

PHILOSOPHY 3: CRITICAL THINKING

University of California, Santa Barbara | Winter 2010

I. CONTACT INFO

LECTURE INFO

Time: MWF 9:00am–9:50am

Location: Theater & Dance West 1701

Course Web Page:

<http://www.joshdmay.com/teaching/course1/>

Text Web Page: <http://www.mhhe.com/mooreparker9/>

INSTRUCTOR INFO

Instructor: Joshua May

Office: South Hall, room 5720

Email: [jdmay \(at umail.ucsb.edu\)](mailto:jdmay@umail.ucsb.edu)

Website: www.joshdmay.com

Office Hours: Mon. 1-3pm (& by appt.)

TA INFO

[Sian Griffith](#)

Email: [siangriffith \(at umail.ucsb.edu\)](mailto:siangriffith@umail.ucsb.edu)

Office Hours: Mon. 10-11a & 12-1p (& by appt.)

Office Location: South Hall 5714

[Robert McIntyre](#)

Email: [rmcintyre \(at umail.ucsb.edu\)](mailto:rmcintyre@umail.ucsb.edu)

Office Hours: Mon. 11a-1p (& by appt.)

Office Location: South Hall 5432-U

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>TA</u>
M	10:00am-10:50am	ARTS 1251	Rob
W	12:00pm-12:50pm	GIRV 2123	Sian
F	10:00am-10:50am	BSIF 1217	Rob
F	12:00pm-12:50pm	GIRV 2116	Sian

Map of UCSB: <http://www.aw.id.ucsb.edu/maps/ucsbmap.html>

II. BASIC COURSE INFO

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Critical thinking is the use of reasoning in determining what's true and what's false. We make our reasoning public when we articulate arguments for or against a certain position on an issue. Consider the current debate about abortion. In trying to figure out whether abortion is immoral, we articulate arguments for or against. Someone might say, for example, "Life begins at conception, and one should never destroy an innocent life. Every fetus is innocent (they haven't yet done anything wrong), so we shouldn't ever destroy them." This is an argument. Is it any good? We will work on developing your critical thinking skills by learning to evaluate arguments in general, like this one about abortion.

We'll do this in both abstract and concrete ways. The abstract way will involve studying a bit of what is called "formal logic" in which one translates arguments into symbolic form and manipulates the symbols in a precise way to determine whether the form of the argument is any good. The more concrete material will include examining specific arguments from ordinary life and employing informal tools for evaluating them. We will also look at the kinds of errors in reasoning that we all often make in order to avoid them in our own arguments, whether in writing or in speech.

REQUIRED TEXT

Moore & Parker, *Critical Thinking*, 9th ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2008) ISBN-13: 9780073386676

(Note: Your textbook has a lot of resources in it and on the supplemental website. Utilize them.)

WEB PAGE

There is a web page for this class (see above) that will contain things like an electronic copy of the syllabus. (**Important:** You need to go there and print a copy out for yourself.)

UPDATES

If I need to cancel class or if I post something important to the course web page, I'll send **email updates** directly to you via UCSB's U-Lists service. Your Umail address is **automatically on this list** if you're registered for the course. Make sure you **check your Umail or have it forwarded** to an account you do check.

MATERIAL COVERED

We will be discussing material primarily from the text. However, we **may not cover everything in the assigned reading**, and quite often **material will be brought up in lecture that is not in the readings**. (Sometimes I will flat out disagree with the authors of the textbook on some point and expect you to learn things my way as I teach them in lecture!) So it's crucial that you come to class.

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

Students are expected to **attend all class meetings (lectures and sections)**. Attendance won't be tracked, but even just a few absences will likely adversely affect your performance on assignments. So you should really make sure to come to class. **Be there on time** as well. I understand that things come up in our lives that make us late sometimes, and I don't want you to not come to class if you're only going to be a bit late. However, don't make a habit of it. It's rude to come in late. Note, though, that your TAs may have their own policies for section, so don't expect them to be lenient when it comes to tardiness.

LECTURE SLIDES

I'll be using PowerPoint slides in lecture, and the **slides will be available on the course web page**. This should help those to catch up who miss class for legitimate reasons. I'm also doing this so students don't have to take such copious notes during class. But beware: the **slides are mere bullet points** of what's covered; don't rely on skipping class and studying them.

So **don't write down everything on the lecture slides**. You'll be able to print them out later. Just take notes on what I'm saying to supplement the slides. I'll do my best to make the slides available before lecture, **probably the night before**. So the best plan for each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday would be to wake up, turn on your computer, and print the slides. Then bring them to class and write your additional notes on them (and on extra notepaper if needed).

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Homework	10% of grade	(Due: Periodically)	[varies]
2. Quizzes	15% of grade	(Date: most Fridays)	[≈weekly]
3. Mid-Term # 1	20% of grade	(Date: 1/29)	[4 th week]
4. Mid-Term # 2	25% of grade	(Date: 2/22 2/19)	[8 th week]
5. Final Exam	30% of grade	(Date: Thurs. 3/18, 8-11am)	[11 th week]

Note: The due dates for the midterms are pretty firm, but they are subject to minor changes.

HOMEWORK

Homework will be **assigned periodically**, around the time we begin discussion of the chapter in lecture. The exercises will be out of the book; they're located at the end of each chapter. Exercises with a triangle next to them have the **solutions in the back of the book**. I will only assign these so that you can check your answers yourself and learn from doing the homework. The homework should be turned into your TA in class on the due date.

The homework won't be graded for accuracy, only **completeness**. There will be **approximately 9 homework assignments**. If your homework doesn't look almost entirely complete, it won't be counted as turned in. If you turn in all the homeworks, you get full credit for the homework portion of your grade. Below that, your grade will be determined based on the percentage of homework assignments you turn in. (For example: If you turn in 85% of the homework assignments, you'll get an 85% on the homework portion of your grade. This will amount to about a "B" on the homework portion and will count for 10% of your course grade.) **Late homework won't be accepted without a good excuse.**

QUIZZES

There will be quizzes in class **every Friday**, except of course for the first Friday of the term and on the days of the midterms. (So, yes, you'll likely have to hold off on the Thursday night partying this quarter if you want to take this class and do well. Believe me, I'm not happy about it either!) This will amount **to about 7 quizzes** over the term. The quiz with the lowest grade (including a zero if you missed it) will **be dropped**. This allows you to miss one Friday, if necessary, without penalty. Each quiz will be fairly short and take up only part of lecture (about 15 minutes). They're designed to give you more feedback on your work throughout the quarter and to provide more time to test you on material (the midterms only allow for about 50 minutes of test time each).

TESTS

The tests (the midterms and final) will all be in class. You don't need to bring a bluebook. Just bring a writing utensil.

There will be **no rescheduled exams**. Of course, if you have special circumstances, exceptions *might* be made. But you must let me know *as soon as such special circumstances arise*; otherwise I may not be able to work something out with you.

EXTRA CREDIT & MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

All students are expected to meet the same standards to pass the course. So there will be **no extra credit** assignments. (The same goes for make-up assignments; in general, you will not be able to make up missed assignments. However, of course, if you have a serious emergency, exceptions *might* be made.)

GRADES

You should be here primarily to *learn*, not to get a grade. Expect to be graded on your **observable intellectual performance**, not on the basis of *effort* or *need*. But **don't fret** too much about grades. Unless you are going onto graduate school or some similar form of even higher education, no one will look at your grades after you graduate. Many employers just care that you got the degree. Grades are mainly for you, to let you know how much understanding of the material you displayed.

CHEATING

Don't cheat (this includes *plagiarism*). I warn against this every quarter, and still nearly every quarter at least one person gets busted! **I take this extremely seriously**: I will prosecute any offenses, seeking penalties that can range up to expulsion from the university. At a minimum, cheating will result in **failing the course**.

Believe me, **it's just not worth it** to cheat. The amount of effort you'd put into cheating and then lying and covering up your lying about not cheating once you've been caught is probably about how much work is required to get a "C" on the assignment by doing it yourself. Yet if you cheat, you'll fail the entire course.

Furthermore, it's **your responsibility** to make sure your work does not violate university policies about plagiarism and other academic cheating. If you need any help in understanding these standards or are in any doubt about whether your work for this course violates them, check with me. For your convenience, here is the link to UCSB's page on academic integrity:

<http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx>

IV. STUDENT SUPPORT

GENERAL HELP

If you have questions about the material in the course, the best method is likely to communicate with your TA first. He or she is your primary resource for help. But, of course, I'm also available for help.

Talking to me (or your TA) about the material, especially in preparation for an upcoming assignment, is **not just for those who fear failing the course**; it's also for those who want to secure an "A" (or whatever your goal is).

OFFICE HOURS

I encourage you all to **talk with me (and your TA) outside of class in office hours**. If you are unable to make the regular time slot, contact me (preferably via email) about setting up an appointment to meet at a mutually convenient time. I'm glad to talk to you about philosophy (whether specific to the class or not), and you don't need a specific question formulated to come talk.

EMAIL

I'm available to contact by email. I can even answer relatively short and specific questions that way. If you have a more detailed and lengthy question, come to my office hours (or your TA's).

WEB PAGE

The web page is meant to be a place to house important files for the course (e.g. the syllabus) and to provide some links that may prove useful in the course. (Note: My website also has some information and external links to several resources for philosophy. But browse at your own risk. What's particularly useful for this course will be provided on the course web page.)

IF YOU FACE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES

If for any reason you face major difficulties—medical or otherwise—get in touch with me **as soon as possible**. I'm happy to work with you to find the best course of action and, if possible, to help you complete the course successfully. But I can't do that if you don't let me know about your circumstances as soon as they arise.

V. READINGS & SCHEDULE

PLASTIC SCHEDULE

There is **no set reading schedule**, and the tentative schedule below is subject to change. You'll need to keep coming to class to know where we are on this list and whether any changes have been made.

WHEN TO READ

Students are expected to **do the assigned reading**. You should aim for doing the reading **before or around the time it's covered** in class. The point of this is: **don't give up on the reading**. If you didn't get to it before we covered it in class, make sure you do it after. I've deliberately chosen a textbook that is relatively concise and accessible, even for students new to philosophy. So it shouldn't be too long or grueling.

HOLIDAYS & CANCELATIONS

The first Friday's lecture of the quarter (**Jan. 8**) is *canceled*; the sections on that day, however, *will* meet. Additionally, there are two holidays this quarter. One is on **Mon. Jan. 18th (MLK B-day)**, the other is on **Mon. Feb. 15th (Presidents' Day)**. There will be no lecture or sections on those days.

READINGS

Unit 1: Some Basics

Ch. 1: Basics: Issues, Claims, Arguments, Etc. (pp. 1-21 = 20 pgs.)

Ch. 2: Arguments: Types & Structures (pp. 41-55 = 14 pgs.)

Ch. 3: Clarity: Vagueness, Ambiguity, Etc. (pp. 69-86 = 17 pgs.)

Unit 2: Credibility, Rhetoric, & Fallacies

Ch. 4: Credibility (pp. 105-134 = 29 pgs.)

Ch. 5: Rhetoric (pp. 147-169 = 22 pgs.)

Ch. 7: Some Fallacies (pp. 211-228 = 17 pgs.)

~~**+ Ch. 6 (partial): More Rhetorical Devices (Red Herring)** (pp. 197-199 = 3 pgs.)~~

Unit 3: Formal Deductive Logic & Induction in More Detail

Ch. 9: Deductive Arguments: Truth-Functional Logic (pp. 297-338 = 41 pgs.)

(a) Symbolization; (b) Truth Tables; (c) Long Truth Table Test; (d) Short Truth Table Test;
(e) Deductions w/Inference Rules; (f) Deductions w/Equivalence Rules

~~**Ch. 10: Inductive Arguments** (pp. 346-371 = 25 pgs.)~~

~~**Ch. 11: Causal Explanation** (pp. 385-413 = 28 pgs.)~~

TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week	Mon.		Wed.		Fri.	
1	1/4	Syllabus	1/6	Ch. 1	1/8	No Lecture
2	1/11	Ch. 1	1/13	Ch. 2	1/15	Ch. 2
3	1/18	Holiday	1/20	Ch. 3	1/22	Ch. 3
4	1/25	Ch. 2	1/27	Ch. 3	1/29	Midterm #1
5	2/1	Ch. 4	2/3	Ch. 4	2/5	Ch. 5
6	2/8	Ch. 5	2/10	Ch. 5	2/12	Ch. 7
7	2/15	Holiday	2/17	Ch. 7	2/19	Ch. 7
8	2/22	Midterm #2	2/24	Ch. 9a	2/26	Ch. 9a
9	3/1	Ch. 9b	3/3	Ch. 9c	3/5	Ch. 9d
10	3/8	Ch. 9e	3/10	Ch. 9f	3/12	Ch. 9f
11	Final Exam - Thurs. 3/18, 8-11am					