Description
This course teaches a basic set of skills that will improve your ability to think clearly and rationally. It will help you avoid fallacies and inconsistencies, uncover implicit assumptions, and become aware of your own biases. These skills will help you identify and assess claims and arguments, such as those encountered in your coursework, in conversation, and online.

The course has a strong focus on hands on practice with immediate feedback. This is facilitated by its unique combination of online resources, including reading modules, online presentations, practice exercises, assignments, and weekly tutorials over live chat (tutorial times will be scheduled during the first week of class).

Note: There is also a blended online and in-class version of this course, which covers the same material. You may wish to consider whether an online or a blended course best suits your learning style.

Readings
- Required readings: Selected modules from Joe Lau’s Critical Thinking Web: http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/ (free)

Requirements
Practice exercises (online) 10%
Assignments (online) 30%
Tutorial participation (online) 10%
Midyear examination (December) 20%
Final examination 30%
Objectives

This course aims to teach students to

- identify, understand, and evaluate claims and arguments,
- understand the difference between different types of claims and arguments,
- depict the structure of statements and arguments using symbolic and graphical tools,
- recognize rational and non-rational influences on belief formation, including biases,
- understand the importance and relevance of critical thinking skills, and
- know when to apply critical thinking skills in both everyday and academic contexts.

Department policies

The Department of Philosophy Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Mental health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

September 9, 2016