

Syllabus: Phil 004
Critical Thinking
De Anza College
Summer Quarter, 2014
Instructor: Toño Ramirez
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Office Location: Forum Building, Room 2D
Office Hours: Tuesdays 7-9 AM



Course Description

This course introduces and examines the role of formal and informal methods of reasoning in several forms of discourse. We will focus on the cultivation of argumentative skills relevant to academic, public, and interpersonal methods of communication.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully engage course materials will be able to:

- Identify and analyze a variety of rhetorical and argumentative techniques
- Analyze and assess a variety of rhetorical and argumentative texts
- Develop original complex arguments
- Apply these tools to real-world decision-making

Course Expectations and Requirements

Attendance:

- Students who are considering dropping the course for personal reasons are encouraged to meet with the instructor first—I'm happy to do what I can to help you succeed in this class!
- Students may miss a total of *two* class meetings without penalty during the term. A third absence will result in the loss of the "attendance buffer" (explained below) when final grades are calculated. A fifth absence will result in dismissal from the course, or a grade of 'F' if the withdrawal date is passed.
- Students are *not* required to provide the instructor with a reason for absence, nor are apologies necessary. I assume that absences will only occur under legitimate circumstances.
- Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining any information or assignments they may have missed.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
- Students are expected to come to class *on time*. Three late arrivals will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who need to leave a phone on for emergency purposes should let me know at the beginning of the class session. Text messaging/web-browsing is incompatible with active participation in class activities, and will not be permitted during class time. Students who use electronic devices in class without obtaining prior permission may be asked to leave.

Student Assessment:

The final grade will be awarded according to the following point system:

	With attendance buffer	Without attendance buffer
Quizzes	20%	25%
Homework Assignments	20%	25%
Mid-Term Exam	25%	25%
Final Exam	25%	25%
Attendance Buffer	10%	0%

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A+	96.5-100
A	92.5-96.4
A-	89.5-92.4
B+	86.5-89.4
B	82.5-86.4
B-	79.5-82.4
C+	76.5-79.4
C	69.5-76.4
D+	56.5-59.4
D	52.5-56.4
D-	49.5-52.4
F	0-49.4

- Quizzes **may not** be made up.
- The mid-term and final exams **may not be made up**.
- Your lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final score total.
- Homework assignments are to be completed by the beginning of their corresponding class meeting, unless otherwise directed. I will collect homework sporadically throughout the course and check it for completion. It is expected that homework will be completed for submission on request.
- You may submit late homework up to one week past the due date for half credit. **I will not accept homework that is more than a week late.**
- Participation in discussions will be evaluated according to the *quality* of student comments, and not quantity. Students who demonstrate excellence in discussions will attend closely to the comments of other students, and offer remarks that are of relevance to the discussion at hand. It is expected that students will engage one another's ideas in discussion, and that this will be done in a respectful manner. Neither disparaging remarks nor personal attacks will be tolerated in any way.
- Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups.
- Academic honesty is imperative in all written work. Plagiarism, the use of unauthorized electronic devices during quizzes, and other violations will automatically result failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me.

Course Assignment Schedule

(n.b.: The schedule is subject to change at my discretion—changes will be posted to the course website)

- 7/1
 - Introduction to course
- 7/2
 - Read pgs. 1-22
 - From book: **1-5**: 17, 18, 19; **1-6**: 5, 6, 9
 - From book: **1-7**: 5-8; **1-9**: 1-5
- 7/3
 - Chapter 1 Quiz
 - Read [Ackerman, “Whole Person Admissions”](#)
 - Read pgs. 69-75
- 7/8
 - From book: **3-1**; **3-3**: 3-5; **3-4**
 - Read pgs. 160-163, 75-87
- 7/9
 - From book: **5-18**: 1-6; **5-20**: 1-5
 - From book: **3-6**: 1-6; From book: **3-9**: 8-15
 - Please read section 5.2 of [this article](#) and prepare a written response to the following question:
 - What is the “strategy of reinterpreting motives”, and how do psychological egoists use it to argue that altruism is impossible?
- 7/10
 - Chapter 3 Quiz
 - Read pgs. 147-168
- 7/15
 - From book: **5-3**; **5-10**: 1-8
 - Read [CBS DC article on Washington Redskins](#)
 - Read [Johnson, “67 Percent...”](#)
- 7/16
 - Chapter 5 Quiz
 - Read pgs. 41-47
 - Complete [this assignment](#) for in-class discussion
- 7/17
 - Please read [this article](#) and prepare a written response to the following questions:
 - *According to the article, in order to faith to be morally acceptable, two important conditions must be met. What are these two conditions?*
 - *Do YOU think that Skywalker’s decision is justified or not? Why?*
 - [Review for midterm exam](#)
- 7/22
 - **MIDTERM EXAM**
 - Read pgs. 48-59
- 7/23
 - From book: **2-1**: All; **2-6**: 1-5
- 7/24
 - Complete [this assignment](#)
 - From book: **2-10**: 1-5; **2-11**: 1-5
- 7/29
 - Chapter 2 Quiz
 - Read pgs. 183-199
- 7/30
 - From book: **6-5**: All
 - Read pgs. 211-228
- 7/31
 - From book: **7-2**: All
 - Please read [this article](#) and prepare a written response to the following questions:
 - *Reconstruct the “cultural differences argument”*
 - *The “cultural differences argument” is not sound—why not?*
 - *Do YOU think that there are any universal, absolute moral rules? Why?*

- 8/5
 - Chapter 6 & 7 Quiz
 - Please read [this article](#) and prepare a written response to the following questions:
 - *According to Singer, exactly how much of my money/wealth am I supposed to give to relieve world poverty?*
 - *Do YOU think that Singer's central argument contains any flaws/mistakes? If so, what are these mistakes? If not, how would you respond to the objection that his demands are too strong*
- 8/6
 - Please read [this case study](#) and bring a written response to the following questions:
 - *What do YOU think that Eric should do, and why?*
 - *How might someone argue against your view*
 - [Review for final exam](#)
- 8/7
 - **FINAL EXAM**

Text (available at bookstore)

Moore, B.N. and Parker, R. [Critical Thinking \(9th ed.\)](#) McGraw Hill, 2009.

Please ensure that you are using the 9th edition of this text. The book has been enrolled in the bookstore's textbook rental program in order to minimize student expense. If the bookstore is out of copies, I recommend searching online vendors such as www.amazon.com or www.half.com. Used copies of the text can be found at these sites for reasonable prices.

The text is available on reserve at the De Anza library

Additional course readings will be handed out in class, or made available via the course website.

Course Website

Electronic copies of course materials, announcements, and other course resources are available at

<http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/phil04>