

PHIL 1230B Reasoning and Critical Thinking

HC W12 Tue 13:30 -14:20/Thur 12:30 – 14:20

Instructor: Dr. Glen Koehn, Office A202

E-mail: gkoehn@gkoehn.com

Office Hours: Tues. 2:30 – 4:30, and by appt.

Tel: (519) 438-7224, ext. 254

Textbook: *Clear Thinking in a Blurry World*. Tim Kenyon. (Thompson-Nelson, 2008.)

Course Description: An introduction to some practical logical tools and skills, including the basic notion of an argument. Over the course of the term we will consider what makes for acceptable premises and good theories. Topics will include fallacies, cognitive biases, analogies and statistical reasoning.

Course Goals: Improve critical skills by learning to recognize good and bad reasoning in natural language. Practice constructing cogent arguments and analyzing their form. Be able to evaluate some statistical claims, and be able to state some general features of satisfactory theories.

Grading: 1. Four Quizzes @ 10%. (Best 3 marks used.) 2. Two assignments @ 15 %. 3. Final test 40%. **Note:** You must pass the final test to pass the course.

The following schedule is provisional, and may be adjusted during the term:

Week Topics

- 1-2 (Jan 4-15) Introduction; Chapter 1. Deduction.
- 3 (Jan 18-22) Ch. 2. Evidence
- 4 (Jan 25-29) Ch. 3. Language and Argument. **Quiz 1.**
- 5 (Feb 1-5) Ch. 4. Fallacies.
- 6 (Feb 8-12) Ch. 5. Numbers. **Assignment 1 due. Quiz 2.**
- 7 (Feb 22-26) Ch. 6. Probability and Statistics.
- 8 (Mar 1-5) Ch. 7. Cognitive Biases. **Quiz 3.**
- 9 (Mar 8-12) Ch. 8. Social Contexts.
- 10 (Mar 15-19) Ch. 9. Science. **Quiz 4.**
- 11 (Mar 22-26) Ch. 10. Media.
- 12 (Mar 29-Apr 1) Readings and Discussions. **Assignment 2 due.**
- 13 (Apr 5-9) Review

Appendix to Course Outlines

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/pdf/CodeStudentRights.pdf>

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor.

For non-medical grounds or for medical grounds when work represents less than 10% of the overall grade for the course, the student must submit a request to the instructor in writing prior to the due date of an assignment, and immediately in the case of a test. (Or as soon as possible following a medical emergency) Students are protected under the Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy and so written requests need only include a broad and general explanation of the situation, and the approximate length of time required. At the discretion of the instructor, the granting of extensions and re-scheduled tests may require the student to submit supporting either medical or non-medical documentation to the Academic Counsellor, who will then make the determination as to whether accommodation is warranted.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf .

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/pdf/FASSonPlagiarism.pdf> . In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found at:

http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research_guides_and_handouts .

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.

2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website and to post an announcement to Web CT.

Accessibility

Huron University College strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place as, and in a similar way to, other customers. We welcome your feedback about accessibility at Huron. Information about how to provide feedback is available at:

http://www.huronuc.on.ca/about_huron/accessibility_at_huron/feedback_comments/

Program and Academic Counselling

Philosophy students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in philosophy should contact the Chair of the Department, Prof. David Conter (Office V131, e-mail: dconter@uwo.ca). Students should contact Debbie Chadwick or Kent Robinson, Academic Counsellor on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_arts_social_science/academic_services_centre/academic_counselling_contact_and_services/