

PHIL 1533 Critical Thinking and Reasoning

FALL 2023

Instructor: Mr. Michael J. Muniz, M.A. (Assistant Headmaster)

Email: michael.muniz@msutexas.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to critical thinking, the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information in order to think through a problem clearly and communicate a solution effectively. Although students will learn to recognize, analyze, evaluate, and compose arguments—the primary instrument of critical thinking and reasoning—and will investigate the various forms arguments take, addressing both formal and informal methods of argumentation and distinguishing between good arguments and bad arguments, the principal focus of the course is not on learning and applying critical thinking methodologies *as such*. Rather, foremost emphasis is placed on exploring the role that critical thinking plays in the development, articulation, and analysis of ideas, values, and beliefs in various cultural contexts as well as the creative products through which these ideas, values, and beliefs are expressed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students in PHIL 1533 will develop the following skills at the culmination of this course:

- The ability to understand the role of critical thinking in the development, articulation, and analysis of ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture that express and affect human experience.
- The ability to understand and implement the rudiments of critical thinking and reasoning in both formal and informal contexts.
- The ability to identify arguments and understand the basic rules of argumentation.
- The ability to evaluate arguments by analyzing reasoning and evidence, particularly as they feature in the articulation and defense of ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture that express and affect human experience.
- The ability to construct sound arguments in support of their points of view.
- The ability to communicate their points of view, as well as the arguments in support of their points of view, clearly and effectively.
- The ability to appreciate the relevance of critical thinking and reasoning in ethical and political decision-making at both individual and social levels.

Assessment of THECB core objectives for LANGUAGE, PHILOSOPHY, & CULTURE

- **Critical Thinking**
 - To assess a student's critical thinking, the Phil 1533 Writing rubric will be applied to the Final Paper.
- **Communication**
 - To assess a student's critical thinking, the Phil 1533 Writing rubric will be applied to the Final Paper.
- **Personal Responsibility**
 - To assess a student's critical thinking, the Phil 1533 Writing rubric will be applied to the Final Paper.
- **Social Responsibility**
 - To assess a student's critical thinking, the Phil 1533 Writing rubric will be applied to the Final Paper.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

All students enrolled in this course are expected to:

- Maintain regular attendance;
- Come to class on time;
- Complete all assignments, including course readings, on time;
- Participate regularly and productively in class discussions;
- Refrain from engaging in rude, inconsiderate, or disruptive behavior (e.g., sleeping, whispering, using cell phones or laptops, etc.);
- Treat the instructor and fellow students with respect and courtesy;
- Observe proper etiquette when communicating with the instructor, especially by email;
- Notify the instructor in the event of absences, whether planned or unplanned;
- Ask questions about course policies, course assignments, and course material, including readings;
- Seek the instructor's help when needed;
- Communicate concerns to the instructor in an open, honest, and constructive way;
- Take themselves seriously not just as students but also as *scholars* and *philosophers*.

CAVEAT

The following schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

Students are expected to meet and abide by the guidelines, standards, and expectations set forth by both MSU and Founders Classical Academy of Corinth.

ASSIGNMENTS

Final grades for this course will be based on the following:

- Weekly quizzes: 20%
- Attendance and class participation: 15%
- 2 in-class examinations: 20%
- Final paper (approximately 6-7 pp.): 45%

ATTENDANCE

- Regular attendance is mandatory. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in a timely fashion regarding any planned or unplanned absences. In order for an absence to be excused, the absentee must provide a reasonable explanation for his or her non-attendance as well as any documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) that the instructor requests. Failure to do so will result in a penalty.
- Students are allowed maximum of 2 unexcused absences without penalty. For each unexcused absence beyond the first 2, the instructor will reduce the absentee's final grade by 5%.
- Students with 3 or more unexcused absences beyond the first 2 are required to attend a conference with the instructor. Students with 5 or more unexcused absences beyond the first 2 will automatically fail the class.
- Tardiness will not be tolerated. Students who are 15 or more minute late for class will be considered absent. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor regarding any planned or unplanned tardiness.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in class discussion is mandatory and accounts for approximately 13% of the final grade (40 points). Examples of participation include, but are not limited to:

- Asking questions about assigned readings or lectures;
- Answering questions posed by the instructor;
- Expressing and defending a point of view regarding the philosophical issue(s) under discussion;
- Responding constructively to other students' points of view regarding the philosophical issue(s) under discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (Aristotle) – Signet Classics – ISBN: 9780451531759
- *The Trial and Death of Socrates* (Plato, trans. G.M.A. Grube) – Hackett – ISBN: 9780872205543
- *Selected Philosophical Writings* (Aquinas, trans. Timothy McDermott) – Oxford – ISBN: 9780199540273
- Immanuel Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?” (Handout Provided by Instructor)
- Hannah Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations.” (Handout Provided by Instructor)
- Students will be Assigned 2 from the following five texts:
 - *Discourse on Metaphysics and The Monadology* (**Leibniz**, trans. George R. Montgomery) – Dover – ISBN: 9780486443102
 - *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (**Hume**) – Dover – ISBN: 9780486451114
 - *Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (**Paley**) – Anodos – ISBN: 9781677879946
 - *Discourse on Method and Meditations* (**Descartes**, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane & G. R. T. Ross) – Dover – ISBN: 9780486432526
 - *The Ethics* (**Spinoza**, trans. R.H.M. Elwes) – Dover – ISBN: 9780486827650

BIBLIOGRAPHY/RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following texts will serve as primary sources for notes and exercises. These texts are not required for purchase. However, familiarity with their content will suffice as supplementary information for lectures and discussions. In addition to the required texts, these texts also serve as foundational in structuring this course.

- Arp, Robert, Steven Barbone, and Michael Bruce. *Bad Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Fallacies in Western Philosophy*. Wiley-Blackwell (2019).

- Bruce, Michael and Steven Barbone. *Just the Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Arguments in Western Philosophy*. Wiley-Blackwell (2011).
- Fisher, Alec. *The Logic of Real Arguments, 2nd Edition*. Cambridge (2004).
- Govier, Trudy. *A Practical Study of Argument, 7th Edition*. Wadsworth Cengage (2014).
- Hurley, Patrick J. and Lori Watson. *A Concise Introduction to Logic, 13th Edition*. Wadsworth Cengage (2018).
- Quine, W.V.O. *Elementary Logic, Revised Edition*. Harvard (1980).
- Moore, Brooke Noel and Richard Parker. *Critical Thinking, 11th Edition*. McGraw-Hill (2014).
- Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments 5th Edition*. Hackett (2017).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

With regard to academic honesty, students are referred to the “Student Honor Creed” on p. 19 of Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 1 (2010-2012).

With regard to academic dishonesty, students are referred to the Founders Classical Academy of Corinth Handbook, and Responsive Education Solutions Handbook.

COURSE SCHEDULE

See attached documents

QUIZ AND EXAM SCHEDULE

See attached documents

Phil 1533 Writing Rubric

See attached documents