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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00, TTH 9:30-10:30 and other times by appointment.

CATALOGUE COURSE DESCRIPTION PHL 262 Critical Thinking. [PHIL 2303] Designed to improve students' ability to think critically. The course covers the fundamentals of deductive reasoning, the identification of common fallacies, and an introduction to inductive reasoning, as well as sensitizing the students to some of the ways information is distorted, e.g., by advertising and news management. Credit 3.

OBJECTIVES:

- (1) To acquaint each student with some basic concepts used in the analysis and evaluation of deductive and inductive reasoning,
- (2) to give each student practice in analyzing such reasoning, and
- (3) to help the student recognize common fallacies.

TEXTS: Lewis Vaughn *The Power of Critical Thinking 2nd edition*
Thomas Gilovich *How We Know What Isn't So*
Also some material will be on electronic reserve at the Library

BLACKBOARD: The syllabus and many other relevant course documents will be posted on Blackboard..

TESTS: There will be three quizzes worth 50 points each, two major exams worth 100 points each, and a comprehensive final exam worth 200 points--an overall total of 550 points. Homework and extra credit opportunities also contribute to the overall point total. To determine your final average, simply divide your overall point total by 5.5. All tests are announced in advance, and there will be time for review before each of them. I use the grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, and below 60 = F.

HOMEWORK:

- (1) Regular daily assignments: since this is meant to be a practical course, there will be regular homework assignments which are NOT optional. Each assignment done acceptably ADDS one point to your point total. One point will be SUBTRACTED for every assignment not done acceptably. "Acceptably" means that EVERY PROBLEM IS ATTEMPTED, and the assignment is turned in ON TIME--no excuses.
- (2) There are three large writing assignments due on dates specified in the syllabus. These assignments will be worth up to 10 points apiece on your final, comprehensive exam for a possible total of 30 points.

EXTRA CREDIT (Note: These are due on or before Thursday December 11 and are open only to those who have attempted more than 50 % of the homework and missed no more than 4 classes.)

- (1) Check it out on the Snopes website at <http://www.snopes.com/>. Find two "urban legends," one of which you are surprised to find out is true and the other of which you are surprised to find out is false. Describe the two "legends" and explain what led to your surprise in each case. Up to 8 points.
- (2) The "Fallacy Hunt": Find "classroom usable" examples of the fallacies we will be discussing, but no more than one advertisement. The fallacies must be properly referenced, and you must analyze the argument and explain specifically how it goes wrong. There is a limit of 3 items that can receive up to 5 points for each item. Turn in the examples with your analyses.

ABSENCES: In accordance with University regulations, I take roll every period. I make no use of the absence record in determining grades. NOTE: If you find you are unable attend class, YOU MUST DROP THE COURSE; otherwise you will receive an F.

MAKE-UPS: I **hate** to give make-ups. If one is necessary, it is likely to be longer and harder than the regular test. You must have a good reason for missing a test, and if you do miss a test, see me as soon as possible. Your excuse must be written out and appropriately documented. ANY EXCUSE THAT DOES NOT WITHSTAND VERIFICATION WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THAT EXAM. If you do have a valid excuse, then we should make the arrangements for you to take a make-up AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

October**Unit II. Inductive Reasoning, The Quality of the Evidence, and Evaluating Explanations**

Thu 02 Read a Handout on Sampling and Generalizing, a Handout on Comparative Experimentation, and PCT Chap. 8 pp. 278-321.

Tue 07 Read Gilovich Chap. 3 Assignment #8:(Ex. 8.1 pp. 291-292, Ex. 8.3 pp. 293-294, and Ex. 8.5 pp. 295-296)

Thu 09 Read Gilovich Chap. 4. Assignment #9:(Ex. 8.7 pp. 304-305 #2, #3, and #4 only, and Ex. 8.8 pp. 321-324 NOTE: #1 to #15 only)

Tue 14 PCT Chap. 4 pp. 136-148, 167-171, and a Handout on definitions. **FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE—the FactCheck.org assignment**

Thu 16 PCT Chap. 9 pp. 335-356. Assignment #10:(Ex. 9.2 p. 344 and Ex. 9.5 pp. 346-347)

Tue 21 PCT Chap. 9 pp. 357-363 Assignment #11:(Ex. 9.7 p. 364 and Ex. 9.8 #3 and #5 p. 374)

Last 30 minutes: SECOND QUIZ--50 points—NO SCANTRON NEEDED

Thu 23 PCT Chap 10 pp. 382-409 Assignment #12:(Ex. 10.5 and Ex. 10.6 pp. 407-409)

Tue 28 PCT Chap. 10 pp. 409-430 and Gilovich Chap. 5 Assignment #13:(Ex.10.10 pp. 433-435)

Thu 30 **Review for Second Unit Exam.**

November

Tue 04 **SECOND UNIT EXAM--100 points. NO SCANTRON NEEDED**

Unit III Analyzing Common Fallacies

Thu 06 PCT Chap. 5 pp. 173-195 and a handout on Fallacies and Gilovich Chap. 6

Tue 11 Gilovich Chap. 7 Assignment #12: Ex. 5.2 #1 to #15 pp. 196-197 and Ex. 5.3 #1 to #5 p.198

Thu 13 PCT Chap. 6 pp. 211-230 Assignment #4: Ex. 6.2 pp. 223-224 and also write out the truth tables for the tilde \sim , the wedge \vee , and ampersand $\&$, and the arrow \rightarrow

Tue 18 Read a handout on Bayes' Theorem and PCT Chap. 3 pp. 95-101 on diagramming and a handout on Probability and Premises

Thu 20 Assignment #11:Ex. 3.9 #3, #4, #5, #8, and #15.

Tue 25 **SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE—the Skeptical Inquirer assignment** Gilovich Chaps. 8 and Chap. 10

Wednesday November 26 to Sunday November 30—Thanksgiving Holiday**December**

Tue 02 PCT 129-139 **THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE--How Much Should You Trust These Experts? [POST-TEST???)**

Thu 04 Assignment #13: (Do Handout No. 24 Fallacy analysis problems #1-#12)

Last 30 minutes of class--THIRD QUIZ—50 points

Tue 09 Assignment #14: (Do remaining Handout No. 24 fallacy analysis items.) Begin review for the Final Exam

Thu 11 **Last Class Day.** Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM—170 points—COMPREHENSIVE plus 30 points for the three writing assignments for a total of 200. Roughly 85 points for Units I & II and 85 points for Unit III. BRING A SCANTRON.

Friday 19 Grades due in the Registrar's office by 9:00 am.

DEADLY FAULTS OF GRAMMAR, SPELLING, AND USAGE

The purpose of this list of deadly faults is to help you rid your writing of faults that people will judge you severely for having committed. In several cases I suggest mnemonics--use them if they help, create your own they don't.

1. Apostrophes--please do not write "it's" unless you mean "it is." You would not write "hi's" or "her's," so do not write "it's" when you mean "its." But **do** use the apostrophe to show possession as in "the first doctor's opinion."
2. The Latin phrase "et cetera" is abbreviated as "**etc.**"—**Not as** "ect." which does not pronounce correctly.
3. Proper spelling of "receive" and its relatives is helped if you remember "i before e except after c"
4. Surely it is not **too** much to expect that you remember that there are two o's in **too**.
5. In speech "could have" and "should have" are contracted to "could 've" and "should 've." Only the ignorant write the non-English "could of" and "should of."
6. How about trying to get straight "except" and "accept"? Perhaps mnemonics will help: "Everyone except Edward elected Elvira empress" vs. "Anthony accepted adversity admirably."
7. In the same vein, "The **E**instein **e**ffect **e**nded **e**verything" vs. "**A**nteaters **a**ffect **a**nts **a**dversely." If it helps, try to remember that "**e**ffect" is usually a noun, and "**a**ffect" is almost always a verb.
8. Notice the "try to" in the preceding sentence. Delete the nonsense phrase "to try and" from your speech and writing repertoire.
9. If you mean "they are" when writing a contraction, then write "they're." Then all you have to do is to keep straight the possessive pronoun "their" and the pointer word "there."
10. How about remembering "If you **lie**, I won't **believe** you"?
11. Do not use "criterion" and "criteria" unless you can remember that you can have only **one** **criterion**, but **criteria** are **many**. In other words, "criterion" is singular, while "criteria" is plural.
12. When you "**recite**" a poem you are "**citing**" it again. That is not the same as locating the building **site** where you first caught **sight** of the poem inscribed over a doorway.
13. Does it occur to you that if you omit one of the two R's in "occurred" you would wind up with something that rhymes with "cured"? And if there are two R's in "occurred," then how many should there be in "occurrence"?
14. Subject and verb should agree in number, so please do not say "he don't" or "they doesn't."