

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-16**

**Philosophy 1200-200&650: Reasoning and Critical Thinking**

**Fall & Winter Term 2015-16**  
**W 3:30-4:30**  
**TC 141**

**Instructors: Chris Viger & David Bourget**  
**STVH 4149**

**Fall Office Hours MW 10:30-11:30**

**Winter Office Hours W 1:30-3:30**

**519-661-2111 x85755**

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**DESCRIPTION**

This course offers students important critical reading, writing, and thinking skills for being successful at university and in the workplace. Students are taught criteria behind language use, which motivates the criteria of good reasoning. Based on these criteria students learn to represent the structure of complicated reasoning and how to assess it and construct it, with specific techniques for deductive and inductive reasoning. These methods are then applied to practical reasoning, particularly in the context of ethical decision making, as well as scientific and numerical reasoning. The course concludes by examining belief acquisition and the nature of bias using converging evidence from a number of research disciplines.

**TEXTS**

Critical Thinking: An introduction to the Basic Skills 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, W. Hughes and J. Lavery. Broadview Press (2015).

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand language as a representational system with pragmatic uses.
2. Learn to identify and represent the structure of complex reasoning, particularly in academic writing.
3. Learn specific assessments methods for deductive and inductive reasoning.
4. Apply methods of representation and assessment in the student's writing.
5. Understand reasoning more broadly in practical reasoning contexts.
6. Learn methods for evaluating scientific and numerical results as a non-specialist.
7. Learn to recognize multiple factors in belief formation and resulting biases.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Weekly Assignments	20%
Weekly Tutorial Participation	10%
Practice Exercises	10%

Short Critical Essay	10%
Midyear Examination (December)	20%
Final Examination	30%

### **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.