Critical Reasoning and Analytic Writing - (PHIL-2)

Section #: 54803

Meeting Days/Times: MW 11:00-12:15

Start Date: 08/07/2023 - End Date: 12/08/2023

Instructor: Marisa Maccaro

Term: 2023FA

Room: CCI 204

Units: 3.00

Instructor

Name: Marisa Maccaro

Email address: marisa.maccaro@reedleycollege.edu

Office Location/Hours: See Canvas course homepage

Division Office Phone: 559-494-3000

Welcome Message

Welcome, Critical Thinkers! I’m so excited to teach this course, and I’m looking forward to getting to know each of you.

This course is an introduction to critical thinking, the practice of examining whether there are good reasons for believing whatever you or someone else might believe. Throughout the semester, we'll learn how to distinguish between good and bad reasons for believing a claim; we'll look at philosophical and psychological obstacles to forming true beliefs; we'll learn about fallacies, which can trick us into believing false things; we'll discuss how to give good reasons that should convince others to believe true things; and we'll apply all the tools we learn to things like conspiracy theories, supernatural phenomena, advertising, partisanship, and pseudoscience!

Please note that this is also a writing intensive course. Over the course of the semester, you’ll write about 6000 words! Nearly every week you’ll have a writing assignment aimed at helping you articulate your thoughts and develop your critical thinking skills.

Below you will find information about course content, requirements, and policies. Please don’t hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Thinking critically about our beliefs is hard. For everyone. But some of the most important things in life are and that doesn't mean you can't do well! The best students approach the subject with humility, curiosity, and a willingness to mess up. Think of this course as a lab for testing ideas rather than a museum for the pristine ideas you already have.

Below you will find information about course content, requirements, and policies. Please don’t hesitate to ask if you have any questions. It’s okay if you feel overwhelmed or confused while reading this syllabus or at any point throughout the semester. I love teaching this course, and my favorite part of my job is helping students succeed. Never hesitate to speak with me if you find that anything is preventing you from being successful in this class.

You can do this. Let’s have a great semester together!

PreRequisites/CoRequisites and Advisories

Prerequisite: ENGL 1A

Corequisite: None

Advisory: None

Required Texts/Materials

*The Power of Critical Thinking: Effective Reasoning About Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims* by Lewis Vaughn

Oxford University Press, 2018, 6th edition

ISBN: 978-0190852719

Course Description

Principles and methods of good reasoning and analytic writing, emphasizing deductive logic (including formal techniques of sentential logic), thesis-driven argumentation, and research strategies. Includes the identification of arguments, developing and assessing basic deductive and inductive written arguments, common fallacies, and application of each element to various areas of study and real-world situations.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate understanding of deductive reasoning and competence in some methods of formal logic; demonstrate understanding of inductive reasoning and competence in some methods of informal logic, including: a. Identify arguments—their premises, justifications for those premises, and conclusions. b. Identify deductive and inductive inferences in textual passages. c. Evaluate deductive and inductive reasoning forms. d. Distinguish between and identify common formal and informal fallacies in reasoning. e. Distinguish between good and bad arguments in real- world situations and state reasons for the judgment.
2. Compose thesis-driven arguments to suit a variety of rhetorical situations, including interpretation, evaluation, and analysis, and support them with a variety of appropriate textual evidence and examples.
3. Find, analyze, interpret, and evaluate primary and secondary sources, incorporating them into written essays using appropriate documentation format without plagiarism.
4. Use style, diction, and tone appropriate to the academic community and the purpose of the specific writing task; proofread and edit essays for presentation so they exhibit no disruptive errors in English grammar, usage, or punctuation.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate understanding of deductive reasoning and competence in some methods of formal logic.
2. Demonstrate understanding of inductive reasoning and competence in some methods of informal logic.
3. Write a college-level argumentative essay.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. In order to succeed in this course, active and timely attendance is necessary, and frequent absences will negatively impact your grade. You will get much more out of the course by showing up prepared and bringing in your questions and comments as they occur to you while reading. That said, **you are allowed to be absent from two (2) class sessions without losing any attendance points.**

Participation and Engagement

Attendance ≠ participation. Participation is class discussion. It is imperative to your performance in this class that you show up to every class prepared to discuss the reading for that day. You will be evaluated on your attempt to understand the concepts and arguments we discuss. A full understanding of the course material is not expected; the aim of participation is to improve your understanding of the material.

I enjoy talking to students about the material, so don’t hesitate to contact me if you have questions about the material or are struggling with a particular concept. I will attempt to respond to any communication you initiate within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends).

Drop Policy & Deadlines

Drop Policy:

I am committed to your success, and I will do everything I can to help you succeed. However, it is also my responsibility to drop students from the course when they are not making satisfactory progress. Here are the reasons I might drop you from the course:

* You don't come to class on the first day or for the first few days (unless you have made advance arrangements with me).
* You don't turn in any assignments for two consecutive weeks before the drop date (without prior arrangement).

I will consider exceptions to these policies on a case by case basis. Here’s the main thing: if you’re experiencing challenges that make it difficult for you to comply with these policies, please let me know immediately so we can work out a plan. I’m here to help you succeed!

Deadlines:

Census Date: 08/21

Fee reversal/refund – 08/18

Add or drop to avoid W (in person) – 08/25

Add or drop to avoid W (on Self-Service) – 8/27

Drop with a ‘W’ (to avoid a letter grade) – 10/6

Holidays

9/4 Labor Day—No Classes, Campus Closed

11/10 Veteran’s Day—No Classes, Campus Open

11/23 & 11/24 Thanksgiving—No Classes, Campus Closed

Class Outline/Calendar

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Module/Week | Topic/Reading | Assignments |
| 8/7 | 1 | Introductions |  |
| 8/9 | 1 | The Power of Critical Thinking * Read: Ch. 1 pp. 3-20
 | Ex. 1.2, 1.3, & 1.4 |
| 8/14 | 2 | Obstacles to Critical Thinking* Read Ch. 2 pp. 31-43
 | Ex. 2.2 |
| 8/16 | 2 | Obstacles to Critical Thinking* Read Ch. 2 pp. 43-47
 | Ex. 2.3Writing Assignment 1 due Monday @ 11:59 pm |
| 8/21 | 3 | Argument Basics & Judging Arguments* Read: Ch. 3 pp. 58-70
 | Ex. 3.1, 3.2, & 3.3 |
| 8/23 | 3 | Finding Missing Parts, Argument Patterns, & Diagramming Arguments* Read: Ch. 3 pp. 73-91
 | Ex. 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, & 3.9Writing Assignment 2 due Monday @ 11:59 pm |
| 8/28 | 4 | Exam 1 Review | **Exam 1** |
| 8/30 | 4 | Take home exam—NO CLASS |
| 9/4 | 5 | Labor Day—NO CLASS |  |
| 9/6 | 5 | Reasons for Belief and Doubt * Read: Ch. 4 pp. 109-128
 | Ex. 4.2 |
| 9/11 | 6 | Reasons for Belief and Doubt * Read: Ch. 4 pp. 128-143
 | Ex. 4.4 |
| 9/13 | 6 | Read: C. Thi Nguyen, “Escape the Echo Chamber” | Writing Assignment 3 due Monday at 11:59 pm |
| 9/18 | 7 | Fallacies: Irrelevant Premises * Read: Ch. 5 pp. 151-166
 | Ex. 5.2 |
| 9/20 | 7 | Fallacies: Unacceptable Premises * Read: Ch. 5 pp. 166-176
 | Ex. 5.3Writing Assignment 4 due Monday at 11:59 pm |
| 9/25 | 8 | Exam 2 Review | **Exam 2** |
| 9/27 | 8 | Take home exam—NO CLASS |
| 10/2 | 9 | Deductive Reasoning: Propositional Logic * Read: Ch. 6 pp. 189-199
 | Ex. 6.1, 6.2, 6.4 & 6.6  |
| 10/4 | 9 | Deductive Reasoning: Propositional Logic * Read: Ch. 6 pp. 201-205
 | Ex. 6.8 |
| 10/9 | 10 | Deductive Reasoning: Propositional Logic * Read: Ch. 6 pp. 205-208
 | Ex. 6.8 |
| 10/11 | 10 | Deductive Reasoning: Categorical Logic * Read: Ch. 7 pp. 226-237
 | Ex. 7.1, 7.2, & 7.3 |
| 10/16 | 11 | Deductive Reasoning: Categorical Logic * Read: Ch. 7 pp. 238-248
 | Ex. 7.4, 7.6, & 7.7 |
| 10/18 | 11 | Deductive Reasoning: Categorical Logic Read: Ch. 7 pp. 250-253 | Ex. 7.9 & 7.10 |
| 10/23 | 12 | Inductive Reasoning: Enumerative Induction* Read: Ch. 8 pp. 260-273
 | Ex. 8.1, 8.3, 8.4 & 8.5  |
| 10/25 | 12 | Inductive Reasoning: Analogical Induction* Read: Ch. 8 pp. 277-283
 | Ex. 8.7 |
| 10/30 | 13 | Exam 3 Review | **Exam 3** |
| 11/1 | 13 | Take home exam—NO CLASS |
| 11/6 | 14 | Inference to the Best Explanation* Read: Ch. 9 pp. 315-323
 | Ex. 9.2 & 9.4 |
| 11/8 | 14 | Inference to the Best Explanation* Read: Ch. 9 pp. 327-344
 | Ex. 9.7Writing Assignment 5 due Monday at 11:59 pm |
| 11/13 | 15 | Judging Scientific Theories * Read: Ch. 10 pp. 362-383
 | Ex. 10.5 |
| 11/15 | 15 | Judging Scientific Theories * Read: Ch. 10 pp. 388-405
 | Ex. 10.9Writing Assignment 6 due Monday at 11:59 pm |
| 11/20 | 16 | Critical Thinking in Morality and the Law * Read: Ch. 11 pp. 417-426
 | Ex. 11.2, 11.3 & 11.4 |
| 11/22 | 16 | Critical Thinking in Morality and the Law * Read: Ch. 11 pp. 426-442
 | Writing Assignment 7 due Monday at 11:59 pm |
| 11/27 | 17 | Exam 4 Review | **Exam 4** |
| 11/29 | 17 | Take home exam—NO CLASS |
| 12/4-12/8 | 18 | Finals Week—NO CLASS | Writing Assignment 8 due Friday at 11:59 pm |

Exams and Assignments

Homework Exercises (20%)

These assignments consist of practice exercises selected from the chapters of your textbook. You will complete most of them through Canvas, but a few assignments will require submission of a scanned document. (For these purposes, I would recommend the phone app CamScanner to render a hard copy into a PDF document.)

Writing Assignments (30%)

These weekly assignments are designed to help you develop both your formal writing skills and the critical thinking skills detailed in the Course Objectives. You may be asked to identify arguments and their premises and conclusions; evaluate deductive and inductive reasoning forms; distinguish between good and bad arguments and state reasons for the judgment; formulate and defend a strong, clearly structured argument; and assess real world situations applying informal logic.

For these assignments, you will be asked to write between 500 and 1000 words.

Exams (40%)

There will be four exams designed to assess your understanding of key concepts and your ability to apply critical thinking skills.

Attendance & Participation (10%)

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. In order to succeed in this course, active attendance is necessary, and frequent absences will negatively impact your grade. You will be allowed to be absent from two class sessions without penalty. You will get much more out of the course by showing up prepared and bringing in your questions, comments, and concerns as they occur to you while reading.

Attendance ≠ participation. Participation is class discussion. It is imperative to your performance in this class that you show up to every class prepared to discuss the reading for that day. You will be evaluated on your attempt to understand the concepts and arguments we discuss. A full understanding of the course material is not expected; the aim of participation is to improve your understanding of the material.

Grading/Evaluation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment Category | Percent of Final Grade |
| Homework Exercises | 20% |
| Writing Assignments | 30% |
| 4 Exams | 40% |
| Attendance & Participation | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

Grading Scale:

A (90-100%)

B (80-89%)

C (70-79%)

D (60-69)

F (59% or below)

Make Up & Late Work

I want you to be successful in this class. The best way to do that is to meet all deadlines and submit all your work. That said, I understand that life may sometimes stand in the way of completing your assignments. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, please get in touch with me whatever the situation might be. In general, all tests and assignments are allowed to be made up, and points will not be deducted in cases of emergency. Typically, if you miss an assignment, I will reach out to help you make a plan for making up the work and staying on track.

Extra Credit

While there are no opportunities for extra credit in this class, there are many opportunities for you to succeed without it. Reach out to me early and often so that we can work together to ensure your success.

Class Norms

Be respectful of your classmates; take your education seriously; and refrain from doing anything that creates obstacles for others in the class to do the same. I want ALL my students to enjoy the class, so please play your part in facilitating a safe and supportive classroom environment. Critical thinking often leads to discussions about controversial subjects, and you will likely disagree with your classmates at times. Friendly debate is encouraged, but personal attacks on your classmates’ views are not. Philosophers think of disagreements as opportunities to grow!

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

A disability does not define a person; it only defines a way that a person's brain or body works. PLEASE don't be embarrassed to take advantage of these services if you qualify (and don't be embarrassed to see if you qualify!) Your success is important to me, so I intend to meet you where you are, and I am happy to accommodate your needs.

Reedley College is committed to creating accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. To obtain academic adjustments or auxiliary aids, students must be registered with the DSP&S office on campus. DSP&S can be reached at 559-494-3032 and is located in the DSP&S Building. All information is kept confidential. If you are already registered with the DSP&S office, please provide your Notice of Accommodation form to me as soon as possible, preferably during the first two weeks of class.

If your accommodation includes taking the tests in the DSP&S office, it is your responsibility to make an appointment to take the test on or before the day and time of the in-class test and to inform me of the appointment.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you have any questions.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students at Reedley College are entitled to the best education that the college can make available to them, and they, their instructors, and their fellow students share the responsibility to ensure that this education is honestly attained. Because cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities erode the integrity of the college, each student is expected to exert an entirely honest effort in all academic endeavors. Academic dishonesty in any form is a very serious offense and will incur serious consequences.

That said, students face a lot of pressures while in school. Sometimes, when time is short, you might feel tempted to take a shortcut and cheat or copy someone else’s work. It is far better to simply reach out to me for help. I enjoy working with students, and I understand that sometimes situations in your life prevent you from completing an assignment as you would like, that you run out of time, or make mistakes. It is better to be late on an assignment than to be dishonest on one. Contact me, so I can help you! If you do make a mistake, I will reach out to you, but I must follow the disciplinary procedures listed below.

**Cheating**

Cheating is the act or attempted act of taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a fraudulent or deceptive manner, such as having improper access to answers, in an attempt to gain an unearned academic advantage. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying from another’s work, supplying one’s work to another, giving or receiving copies of examinations without an instructor’s permission, using or displaying notes or devices inappropriate to the conditions of the examination, allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student, or failing to disclose research results completely.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating and is the use of another’s words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or encouraging, permitting, or assisting another to do any act that could subject him or her to discipline. Incidents of cheating and plagiarism may result in a variety of sanctions and penalties that may range from a failing grade on the particular examination, paper, project, or assignment in question to a failing grade in the course, at the discretion of the instructor and depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents.

Support Services

Reedley College has many resources available to help students through their educational journey.  This is a partial list of the more popular resources.  Refer to the Online Information Center or Counseling and Advising if you do not find what you need here.

**I don't know what I am looking for!**

*Online Information Center*

The Online Information Center provides a live chat to help guide you to the information you need.   Check hours available on the webpage.

**How do I get help with basic needs like food and housing?**

[*Tiger Pantry*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/student-activities/tiger-pantry.html)

The Tiger Pantry offers non-perishable food items, personal toiletries, fresh produce and vegetables, and school supplies. This is made possible by donations and a collaboration with the Community Food Bank. It is available to all currently enrolled Reedley College students.

559.638.0300 x3105 (Student Activities Office)

*Homelessness Liaison*

The Homeless Liaison can help you get connected to a support program on campus and provide information about the Reedley College dorms. The liaison will also help you get connected to Fresno County Resources to find local homeless shelters.

Aaren.Cobb@reedleycollege.edu ~   phone 559.638.0340  ~  text 559.419.0256

**How do I pay for college?**

[Financial Aid](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/index.html)

Provides students information to secure the financial resources to pay for their education.

reedley.financialaid@reedleycollege.edu  ~   559.638.0312

[Scholarships](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/scholarships/index.html)

This Reedley College financial resource provided by local businesses, community groups, alumni, and a variety of private sources.  Applications are generally due early Spring semester; check website for specific due dates.

559.638.0312

[*Career Center*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/career--employment-center.html)

The Career Center offers career and employment services, including help finding a job or internship.

cec@reedleycollege.edu  ~   559.637.2543

*Student Support Programs & Centers*

There are a number of programs that can help you pay for college, connect to campus, and plan your studies. [EOPS](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/extended-opportunity-programs-and-services-eops/index.html) and [CalWORKs](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/calworks.html) are just two of the many Student Support Programs at Reedley College.  There are many programs available for students in a variety of areas and interests.  Students are encouraged to talk to their counselors about programs that might be appropriate for them.  Schedule time with a counselor for further information. Many of these programs are listed on the [Student Services page](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/index.html).

[Counseling and Advising](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html) ~  counseling@reedleycollege.edu  ~  559.638.0337

**How do I get healthcare and mental health assistance?**

[*Health Services*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/health-services/index.html)

Health Services is a nurse-run clinic available to currently enrolled students. The College Nurse Practitioner provides advanced nursing assessment and treatment for acute illnesses and injuries, preventative screening services, health education, and medical referrals to local health care providers.

559.638.0328

[Psychological Services](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/health-services/psychological-services.html)

Psychological services is a program designed to meet mental health needs of the college community in Reedley. These services are available at no charge to students and assist in the promotion of healthy emotion and psychological responses. Psychological services include 4-6 confidential counseling sessions for college students. Care is provided by a clinical psychologist and supervised graduate interns.

559.638.0328

**How do I get help with technology?**

*Canvas Help*

Click on the icon at the bottom of the global navigation bar on the far left side of this window (pictured) to access links to Canvas Guides.

*Student Help Desk*

Ask questions about logging in to Canvas, email, WebAdvisor, or other local systems.

559.499.6070

*Canvas Student Orientation*

If you feel like you need to learn more about how to use Canvas, we have a self-enroll, self-paced Canvas Student Orientation course that is completely online for students to take within Canvas. Click the [self-enroll link](https://scccd.instructure.com/enroll/K6DWKL) if you would like to check it out

**Where can I get help being successful in my classes?**

[Academic Support Centers (Tutoring Services)](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/index.html)

Visit these locations to get connected to tutors.

* [Learning Center -- Tutorial (all subjects)](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/learning-center.html)
* [Math Center](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/math-center.html)
* [Reading & Writing Center](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/reading-and-writing-center/index.html)

[*Disabled Students Program & Services (DSP&S)*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/disabled-student-programs-and-services/index.html)

DSP&S provides services and accommodations that assist students with documented disabilities to reach their maximum potential while achieving their educational goals.

DSPS@reedleycollege.edu ~   559.638.0332

**How do I stay on track?**

[*Counseling and Advising*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html)

Counselors are available to help you with academic planning to help you stay on track and assist you with connecting to support resources that provide additional support based on your individual needs.

 Visit the [Academic Counseling and Advising](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html) page to set up an appointment to meet with a Pathway Counselor.

Academic Counseling is also available in all of our Student Support Programs.  Visit the individual program for more information.

559.638.0337

*Student Support Programs & Centers*

There are a number of programs that can help you pay for college, connect to campus, and plan your studies. [EOPS](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/extended-opportunity-programs-and-services-eops/index.html) and [CalWORKs](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/calworks.html) are just two of the many Student Support Programs at Reedley College.  There are many programs available for students in a variety of areas and interests.  Students are encouraged to talk to their counselors about programs that might be appropriate for them.  Schedule time with a counselor for further information. Many of these programs are listed on the [Student Services page](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/index.html).

[*Counseling and Advising*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html)*~*  counseling@reedleycollege.edu  ~  559.638.0337

[*Admissions and Records*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/admissions/index.html)

Admissions and records can help you add, drop, and register for your classes.

admissions@reedleycollege.edu ~  559.638.0323

[*Transfer Center*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/transfer-services.html)

The Reedley College Transfer Center is designed to assist students explore, prepare and succeed in their transfer plans. We provide a variety of resources and services to help students transfer from Reedley College to other colleges and universities for completion of their educational goals.

transfercenter@reedleycollege.edu  ~   559.638.0300 ext. 3234