

LA Mission College, PACE
Fall 2012

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Office IA 29 Office hours: Tues. 7-8PM; MW 10:30- 12:20

Philosophy 6: Logic in Practice

Section 6506 Tuesday 8:10-10:19 PM CSB 205 & Saturday: 9/8; 9/22; 10/6—
12:30-4:30 PM. CSB 206 Final Exam Saturday, 10/20 12:30 PM- 2:30 PM

Course Description

Philosophy 6 will improve your skills in critical reasoning and in the writing of critical essays. Classroom discussions, small group presentations, and individual assignments will explore techniques of argument analysis and evaluation.

Course Objectives

In a society where career changes are commonplace and where political policies, consumer products, and religious dogmas are persuasively advertised, the skills of careful, critical analysis are increasingly required. By successfully completing the Logic in Practice course you will be better equipped to confront the complex issues that each of us faces as working professionals and citizens. You will learn to identify fallacious arguments, to recognize the underlying logical structure of complicated chains of reasoning, to evaluate argument patterns using Venn diagrams and truth tables, to assess the strength of inductive arguments, and to construct cogent arguments of your own.

Required Text

Invitation to Critical Thinking, 6 ed. Vincent Barry and Joel Rudinow.

Philosophy 6 Handouts Campus Bookstore; or download from my website

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation in class discussions; **homework assignments**; participation and performance in **critical exchange presentation** (= team debates on contemporary social controversies); **argumentative essay** (5-7 pages. Defend a thesis on a controversial moral or social issue. Research both sides of the issue and refer to 3-5 sources on your *Works Cited* page.); **two exams**; **ITV journal**: (1) View the film *12 Angry men*. Discuss (in a 250-word paper) how the bias of some jurors interfered with their ability to view the case objectively and how other jurors used inductive and deductive reasoning to find flaws in the prosecution's case. (2) English Prof. Michele Wallace criticizes the film *Boyz in the Hood* for its portrayal of single black mothers. She says we are told little about them and are *encouraged, on the basis of crucial visual cues, to come to stereotypical conclusions about these women*. View this film and determine (in a 250-word paper) if Wallace's criticism is justified. (3) View the films *Malcolm X* and *Ghandi*. Write a 350-word paper comparing the two lead characters with respect to differences in leadership styles, handling of conflict, relations with others, and the evolution of their political views. (Counts as two). (4) View the film *Aladdin* and evaluate the claim from some critics that the film is racist in its portrayal of Middle Eastern people. State your evidence for or against in a 250 word paper. You are required to do a total of three ITV assignments. Number (1) is required for everyone.

Evaluation

Class participation and homework: 10%
Critical Exchange presentation: 10%
Argumentative essay: 20%
ITV Journal 15%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

Schedule*

Week I 8/28 Course Introduction

Week II. 9/4 Ch.s 1-2. Barriers to critical thinking; analyzing the functions of language; the fact/value distinction.

Saturday Session 9/8 Ch.s 3 - 4. Argument analysis: identifying premises and conclusions, identifying arguments. Lecture and small group exercises. Casting, paraphrasing, and reconstructing arguments

Week III. 9/11 Ch.s 5-6.. Evaluating deductive arguments: validity, soundness.

Week IV 9/18 Chapter 6. Categorical statements, Venn diagrams. Midterm review.

Saturday Session 9/22 Midterm Exam; Preparation for Critical Exchange Presentations

Week V 9/25 Ch. 7 Truth Functional Logic.

Week VI 10/2 Propositional logic review. Small group truth table assignment.

Saturday Session 10/6 Critical Exchange Presentations

Week VII. 10/9 Chapters 8-10. Evaluating inductive reasoning. **ITV Journal due.**

Week VIII. 10/12 Chapters 11-12. Informal Fallacies; Exam review. **Essay due.**

Saturday, 10/20 Final Exam: 12:30 - 2:30 PM (Deadline to submit work)

Extra credit assignments: (1) Argument Journal- Find examples in printed media of an inductive argument, a deductive argument, an argument with a premise signal word, an argument with a conclusion signal word, an argument that has no signal words, and cast an argument found in a newspaper or magazine. (Identify premise(s) and conclusion of each argument. (2) Fallacy journal- Find examples in printed media of seven fallacies discussed in the course. Provide a brief explanation of each example. **You must provide a copy of the source document to receive credit. Due 10/23.**

Cheating- unauthorized material used during an examination (including electronic devices), changing answers after work has been graded, taking an exam for another student, forging or altering attendance sheets or other documents in the course, looking at another student's paper/scantron/essay/computer or exam with or without their approval is considered cheating. Any student caught cheating will receive a zero for the assignment/exam and referred to the Department chair and/or Student Services for further disciplinary action.

Plagiarism- Plagiarism is defined as the act of using ideas, words, or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving proper credit to the original sources. This includes definitions found online on Wikipedia, materials from blogs, twitter, or other similar electronic resources. The following examples are intended to be representative, but not all inclusive:

- failing to give credit by proper citations for others ideas and concepts, data and information, statements and phrases, and/or interpretations and conclusions.

- failing to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or a part thereof

- Paraphrasing the expressions or thought by others without appropriate quotation marks or attribution

- Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as essays, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures or similar works as one's own.

First offense, you will receive a zero for the assignment in question. Any further offenses may result in expulsion from the class, as determined by the disciplinary action from the Office of Student Services.

Recording devices in the classroom- Section 78907 of the California Education Code prohibits the use of any electronic audio or video recording devices, without prior consent of the instructor. (including cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, and more)

Reasonable Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and require accommodations, please send me a private email. The sooner I am aware of your eligibility for accommodations, the quicker I will be able to assist the DSP&S Office in providing them. For students requiring accommodations, the DSP&S Office at Mission College provides special assistance in areas like: registering for courses, specialized tutoring, note-taking, mobility assistance, special instruction, testing assistance, special equipment, special materials, instructor liaisons, community referrals and job placement. If you have not done so already, you may also wish to contact the DSP&S Office in Instructional Building 1018 (phone 818/364-7732 TTD 818/364-7861) and bring a letter stating the accommodations that are needed.

Student Learning Outcomes for Philosophy 6

1. Identify the structure of an argument.
2. Evaluate deductive arguments for validity and inductive arguments for strength.
3. Differentiate among various informal fallacies.
4. Design and create cogent arguments.

Writing Analytic Essays*

1. The point of a paper is to state and defend some thesis. The thesis may be critical (The slippery slope objection to assisted suicide fails because...), or substantive (Abortion is morally permissible in the following cases...). This is a special kind of expository writing. One kind of expository writing (text books, newspapers) is designed to convey information, and another is designed to prove a point. Philosophy papers of the first sort are generally not acceptable.
2. The thesis of the paper should be carefully stated somewhere in the first paragraph of the essay. Your reader needs to know what you are arguing for.
3. Some attempt should be made, either at the beginning or the end of the paper, to say why the thesis is interesting or important.
4. It is often helpful to include a strategy paragraph before the actual argumentation begins, explaining how you plan to defend your thesis.
5. By making reference to the strategy paragraph, or to an outline, you should be able to point to any paragraph in the essay and say just what it is supposed to contribute to the defense of the thesis.
6. If you cannot defend your thesis adequately, perhaps a weaker version of your thesis can be defended. Then you can say what would need to be done in addition to what you have done to defend the stronger version.
7. A large part of the point of philosophical writing is to bring precision and clarity to abstract, vague, and slippery issues. If you sense your discussion becoming overly general or vague, you're on the wrong track. Start over. It is better to oil one small wheel than to utter incantations over the whole machine.

Grading Criteria (in order of importance.)

1. **Relevance**. If you write something down, the assumption is that you think it is relevant. Papers containing material irrelevant to the thesis defended have poor prospects.
2. **Coherence**. This takes practice. A well defended false thesis is better than an ill defended true thesis.
3. **Accuracy**. Be careful not to misrepresent or grossly misinterpret the text (if there is one).
4. **Originality**. Originality is not essential. More important is how you put the ideas to use. If you use material (ideas, strategies, whatever) that is not your own, identify that source properly.

*After a handout by R. Cummins (University of Arizona) and Frank Lewis (USC).