

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Reasoning and Critical Thinking

Course Number and Section:

PHILOSOP

1230B 551

Instructor Name(s): Dr. Jonathan P. Marsh

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

We humans are, in the familiar ancient slogan, “rational animals”. Yet there are systematic problems with the way we reason – rooted in unconscious biases, fallacies, illusions, inconsistencies, misinformation and a multitude of intellectual vices.

The goal of this course is to help us get better at mitigating these cognitive shortcomings and, in turn, enhance our ability to reason. We pursue this aim with an eye towards forming more accurate beliefs and making better decisions.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of term, every committed student will know how to do four things:

1. categorize, diagram and assess arguments from virtually any discipline,
2. spot and, to some extent, mitigate common forms of human irrationality (e.g. biases, fallacies and inconsistencies), and the various harms they can cause,
3. look for good sources of information and distinguish these from bad sources,
4. employ various techniques and principles for rationally updating their beliefs (KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS, 1-4).

Students will also get opportunities to

5. construct intellectual rules or guidelines that improve their thinking and decisionmaking (PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT).

Textbooks and Course Materials:

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be made freely available via OWL Brightspace. Nor are there any anticipated distinctive, i.e. class-specific, costs.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Unit 2.1 Test	January 23	20%
Active and Informed Participation		20%
Rules Assignment /Workshop	February 13	20%
Final Exam		40 %

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, January 27, 2025