

PHIL 1: CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2025
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Prerequisite:	One of the following: ENGL C1000 or C1000H or ESLL 26.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate persuasive text or speech through the identification of common logical fallacies.
- Identify and distinguish the constituent parts of an argument (premises and conclusion) within a persuasive text or speech.
- Write a composition presenting a well-reasoned argument defending a position on a controversial issue, with attention to acknowledging and critically evaluating counter-arguments.

Description

Develops understanding of informal logic and practical reasoning skills necessary for academic success, including tools needed to analyze information from a variety of sources such as academic essays, philosophic literature, news media and advertising. Focus on skills of argumentation including, but not limited to, elements of an argument, deductive and inductive forms of argumentation, the evaluation of arguments and the recognition of a variety of fallacies. Skills developed through a series of written assignments of increasing scope and difficulty culminating in a sophisticated argumentative essay.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Distinguish basic elements of an argument.
 - a. Identify premises and conclusions.
 - b. Distinguish arguments from non-inferential passages.
2. Identify and evaluate inductive and deductive arguments.
 - a. Use and identify common forms of inductive and deductive arguments.
3. Evaluate evidence with respect to its relevance and strength.
4. Recognize fallacies.
5. Analyze and use language effectively in college level argumentative writing.
 - a. Recognize vague, ambiguous, over-general and slanted language.

6. Use all of the above-mentioned skills in writing effective argumentative and critical essays.

Course Content

1. Basic elements of an argument
 - a. Premises and conclusions
 - i. Indicator words
 - ii. Recognizing inferential relationship between propositions
 - iii. Recognizing arguments and distinguishing them from non-inferential passages
 - iv. Clearly listing premises and conclusion
2. Induction and deduction
 - a. The basic distinction
 - i. Necessity and probability
 - b. Common forms of inductive and deductive arguments
 - i. Syllogistic forms of deduction
 - ii. Deductive arguments from definition and mathematical reasoning
 - iii. Inductive arguments including, but not limited to, analogy, generalizations and instantiations, predictions, statistics and causal arguments
3. Fallacies
 - a. Types
 - i. Relevance
 - ii. Presumption
 - iii. Grammatical analogy
 - iv. Weak induction
 - b. Psychological appeal
 - c. Recognition and avoidance in reading and writing
4. Language
 - a. Nature and functions
 - b. Its uses and abuses
 - i. Clear and precise use of language in argumentative writing
 - ii. Avoidance and recognition of slanted, ambiguous, vague, over-general, and abusive language
5. Argumentative writing
 - a. Finding, evaluating and using sources
 - b. Constructing a clear and effective thesis
 - c. Constructing an effective argument employing skills of induction and deduction
 - i. Avoiding fallacies in writing
 - d. Clear and fair presentation of relevant counter-arguments to the thesis and premises of the main argument
 - e. Defending one's own argument against the relevant counter-arguments

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software, media plug-ins, and relevant computer applications.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Quizzes as necessary to determine student's understanding of critical thinking and logical concepts as well as comprehension of assigned texts and arguments

Classroom participation and small group exercises designed to facilitate collaborative learning of key concepts of logic and critical thinking

Examinations

Homework assignments that provide exercises for reinforcement of logical concepts

Writing exercises (totaling in 4,000 to 6,000 words). These will consist of short argumentative and analysis writing assignments (500-1000 words each). Each writing exercise will be directed toward a specific critical thinking skill

Argumentative essay (2000 word minimum). At least one sophisticated argumentative essay that posits a logically supported argument, and demonstrates knowledge of the skills, principles and distinctions explored throughout the course and demonstrates proper use of MLA format

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Discussion

Peer review of writing progress

Collaborative learning groups to solidify content and skills

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Bassham, Gregory, William Irwin, Henry Nardone, and James M. Wallace. Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction, 6th ed.. 2019.

Moore, Brooke N., and Richard Parker. Critical Thinking, 13th ed.. 2021.

Vaughn, Lewis, and Theodore Schick. How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age, 8th ed.. 2020.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Readings in basic elements of an argument, argument construction, fallacy identification and avoidance, writing arguments for academic essays
2. Written exercises to solidify concepts from the readings listed above
3. Writing argumentative academic essays

Discipline(s)

Philosophy