

P

**Chaminade University**  
Instructor: Dr. Mark Brasher  
Call: 261-8948 E-mail: mbrasher@lava.net

**Critical Thinking PH-103** <sup>W</sup> Pearl Harbor  
Mondays 16:45-20:58

Text: Critical Reasoning: Understanding and Criticizing Arguments and Theories (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
by Jerry Cederblom and David W. Paulsen. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1996.  
ISBN-0-534-50410-8

**Description:** Designed to be more than a study of non-formal reasoning methods, the course assembles approaches from analytic philosophy, literary theory and cultural studies, modeling the rhetorical dimension of language and discourse. The course is useful for those who want to think, write and speak in a clear and straightforward manner.

**Course Objectives:** to understand and be able to evaluate the structure, content and quality of arguments; to be able to objectively analyze print and oral communication; to be able to clearly communicate your positions about issues and to support your positions with solid evidence; to understand how critical thinking can be applied to decision-making in daily life.

**Course Format:** Students will read the assigned reading prior to class and complete all assigned exercises. During class the instructor will give additional background information and examples, work through exercises and answer questions about the material.

**Course Requirements:**

- Attendance is necessary at each meeting in order to complete the course (unexpected conflicts such as hospitalization or deployment, will be excused on a case by case basis *with proper documentation*, according to Chaminade University policy). Students **must** contact the instructor by phone or e-mail *as soon as possible* for make-up work, submit the work and make up the quiz as soon as possible in order to maintain their grade. Unexcused absences will result in a reduced grade or failure.
- Students will read part of a chapter and do a few short written exercises prior to class, which they will submit at the start of class each week.
- Grading will be based upon the student's completion of weekly exercises, and the average of his or her mid-term and final quizzes. Each student has the option of completing one extra credit assignment (see handout on extra credit).

**11 January INTRODUCTION.** Chapter one.

---

- Overview of course.
- Overview of textbook (see pp. 8-11).
- How to read *critically*

**ONE Deciding what to Believe 1**

*Critical Reasoning Versus Passive Reading or Listening 3*

*Critical Reasoning Versus Mere Disagreement 3*

*The Attitude of the Critical Reasoner 4*

*Self-Identity: Two Options 5*

*Some Common Misconceptions About Critical Reasoning 6*

*Benefits of Critical Reasoning 7*

*Exercise 1.1 Taking Notice of Disagreements and Reasoning 8*

*The Main Techniques of Critical Reasoning 8*

*Exercise 1.2 A Beginning Step: Identifying Main Points and Supporting Points 11*

- Homework: Read Chapter 2 and do each odd-numbered exercise. Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

*Note:* We do not meet on January 18, *Martin Luther King Day*, which is a holiday.

*A Special Case: Causal Generalizations* 242  
*Five Common Criticisms of Causal Reasoning* 244  
*The Controlled Experiment: handling the X-Factor* 247  
*What Happens If Control is Limited?* 250  
     *Exercise 8.3 The Faulty Move from Correlation to Cause* 254  
*Criticizing General-to-Particular Inductive Arguments* 260  
     *Exercise 8.4 Criticizing Arguments with Statistical Premises* 263  
*Another Special Case: Arguments from Analogy* 264  
     *Exercise 8.5 Criticizing Arguments from Analogy*

- Homework: Read Chapter 9 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

15 March: THEORY

---

**NINE** *Explanation and the Criticism of Theories* 270

*"That's Just a Theory"* 272

*Picking Out Theories* 273

*Exercise 9.1 Finding Theories* 278

*Criticism of Theories* 282

*Exercise 9.2 Criticizing Empirical Theories* 289

*Empirical Theories and Explanation: A More Formal Approach* 303

*Exercise 9.3 Putting Explanations Given by Empirical Theories into a "Standard Form"* 308

- Homework: Read Chapter 10 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

22 March: SYNTHESIS

---

**TEN** *Putting It All Together: Six Steps to Understanding and Evaluating Arguments* 320

*A Sample Application of the Six-Step Procedure* 323

*A Second Sample Application of the Six-Step Procedure* 331

*Exercise 10.1 Applying the Six-Step Procedure* 338

*Application of the Six-Step Procedure to Passages Containing Theoretical Statements* 343

*Exercise 10.2 Criticizing Arguments Based on Theories and Generalizations* 345

*Application to Writing* 362

*Exercise 10.3 Writing a Critical Essay* 366

*Exercise 10.4 Putting it Together in the Classroom: "Fishbowl" Discussions and Critical Exchanges* 371

- Homework: REVIEW Chapters 7-10, prepare for final examination.

*Note:* We meet Wednesday 24 March

24 March: **Final Examination**

---

- Discuss Chapter 11.
- Final review questions
- **FINAL EXAMINATION**
- End of course, last day to submit any work for the course, including extra-credit and make-up work.

- Review Chapters 1-6 and prepare for the mid-term examination.
- Note:* We do not meet 15 February, which is a holiday.

---

22 February: FALLACIES. Chapter 6. **Mid-Term Examination**

---

- SIX Fallacies: Bad Arguments That Tend to Persuade Persuasiveness** 150
- What Is a Fallacy?* 152
- Categorizing the Fallacies According to Their Sources of Persuasiveness* 152
- Two Kinds of Sleight-of-Hand* 153
- Exercise 6.1 Identifying Fallacies: False Dilemma, Slippery Slope, Straw Man* 156
- Review 165
- Exercise 6.2 More Sleight-of-Hand Fallacies* 166
- Emotion and Reason in Argument* 168
- When Is an Emotional Appeal Illegitimate?* 169
- Exercise 6.3 Identifying Fallacies: Appeal to Force, Appeal to Pity and Prejudicial Language*
- Review 179
- Note on Terminology* 182
- Exercise 6.4 A Comprehensive Review of Fallacies* 182
- Exercise 6.5 Fallacious or Not?* 185
- **MID-TERM** on Chapters 1-6
  - Homework: Read Chapter 7 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

---

1 March: EXAMINING PREMISES

---

- SEVEN That Depends on What You Mean by . . .** 188
- Unclear Expressions in the Premises: Looking for Shifts in Meaning* 189
- The Possibility of Misleading Definitions*
- Kinds of Unclarity: Vagueness and Interpreting and Evaluating: A Dialogue*
- Exercise 7.1 Criticizing Arguments or Expressions* 197
- Argument and Definition* 193
- Evaluating Definition-like Premises** 201
- Conceptual Theories* 202
- A Model for Conceptual Theories* 204
- Reconstructing Fragmentary Theories* 206
- Exercise 7.2 Reconstructing Conceptual Theories* 207
- The Criticism of Conceptual Theories* 209
- Exercise 7.3 Criticism of Conceptual Theories*
- Conceptual Clarification and Arguments*
- Exercise 7.4 Reconstructing and Criticizing Conceptual Theories and Arguments Based on Them*
- 217
- Homework: Read Chapter 8 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

---

8 March : GENERALIZATION

---

- EIGHT Induction and Empirical Generalization** 224
- Two Major Types of Nondeductive Arguments* 225
- Inductive Versus Deductive Arguments* 227
- Exercises 8.1 Generalizations, Descriptions of Particulars, and Inductive Arguments* 230
- Criticizing Arguments That Generalize* 231
- Exercise 8.2 Criticizing Empirical Generalizations* 238

25 January: PARTS OF AN ARGUMENT. Chapter two.

---

**TWO The Anatomy of Arguments: Identifying Premises and Conclusions 15**

*The Key to Identification: Seeing What is Supported*

*Clues to Identifying Argument Parts: Indicator Words*

*Marking the Parts of Arguments 18*

*Exercise 2.1 Techniques for Marking the Parts of Arguments*

*What to Do When There Are No Indicator Words: The Principle of Charitable Interpretation 22*

*Exercise 2.2 Using the Principle of Charitable Interpretation to Pick Out Premises and Conclusions Without Explicit Indicator Words 24*

*Patterns of Argument 25*

*Exercise 2.3 Using Argument Patterns to Pick Out Conclusions in Arguments Without Explicit Indicator Words 30*

*Identifying Premises and Conclusions in Longer Passages 33*

*Exercise 2.4 Reconstructing Explicit Arguments in Longer Passages 35*

*Applications to Writing 39*

*Exercise 2.5 Making Premises and Conclusions Clear in Your Writing 40*

- Homework: Read Chapter 3 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

1 February: RECONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS. Chapter three.

---

**THREE Understanding Arguments Through Reconstruction 42**

*Understanding Arguments by Identifying Implicit Premises 45*

*Adding Both Conclusion and Premises 47*

*Guidelines and Warnings in Adding Implicit Premises and Conclusions 48*

*Exercise 3.1 Recognizing Argument Patterns and Adding Implicit Premises, Conclusions or Both 54*

*What's the Point? Understanding Complicated Passages in context 61*

*Exercise 3.2 Simplification and Paraphrasing : Making a First Approximation 64*

*Fine Tuning: Paraphrase and the Structure and the Structure of Arguments 66*

*Exercise 3.3 Putting All This into Practice 73*

*Using Techniques of Reconstruction in Writing 79*

*Exercise 3.4 Moving from Arguments in Standard Form to Prose Passages 82*

- Homework: Read Chapter 4 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.

8 February: EVALUATING ARGUMENTS. Chapter four.

---

**FOUR Evaluating Arguments: Some Basic Questions 86**

*When Does the Conclusion Follow from the Premises? 88*

*Exercise 4.1 Showing Invalidity 98*

*When Should the Premises Be Accepted as True? 99*

*Exercise 4.2 Casting Doubt on Premises 103*

*Sample Appraisals: Examples of Techniques of Criticism*

*Exercise 4.3 Distinguishing the Validity of an Argument from the Truth of Its Premises 108*

*Some Special biases: Arguments That we Should or Should Do Something 109*

*The Rationale for Using These Critical Techniques*

*Writing Critical Comments 14*

*Exercise 4.4 Criticizing Arguments 116*

- Homework: Note that we are **skipping** Chapter 5. Read Chapter 6 and do each exercise (odd numbers only). Later, correct your exercises to turn in at the next class meeting.