

Critical Reasoning

LPS 29/Phil 29

Summer Session I 2020

Lectures: Available on course website at any time

Instructor: Chris Mitsch
Office Hours: TBD
Location: Online
Email: cmitsch@uci.edu

Course Texts: Nolt, Rohatyn, and Varzi, *Schaum's Outline of Theory and Problems of Logic*, McGraw Hill (2nd Edition)

Goals

This course has the following learning outcomes:

- Understand the basic concepts of analysis and reasoning.
- Identify and assess simple propositional arguments.
- Be able to appreciate the benefits and limitations of formalizing reasoning.
- Cultivate the intellectual humility, carefulness, and tenacity necessary for academic success.

Accessibility Statement

My goal is to create an educational environment that accommodates the learning styles of all students. While the [Disability Services Center](#) provides a number of services and accommodations, I recognize my responsibility as an instructor to design the course such that it is accessible to all students. Any students with particular needs are encouraged to contact me so we can work out the details of any accommodations needed for this course.

Documented Excuses

If you request an adjustment to or exemption from course requirements—e.g., a later due date for a homework assignment—you must provide documentation to justify your request. I am flexible about what will count as documentation. For example, in most cases I will accept a note from one of UCI's many resource centers. I require documentation for two reasons: (1) to ensure you are receiving the assistance and support you need, and (2) to keep you honest without unduly violating your privacy. I will consider any documentation that you feel meet these requirements, and I encourage you to advocate for yourself. However, I reserve the right to deny your request.

Course Website

The course website can be found [here](#).

Grading

I will use the standard grading scale when assigning final grades. I do **not** intend to curve the grades. In the rare circumstance that I adjust the grades, you are guaranteed the grade you would have received on the standard scale or better. Use the below table to calculate your overall grade (divide your points by the number possible, then multiply by 100).

HW 0	/15 PTS	ABOUT 32% OF YOUR GRADE
HW 1	/15 pts	
HW 2	/15 pts	
HW 3	/15 pts	
HW 4	/15 pts	
HW 5	/15 pts	
HW 6	/15 pts	
HW 7	/15 pts	
HW 8	/15 pts	
HW 9	/15 pts	
QUIZ 1	/80 pts	ABOUT 25% OF YOUR GRADE
QUIZ 2	/40 pts	
FINAL EXAM	/200 pts	ABOUT 43% OF YOUR GRADE
OVERALL GRADE	/470 pts	

Quizzes and Exams

There will be two quizzes and a final exam. Each quiz will cover material from that section of the course. The final will be cumulative. Each of these will only be available during a 24-hour window.

Homework

There will be ten homework assignments. Excluding the first, they will consist of practice problems. These will be graded on completion. You can find the rubric for the assignments on CANVAS.

Extra Credit

Critical reasoning is an important skill, but it can't do its job alone. For this reason, I will be running a reading group on *intellectual humility*. Among other things, someone who is intellectually humble: actively seeks out the experience of others; is comfortable with uncertainty; works hard to recognize their own biases; readily admits when they are wrong; and, especially, sees confusion and disagreement as opportunities to gain wisdom.

Developing and maintaining intellectual humility takes dedication and practice. It can be difficult and uncomfortable—especially when it is most needed. For this reason, we will read and discuss *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*, by Robin DiAngelo. **To be clear:** this book is aimed at white Americans in particular, so it may not speak to your experience. But despite its emphasis on white Americans and anti-Blackness, the book is a great example of teaching and learning intellectual humility when it is difficult and when it matters. Nevertheless, reading and discussing anti-Blackness is not required to receive extra credit. If you would prefer to read (or watch, listen to, etc.) something else to learn about intellectual humility, please email me as soon as possible so I can make arrangements.

We will meet once per week for about an hour. Each of you will send me one discussion question at least one hour before we meet. We will discuss these as well as some questions I come up with. You will be expected to model intellectual humility.

Your extra credit grade will be determined based on the quality of your participation (details coming). **Your extra credit grade may replace your score on the final exam.** For this to happen, you must take the final exam and receive at least a 65%.

Point Deductions

I reserve the right to deduct points for behavior that is disruptive to the smooth functioning of the course. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, emailing me questions that are clearly answered in this syllabus or on the course website (such as, “When is the final?” or “When is the homework due?”) and arriving late to the exams. However, to thank you for reading the syllabus now, I would like to give you the opportunity to receive an extra half-percent grade boost by sending me an email with the subject line “I read the syllabus.” In the body of the email, please include either a fun fact about yourself, or let me know what you’re hoping to get out of this course. (That last part is optional—all you *need* to do to get the extra credit is send an email with the subject line mentioned above.)

Section Attendance

Attendance at section is **not required**. However, it is strongly encouraged. Sections will be used to go over the latest homework.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student’s work, plagiarizing, and assisting the academically dishonest behaviors of others. It is your responsibility to know the [university policies on academic integrity](#).

Syllabus Note

This syllabus—including the schedule—is tentative and subject to revision. Any modifications will be announced on the course website. The purpose of any such modifications would be to facilitate students’ learning experience. I want you all to enjoy the course and get as much out of it as possible!