: You are expected to complete one short paper for this course. Your paper should be 900-1200 words, and will be a critical response to either the Ruse, Thagard, or Leninovitz paper on the demarcation between science and pseudoscience. You will be expected to reconstruct and critically evaluate the author's argument. More details on the paper will be presented on Canvas around the mid-point of the course. This paper is worth 60 points.

Breakdown:

Homework: 6 @ 10 points = 60pts.

Final Paper: 1 @ 60 points = 60pts.

Total possible points: 120

Late Work: I will accept late homework and papers, but for each 24-hour period assignment is late, the grade will be reduced by 4%.

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Grade Disputes: If you feel that your work has been unfairly assessed, you may ask that I reconsider. I am, after all, a human who makes mistakes on occasion. I will do so **only if** you submit to me, on paper, a one-paragraph typewritten explanation of why you believe that your work has been unfairly evaluated. You must indicate the grade you believe yourself to deserve and explain clearly why it is that you deserve that grade. Your dispute must be submitted within **one week** of receiving your grade.

Attendance: The course is asynchronous, so there are not really classes to attend. That being said, I would like to see some indication that you're engaged with the course. Whether that's via email, discussion boards, zoom meetings, or otherwise, I just want to know you're out there.

There is also a mandatory, zero point, attendance quiz. Please fill that out as soon as you can.

Plagiarism or academic fraud of any sort will result in an F for the course. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter. Please familiarize yourself with Southern Utah University's *Student Handbook*, which you can find online at <https://www.suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP633Academic.pdf>. I will follow the regulations described in this document for dealing with cheating, plagiarism, etc. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism or academic fraud after reading through the student handbook, please do not hesitate to ask me for further clarification.

Disabilities: I warmly welcome any of you who have disabilities. Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these services and aids. Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines. For Southern Utah University's full policy, see: <http://suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP119Disability.pdf>.

Emergency Management: In case of emergency, the University's Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the mySUU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University's emergency management plan can be found at <http://suu.edu/emergency>.

HEOA Compliance: The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law.