

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Philosophy 125 – Critical Thinking and Philosophical Composition

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

In this course, students will philosophically examine and write about a diverse array of historical and contemporary human experiences, including but not limited to metaphysical assumptions of race, class, and gender, for example, which have implications for knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, justice, and existential meaning. Students will generate argumentative theses and refine essay length sustained complex arguments. Topics to be explored include principles of deduction and induction, logical fallacies in language and thought, fact versus judgment, science and superstition, and how to overcome cognitive biases in thought and writing. This Philosophy seminar is designed to enhance the student's critical thinking, writing, and research skills in preparation for upper division academic activity.

Prerequisite

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in ENGL C1000 or ESL 122 or equivalent

Course Content

- 1) Critical/Philosophical reasoning:
 - a. Nature of fact, opinion or justified belief, and knowledge in general
 - b. Elements of argument (e.g., claim support, assumption)
 - c. Reasoning fallacies, both formal and informal
 - d. Difference between inductive and deductive argument types
 - e. Science versus superstition
 - f. Evaluation of evidence (e.g., statistics, surveys)
 - g. Claims of fact and claims of value (including reasoning about values)
 - h. The relationship between logical argument and rhetoric
- 2) Critical/Philosophical Reading:
 - a. Critical reading of historically and culturally diverse collection of texts to uncover philosophical assumptions about topics such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, social media, and wealth
 - b. Philosophical analysis utilizing metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, and logical concepts applied to each category stated in b.1.
 - c. Critical reading of these expository and argumentative writings utilizing the critical reasoning skills identified above (Section 7.a)
 - d. Reading for the argument, including such things as identifying the main elements of an argument identifying fallacies in texts and other elements of philosophical and critical analysis listed in Section 7.1.a.2-8
- 3) Critical/Philosophical Writing and Research:
 - a. Writing expository and argumentative papers in Philosophy, including the use of narrative, descriptive comparison, and other rhetorical modes for argumentation as well as exposition
 - b. Effective writing utilizing strong thesis, adequate development, sound organization, effective sentences, and appropriate word choice
 - c. The writing process (e.g., invention, analysis, and revision)

- d. Research strategies to locate reliable and scholarly, peer reviewed books, articles, websites, and other sources using library databases and other resources, and proper citation of sources
- e. Information literacy and evaluation of sources, (i.e., critical assessment of information and disinformation in fulfilling course assignments)

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Evaluate theses, argumentative components and types, and rhetorical strategies
- 2) Differentiate types of inductive reasoning, such as moral and scientific reasoning, and types of deductive reasoning, such as categorical reasoning and propositional reasoning
- 3) Identify usage of inductive and deductive structures
- 4) Apply the tools of information literacy, which includes the identification of disinformation
- 5) Critically examine the usage of language, especially foundational definitions to determine if they are, for example, persuasive definitions
- 6) Identify commonly used, persuasive informal fallacies
- 7) Develop and refine an argumentative thesis utilizing philosophical methodologies
- 8) Develop and compose extended philosophical critical essays

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Writing Assignments
 - a. A minimum of 5,000 words is required in this course
 - b. All written assignments require the application of critical thinking tools and presupposes that the student develop the skills necessary to write clear, coherent essays or position papers
 - c. At least three argumentative essays involving research and analytical readings in Philosophy
 - d. Short essays that ensure students engage in describing, analyzing, and evaluating the topic or issue under study
 - e. Annotated bibliography in which the student collects reliable information and abstracts the content of each source, noting biases, fallacies, reasoning style, and other critical thinking components.
 - f. Abstract summarizing the essential elements of a position of the topic or issue under treatment.
 - g. Forms, or natural kinds, regarding gender
 - h. Essays that describe or critique the considered topic or issue, e.g., the notion of free will and choice
 - i. Position papers in which the student articulates, analyzes, and compares personally held beliefs with the beliefs and views under consideration
- 2) Collaboration/Consultation with the instructor are required during the processes of research and writing.
 - a. Collaborative discovery of philosophical assumptions located in source materials
 - b. Discussion about viability of scope and appropriateness of dialectical content of larger essays or position papers (9.a.7 and 9.a.8)
 - c. Instructor's oral feedback on drafts, both early and penultimate drafts
- 3) Peer Review – Students will collaborate and assist each other by offering critical feedback on writing assignments
- 4) Presentations – Student presentations of the abstract of at least one writing assignment
- 5) Discussions – Student discussions on critical reasoning concepts, e.g., inference to the best explanation, and applications, e.g., identifying instances of cogent analogical reasoning
- 6) Outside Class Assignments

- a. Read text and supplementary materials.
 - b. Writing assignments may take the form of exercises which apply critical thinking concepts, the construction of argumentation, analyses of essays, editorials, articles in various current publications.
 - c. Out of class assignments are required and shall entail extensive reading, study, or formal activities which engage the student from one to two hours per week for each unit of class credit
- 7) Reading and writing assignments as specified in the course syllabus or schedule
 - 8) Participation in “study group” activities relating to the issues and topics studied in this course
 - 9) Library, electronic or other archival research, e.g., the rise of Critical Race Theory
 - 10) Analytical projects, e.g., analysis of Charles Mills’ Racial Contract thesis
 - 11) Short written assignments that facilitate position papers, i.e., short, low stakes assignments that scaffold a larger essay project, such as a precis of the tenets of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *Hombres necios que acusáis*
 - 12) Reading, annotating, and critically reviewing articles in professional journals, e.g. *Philosophy in Focus: Social Justice*, current periodicals, e.g., *Philosophy Now*, and websites, e.g., American Philosophical Association
 - 13) Field trips to lectures/presentations on topics related to the course content, especially as it pertains to the culturally inclusive and equitable curriculum demonstrated by the collection of supplemental texts below, such as UC San Diego’s Mexican Philosophy Lab or to the Asian Pacific American Coalition’s Night of the Round Table
 - 14) Other out of class assignments the instructor deems appropriate for the application and improvement of students’ philosophical and composition skills

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

- 1) Formal, didactic, expository lectures
- 2) Philosophical discussion and critical analysis
- 3) Informal evocative dialogue/discussion sessions
- 4) Heuristic discussions
- 5) Reviews and/or critiques of examinations and out of class assignments
- 6) Multi-media presentations
- 7) Assignments at the Learning Resource Center and Library
- 8) Collaborative projects
- 9) Guest speakers
- 10) Self-pacing that includes individual consultation and interaction with the instructor
- 11) Independent research, analysis, and concept/thesis formulation
- 12) To enhance active involvement in learning, students may be assigned:
 - a. To keep an up-to-date set of class/personal notes
 - b. To make oral and/or written in-class presentations
 - c. To engage in group dialogue/study activity both in and outside of class

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Out of class assignments are required and shall entail extensive reading, study, or formal activities which engage the student from one to two hours per week for each unit of class credit
- 2) Reading and writing assignments as specified in the course syllabus or schedule

- 3) Participation in “study group” activities relating to the issues and topics studied in this course
- 4) Library, electronic or other archival research, e.g., the rise of Critical Race Theory
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Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples): one or more of the following
 - a. Lavin, Andrew. *Thinking Well: A Creative Commons Logic & Critical Thinking Textbook*, Edition 4.0, Spring 2022.
 - b. Vaughn, Lewis. *The Power of Critical Thinking: Effective Reasoning about Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims*, 7th Edition., New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2021.
 - c. Chatfield, Tom. *Critical Thinking*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, Ltd, 2018.
 - d. Copi, Irving M. and Carl Cohen. *Introduction to Logic*. 14th edition. New York, NY, Routledge, 2016.
 - e. Graybosch, Anthony J., et al. *The Philosophy Student Writer’s Manual*, Boston, MA, Pearson, 2013.
- 2) Supplemental:
 - a. Texts and workbooks
 - b. UC San Diego’s Mexican Philosophy Lab 2. Asian Pacific American Coalition’s Night of the Round Tables 3. Indiana University Bloomington’s Black Philosophy & Thought.
 - c. Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 4th edition. Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Student Learning Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify assumptions and differentiate between beliefs, truth, validity, and inductive strength.
- 2) Distinguish between deductive and inductive reasoning.
- 3) Critically evaluate arguments and differentiate between non fallacious and fallacious reasoning.
- 4) Read critically and conduct research, using the results to effectively fulfill the course assignments.
- 5) Develop strong arguments based on sound reasoning.
- 6) Compose clear, carefully-reasoned expository and argumentative prose dealing with complex/sophisticated philosophical materials.