Phil 103: Critical Reasoning
CRN: 15449
MTWTh 9-9:50 am
204 Chapman

Elizabeth Caldwell
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332 PLC
Office Hours: Mon and Tues 10 am

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to some key practices for critical thinking and rules of argumentation. We will be examining the basics of logical structure, exploring how common fallacies and obstacles to reasoning can thwart our thinking, and address common issues that arise in the process of reasoning, writing, and debating with others. This course will help you develop tools for analyzing arguments and critically examining information presented in a variety of formats. The course will also encourage you to critically evaluate your own positions, beliefs, and arguments, building skills for presenting these to others in a clear, cogent fashion. Throughout the course, we will be engaging with one another in efforts to critically reflect on, analyze, and ultimately, improve the quality of our dialogue with one another, our assessment of information given to us from a variety of media, and our participation in discourse and debate in the public sphere.

Course Texts:


** Note: If you get these texts from a source other than the UO Duckstore, be 100% certain that they are the correct editions. **

Course Assignments:
Weekly Homework Assignments: 50%
Final Paper: 25%
In-Class Participation: 25%

Course Policies and Practices:
Attendance: Attendance in this course is required. Participating in this class is a part of your final course grade, and participation requires your presence. Missing more than three classes will begin to adversely impact your overall course grade.
**Homework and Assignments:** This course will include weekly readings as well as exercises and assignments, which you will be responsible for completing for the appropriate class. These will most often be the topic of discussion for the day and/or form the basis for in-class activities, so they cannot be accepted late. You are allowed to skip one assignment for the term; after that, all missed assignments will not be included in your grade.

**Papers:** At times, these weekly assignments will include short papers (1-2 pages). These will be responses to in-class exercises or prompts from the textbook, and should be turned in as polished, typed, proofread academic papers (not outlines, lists, or a paragraph thrown together right before class). The course will also require you to write a final paper (4-5 pages) due during finals week. This paper should be typed, double-spaced, written using standard fonts and standard margins, should include a title, and do not need a cover page. The final paper will be in response to topics generated in the last few weeks of class, and we will devote several class sessions to discussing, debating, and workshopping your ideas.

**Email and Blackboard:** You must have a working University email address; if you choose to link another one to it, you can, but – this is important – you must be sure to check your email on a daily basis. If any changes occur with the class, assignments, or the syllabus, I will communicate these via email (as well as in class, when possible). You must also be sure that your access to Blackboard is active, as I will often post assignments and readings there. I will always let you know when new material arrives on Blackboard or when assignments are posted there.

**Students with Special Needs or Disabilities:** If any students have special needs or would benefit from disability accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. If you have been in contact with the University’s Disability Services department, please pass on to me any information from them and any accommodations needed so we can address these quickly and anticipate any future concerns.

**Academic Honesty:** All the work performed in this class must be your own work, done for this class only (e.g., no recycling papers from other courses). Cases of plagiarism or academic misconduct are taken very seriously and will be handled according to University and Department policies; for information and details, see [http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx](http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx). If you have any questions or concerns about this, including concerns about what constitutes plagiarism, please come talk to me.

**Electronics:** I have no patience for cell phones in class. Make sure they are on silent and out of your reach (not on your desk on in your lap). If I see you using a cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave. I also prefer that computers not be used for note-taking in class, so unless a special learning need or disability requires it, I ask that laptops be left at home or in your bag. There may be times when an in-class activity requires the use of computers, and in the event of such activities, I will let you know in advance that bringing your computer to class will be beneficial. However, in general, I find the distractions offered by computers to be simply too great to resist (understandably) and thus, I ask that you take notes in class without using computers. If you anticipate any concerns regarding the use of computers, please come talk with me as soon as possible.
Course Schedule:
** Note: this schedule is subject to change!!! Be sure to keep up with assignments as the term proceeds.

**Week One: Introductions, Why Critical Reasoning??
Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric (LCR) Chapter One
Rulebook for Arguments (Rulebook) Chapter One

**Week Two: Arguments, Forms, Rules, and Reasons
LCR Chapter Two
Rulebook Chapter Two, Three, and Six

**Week Three: Fallacies and Common Problems
LCR Chapter Three
Rulebook Chapter Four

**Week Four: More Fallacies and Common Problems
LCR Chapters Four and Five

**Week Five: Other Impediments to Good Reasoning
LCR Chapter Six
Rulebook Chapter Five

**Week Six: The Importance of Language
LCR Chapter Seven

**Week Seven: Evaluating and Writing Extended Arguments
LCR Chapters Eight and Nine
Rulebook Chapters Seven and Eight

**Week Eight: Advertising
LCR Chapter Ten
Rulebook Chapter Nine
Discussions on Final Paper Topics

**Week Nine: News and Media
LCR Chapter Eleven
Debates on Final Paper Topics

**Week Ten: Textbooks and Educational Media
LCR Chapter Twelve
Workshops on Final Papers
Conclusion: Why Critical Reasoning Again?

**Finals Week: Final Paper Due in my office (PLC 332) on Tuesday, December 4 by 12:00 pm