

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016/2017

Philosophy 1200 (650): Critical Thinking (Online)

Full year 2016/2017

Instructor:	Dr. Angela Mendelovici	amendel5@uwo.ca
Teaching assistants:	Mr. Erlantz Etxeberria Altuna	eetxeber@uwo.ca
	Mr. Matthew Howery	mhowery@uwo.ca
	Mr. Robert Munro	rmunro9@uwo.ca
	Mr. Daniel Viger	dviger2@uwo.ca

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)
- Optional: Joe Lau. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking and Creativity: Think More, Think Better*. Wiley, 2011. (Hard copy available at bookstore and from publisher, E-text available from publisher)

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