



## PHIL-1200H-A: Critical Thinking 2018FA - Peterborough Campus

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### Instructor:

Instructor: Amanda Bryant

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Phone Number: 705-748-1011 x7118

Office: CC G15

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-2:00pm

### Meeting Times:

MON 4:00-5:50pm, GCS 114

WED 9:00-9:50am, GCS 114

Please check the on-line [Timetable](#) to confirm times and locations

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### Department:

Academic Administrative Assistant: Kathy Axcell

Email Address: [philosophy@trentu.ca](mailto:philosophy@trentu.ca)

Phone Number: 705-748-1011, x7166

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### Description:

We recently started describing this as a *post-truth* era — a time in which political powers and citizens frequently show little regard for objective facts. Given our intellectual (or anti-intellectual) climate, the ability to critically evaluate and respond to the information we receive is more important than ever. We must not passively accept what we see on social media, blogs, tv, and other media, because doing so could lead to our being taken advantage of for political or economic gain. We must be active consumers of information, because doing so empowers us to

protect our own interests and promote our own values. This class will help you to be a more active consumer of information. In this class, we will learn about:

- the role of language in argument and persuasion
  - the structure and components of arguments
  - how to evaluate arguments and evidence
  - errors of reasoning
  - the logic of arguments
  - causal and statistical reasoning
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## Learning Outcomes:

I have developed the course to address several learning outcomes. By the end of the course a successful student will be able to:

- identify arguments and their components (i.e. premises and conclusions) in a variety of contexts;
  - reconstruct arguments using techniques including argument diagramming;
  - assess the reliability, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence or reasons presented in support of a claim;
  - demonstrate an appreciation of the influence of perspectives, interests, and biases in relation to arguers and audiences;
  - recognize deductive and inductive argument schemes;
  - assess the validity of arguments using basic propositional logic;
  - reflect critically on their own beliefs and values; and
  - construct original and compelling arguments in support of their own views.
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## Texts:

David Kelley's *The Art of Reasoning: An Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking* (4th Edition). Norton.

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## Assessments, Assignments and Tests:

### 1. Type of Assignment: **Short Online Quizzes**

Description: Students must complete 10/15 quizzes on Blackboard. Each one tests students' grasp of basic concepts from the course readings.

Due Date: **Ongoing**

### 2. Type of Assignment: **Midterm 1**

Description: An in-class exam testing students' knowledge of course content.

Due Date: **OCT 15**

### 3. Type of Assignment: **Midterm 2\***

Description: An in-class exam testing students' knowledge of course content.

Due Date: **NOV 12**

\*Students who prefer to do so may complete a written assignment instead of Midterm 2, due via Blackboard on **NOV 12**, which will likewise test students' knowledge of course content. Students who prefer this option should indicate their preference to the professor no later than **OCT 29**. Think carefully about which option is better for you, given your strengths. Keep in mind that Midterm 2 will be good practice for the final exam.

### 4. Type of Assignment: **Final Exam**

Description: A cumulative exam testing students' knowledge of course content.

Due Date: **During Exam Period**

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## Grading:

- **Short Online Quizzes: 10%**
- **Midterm 1: 25%**
- **Midterm 2 or Alternate Written Assignment: 30%**
- **Final Exam: 35%**

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## Schedule:

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

Note: BB stands for Blackboard and AR stands for our textbook, *The Art of Reasoning*.

MON SEP 10 - Introduction

- No reading

WED SEP 12 - Language

- Tracy Bowell and Gary Kemp, "Language and Rhetoric" in *Critical Thinking: A Concise Guide*, pp. 27-54 (BB)

MON SEP 17 - Language and Argument

- "Propositions" (AR, 48-63)
- "Argument Analysis" (AR, 68-98)

WED SEP 19 - Academic Skills Presentation on Note-taking, Studying, and Exam Skills

- No reading

MON SEP 24 - Evaluating Evidence

- Anne Thomson, "Evaluating Evidence and Authorities" in *Critical Reasoning: A Practical Introduction*, pp. 83-101 (BB)
- 14 min. video (to be watched in class): "[Immaculate Perception: Jerry Kang at TEDxSanDiego 2013](#)"
- Keith Payne, Laura Niemi, and John M. Doris, "[How to Think About Implicit Bias](#)" *Scientific American*
- Daniel Yudkin and Jay Van Bavel, "[The Roots of Implicit Bias](#)" *New York Times*

### WED SEP 26 - Food for Thought: Free Speech on Campus

- Kate Manne and Jason Stanley "When Free Speech Becomes a Political Weapon" [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)
- [Truth Seeking, Democracy, and Freedom of Thought and Expression](#) - A Statement by Robert P. George and Cornel West
- Deborah MacLatchy, "[Not merely free speech, but better speech needs to be protected on campus](#)" *Globe and Mail*

### MON OCT 01 - Informal Fallacies

- "Fallacies" (AR, 104-136)

### WED OCT 03 - Food for Thought: Race, Representation, and Reconciliation in Canada

- Joe Friesen, "[The night Colten Boushie died: What family and police files say about his last day, and what came after](#)" *Globe and Mail*
- Dave Deibert, "['Enough killing our people': Stanley verdict generates rallies and pleas for change](#)," *National Post*
- Scott Gilmore, "[Canada's race problem? It's even worse than America's](#)" *Maclean's*

### MON OCT 08 - NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

### WED OCT 10 - **Exam Review**

### MON OCT 15 - **First Midterm Exam**

### WED OCT 17 - Deductive Logic

- "Categorical Propositions" (AR, 145-175)

### MON OCT 22 & WED OCT 24 - **NO CLASS (Reading Week)**

### MON OCT 29 - Deductive Logic

- "Categorical Syllogisms" (AR, 179-197)

### WED OCT 31 - Deductive Logic

- "Categorical Syllogisms" (AR, 198-214)

### MON NOV 05 - Catch-up

- No additional reading

**Note: TUE NOV 06 is the drop deadline**WED NOV 07 - **Exam Review**MON NOV 12 - **Second Midterm Exam / Alternate Assignment Due**

WED NOV 14 - Propositional Logic

- "Disjunctive Syllogisms" (AR, 220-224)
- "Hypothetical Syllogisms" (AR, 225-233)

MON NOV 19 - Propositional Logic

- "Propositional Logic - Propositions" (261-298)

WED NOV 21 - Propositional Logic:

- "Propositional Logic—Arguments" (AR, 301-328)

MON NOV 26 - Catch-up

- No additional reading

WED NOV 28 - Food for Thought: Objective Truth, 'Alternative Facts', Authoritarianism and Freedom of the Press

- Piers Brendon, "[Death of truth: when propaganda and 'alternative facts' first gripped the world](#)" *The Guardian*
- Harry Frankfurt, "[Donald Trump Is BS, Says Expert in BS](#)" *Time*
- Jason Stanley, "[Beyond Lying: Donald Trump's Authoritarian Reality](#)." *New York Times*

MON DEC 03 - Causal and Statistical Reasoning

- Lewis Vaughn, "Inductive Arguments and Statistics," in *Concise Guide to Critical Thinking* (BB)
- "Statistical Reasoning" (AR, 456-479)

WED DEC 05 - **Exam Review**TBA - **Final Exam**

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## Course Guidelines:

### Classroom Behaviour

- Be respectful. Our classroom should be a place where everyone feels comfortable contributing to discussion.
- If you're bursting with questions and comments all the time, great! Just make sure not to dominate the discussion. Let others speak, too.

- Give your attention to the person speaking (no side-conversations, no texting, no Facebooking, etc.).
- Be on time. If you must be late, try to enter the classroom in the least distracting manner possible.
- Cell phones, laptops, and other noise-making devices should be silenced.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is expected. Repeated, unexcused absences and latenesses will harm your grade. You must be present for all exams (except in the case of Midterm 2, for those students who have chosen to complete the written assignment instead, and have indicated their preference to the professor by the appropriate date). Make-up exams will only be given to students with documented extenuating circumstances.

## 24-Hour Rule

When an exam is returned to you, please wait at least 24 hours before approaching me about your grade.

## Email

I get a lot of email, so please email me just when necessary. Make sure the answer to your question isn't already on the syllabus. If you have a question that might require a long answer, see me in my office hours.

Please note that I don't discuss grades by email. If you wish to discuss a grade, please make an appointment with me.

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## Departmental Policies:

### Final departmental deadline for submission of work:

No term work will be accepted for evaluation in the Philosophy Department later than one week after the last day of classes. One week after the last day of classes is also the deadline for the filing of Request for Incomplete Standing Forms to the Chair with all the relevant documentation.

Note: Most instructors will have deadlines well before this final departmental deadline. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with instructor's deadlines and deadline policies.

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## University Policies:

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: [www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity).

## Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that they may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.

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