

PHIL 102: Critical Thinking and Reasoning

Instructor:

Non-WebCampus Email:

Virtual Office Hours: Most Thursdays from 1—2pm, or by appointment

Philosophy Department: 702-895-3433

Catalog Description:

Introduction to the analysis and evaluation of actual arguments, to the practice of constructing logically sound arguments, and to logic as the theory of argument. Emphasizes arguments of current or general interest.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of PHIL 102 students should be able to:

1. Identify arguments and distinguish arguments from non-arguments in actual discourse.
2. Identify components of arguments – conclusions and premises (both explicit and implicit).
3. Identify assumptions used in actual arguments
4. Reconstruct arguments in order to make logical structure explicit.
5. Evaluate Arguments for: strength of inference (Validity/Invalidity, Strong/Weak), type of inference (deductive, non-deductive, causal, analogical, statistical), and truth/plausibility of premises (Soundness, Cogency)
6. Distinguish and classify fallacious forms of reasoning.
7. Distinguish types of definitions and their use in argumentation.
8. Identify, distinguish and classify typical argumentative forms: standard deductive forms, standard inductive forms (e.g. Mill's Methods), statistical forms, analogies, and causal arguments
9. Construct and defend reasonable arguments of their own.

Textbook:

A Guide to Critical Thinking (2020). Available FOR FREE! Link in WebCampus to download.

Assignments/Grading

Assignment	Points
<i>Homework (10 assignments)</i>	70
<i>Quizzes (10 Quizzes)</i>	100
<i>Short Assessments (8 Short Assessments)</i>	40
<i>Final Project</i>	50
<i>Discussion Post (5 posts)</i>	25
<i>Discussion Replies (5 replies)</i>	15
<i>Total Points Possible</i>	300

Grades

To Get This Grade	You need this many total points
A	270
B+	between 261 and 296
B	between 249 and 260
B-	between 240 and 248
C+	between 231 and 239
C	between 219 and 230
C-	between 210 and 218
D	between 180 and 209
F	fewer than 180

Homework Schedule

Each assignment is worth 7 points. Most of these will be similar to the practice problems that will be covered during our Practice Problems Workshops.

Homework Number	Due Date
<i>Homework 1</i>	<i>Saturday, August 28 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 2</i>	<i>Tuesday, September 7 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 3</i>	<i>Saturday, September 11 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 4</i>	<i>Saturday September 18 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 5</i>	<i>Saturday, September 25 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 6</i>	<i>Saturday, October 2 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 7</i>	<i>Saturday, October 9 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 8</i>	<i>Saturday, October 16 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 9</i>	<i>Saturday, November 6 by 11:59pm</i>
<i>Homework 10</i>	<i>Saturday, November 20 by 11:59pm</i>

Quiz Schedule (All of these are on WebCampus)

Each quiz will have between one and five questions. Quizzes will be available from Wednesday before they are due up to the stated due dates/times below.

Quiz Number	Date Due
Quiz 1	Tuesday, August 31 by 11:59pm
Quiz 2	Wednesday, September 8 by 11:59pm
Quiz 3	Monday, September 13 by 11:59pm
Quiz 4	Monday, September 20 by 11:59pm
Quiz 5	Monday, September 27 by 11:59pm
Quiz 6	Monday, October 4 by 11:59pm
Quiz 7	Monday, October 11 by 11:59pm
Quiz 8	Monday, October 18 by 11:59pm
Quiz 9	Monday, November 8 by 11:59pm
Quiz 10	Monday, November 22 by 11:59pm

Short Assessment Schedule

You will be provided with a short passage to analyze and evaluate. You will do your work on whatever word processor you normally use. I have a slight preference for MS Word; but use whatever software you typically use for writing. It would help if it has minimal graphing capability. The short assessments will be available starting on the Monday of the week before they are due. Due dates/times are listed below.

Short Assessment Number	Due Date
SA 1	Saturday, September 11 by 11:59pm
SA 2	Saturday, September 18 by 11:59pm
SA 3	Tuesday, September 28 by 11:59pm
SA 4	Tuesday, October 4 by 11:59pm
SA 5	Tuesday, October 12 by 11:59pm
SA 6	Tuesday, October 19 by 11:59pm
SA 7	Tuesday, November 9 by 11:59pm
SA 8	Tuesday, November 23 by 11:59pm

Discussion Schedule (Uses the Discussion Function of WebCampus)

You will need to author five posts. Each discussion is anchored by a problem, question, or passage. You will respond to the anchor-problem. For posts you author, the post must be at least 75 words and be relevant to the anchor problem.

Replies must be constructive criticism of a post (but not your own post).

- *Discussion 1* Due Saturday, August 28 by 11:59pm
- *Discussion 2* Due Saturday, September 4 by 11:59pm
- *Discussion 3* Due Saturday, September 18 by 11:59
- *Discussion 4* Due Saturday, October 2 by 11:59pm
- *Discussion 5* Due Saturday, October 23 by 11:59pm

- *Reply 1* Due Tuesday, August 31 by 11:59pm
- *Reply 2* Due Wednesday, September 8 by 11:59pm
- *Reply 3* Due Wednesday, September 22 by 11:59pm
- *Reply 4* Due Wednesday, October 4 by 11:59pm
- *Reply 5* Due Thursday, October 28 by 11:59pm

Open Workshop/Office Hours

An open workshop occurs during my virtual office hours. These occur almost every Thursday of the semester. Most of the time I want to answer homework or practice problem questions that you have. Sometimes these will just be chat sessions and sometimes these will be full video sessions (though you don't have to turn on your camera).

- Thursday, August 26 from 1pm—2pm (Chat)
- Thursday, September 2 from 1pm—2pm (Google Meet)
- Thursday, September 9 from 1pm—2pm (Chat)
- Thursday, September 16 from 1pm—2pm (Google Meet)
- Thursday, September 23 from 1pm—2pm (Chat)
- Thursday, September 30 from 1pm—2pm (Chat)
- Thursday, October 7 from 1pm—2pm (Google Meet)
- Thursday, October 21 from 1pm—2pm (Chat)
- Thursday, November 4 from 1pm—2pm (Google Meet)
- Thursday, November 18 from 1pm—2pm (Google Meet)

Final Project Schedule

The final project involves four elements: One Draft, One Response/Criticism, One Project Workshop Attendance, and your Final Draft of the project. You will be writing a formal letter on a topic I choose. The format of the letter and all of the details will be given in a final project explanation sheet. You are required to submit a draft (on April 16). You will then get someone else's draft to critique. Your critique will consist of (1) marking up the letter using the tools from class, (2) reconstructing the argument of the letter, (3) a quick assessment of the argument's strength, and (4) some suggestions on how to improve the letter. The response is due one week after you get it (April 23). Then you must attend a one-on-one workshop with me regarding your final project. I'll have a signup sheet for you to find a time for us to have an online meeting to discuss getting your project into shape. The meeting will last no more than 15 minutes. Lastly, the project/letter is due on Wednesday of Finals Week.

1. *Draft of Project*: November 5 by 11:59pm (10 points)
2. *Response/Criticism*: November 17 by 11:59pm (15 points)
3. *Project Workshop Attendance*: November 23, 24, or November 29-December 3 (There will be a signup) (10 points)
4. *Final Project*: December 8 by 11:59pm (15 points)

Content of Course

The course is broken into 10 sections of content (or modules) + the course introduction.

Stage 0: Course Introduction, Syllabus, Stuff (First Week)

Stage 1: Overview of Critical Thinking (First Week)

Stage 2: Quick Assessments (Second Week)

Stage 3: Anatomy of Arguments: Conclusions, Premises, Etc. (Third and Fourth Weeks)

Stage 4: Schemes Introduced and some Non-Deductive Schemes (Fifth Week)

Stage 5: More Non-Deductive Schemes (Sixth Week)

Stage 6: Deductive Schemes (Seventh Week [May need to add a week here])

Stage 7: More Deductive Schemes (Eighth Week)

Stage 8: Lines of Reasoning (Ninth Week)

Stage 9: Complete Assessments (Tenth through Twelfth Weeks)

Stage 10: Constructing Arguments (From About the Thirteenth Week to the End of the Semester)

University Policies:

Public Health Directives

Face coverings are mandatory for all faculty and students in the classroom. Students must follow all active UNLV public health directives while enrolled in this class. [UNLV public health directives](https://www.unlv.edu/coronavirus/health-requirements) are found at <https://www.unlv.edu/coronavirus/health-requirements>. Students who do not comply with these directives may be asked to leave the classroom. Refusal to follow the guidelines may result in further disciplinary action according to the [UNLV Code of Student Conduct](https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/StudentConduct-Code.pdf), https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/StudentConduct-Code.pdf, including being administratively withdrawn from the course.

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the University community. We all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the source(s). See the [Student Conduct Code](#)

Auditing Classes

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.

Classroom Conduct

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn, or of instructors to teach. Use of devices such as cellular phones and pagers, or other potentially disruptive activities are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. Students are specifically prohibited to record classes without instructor authorization, including online/remote classes (either audio only, or video and audio). The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative withdrawal of the student from the course.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic forced some instruction to be delivered remotely starting in Spring 2020, numerous students have asked instructors to record their synchronous classes, so that they can access them at their convenience. Instructors who agree to record their classes (audio only, or video and audio) should inform students in advance. Recorded lectures may not be broadly released to anyone, but made available exclusively to those students enrolled in the class during the particular academic term. Recorded lectures must be stored securely, and are subject to the Nevada System of Higher Education's Records Retention Policy, meaning that the recordings can only be deleted 120 days after the end of class (i.e., after grades are posted). Once this requirement is met, the recordings should be deleted. Class recordings are protected from disclosure, as they are deemed part of an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Copyright

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional [copyright policy information](#) is available at <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [UNLV Disability Resource Center](#) (Student Services Complex, SSC-A, Room 143, <https://www.unlv.edu/drc>, telephone 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to a permanent disability, temporary or permanent medical need, or academic support due to pregnancy are encouraged to contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. Students who are already registered with the DRC should request their accommodations online each semester, and make an appointment to discuss their accommodations with their instructors.

Final Examinations

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The Final Exam schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the semester. See the [Final Exam Schedule](#).

Identity Verification in Online Courses

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus-Canvas.

UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#), <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy>, which states that “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” is a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute, and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the [Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy](#), <https://www.it.unlv.edu/policies/acceptable-use-computing-and-information-technology-resources-policy>, which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization.

To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus-Canvas or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

Library Resources

Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the [Libraries’ Research Consultation](https://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian) website, <https://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian>. You can also [ask the library staff](#) questions via chat and text message.

Missed Classwork

Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Missed Work policy, under Registration Policies, on the [Academic Policies](https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7326) webpage, <https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7326>.

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one”

option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate's policy, and an infringement on the student's right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could be reasonably avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/School Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to: academic recruitment activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, fine arts activities, liberal arts competitions, science and engineering competitions, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Rebelmail

Rebelmail is UNLV's official email system for students and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students' Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways in which students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Emailing within WebCampus-Canvas is also acceptable.

Tutoring and Coaching

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the [ASC website](https://www.unlv.edu/asc), <https://www.unlv.edu/asc>, or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the [Writing Center](https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/), <https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>, located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3-301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, telephone 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.

Diversity Statement

As an institution of higher learning, UNLV represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students, and is committed to aspiring to maintain a Campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the University supports understanding and appreciation of all members of its community, regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, or political affiliation. Please see [University Statements and Compliance](#).

A successful learning experience requires mutual respect and trust between the students and the instructor. Accordingly, the instructor asks that students be willing to listen to one another's points of view, acknowledging that there may be disagreements, keep discussion and comments on topic, and use first person, positive language when expressing their perspectives.