

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Philosophy  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016/2017

## Philosophy 1200 (200): Critical Thinking (Blended)

Full year 2016/2017, Class meetings: W 3:30-4:30, Room WL-258

Instructor:	Dr. Angela Mendelovici	amendel5@uwo.ca
Teaching assistants:	Mr. Erlantz Etxeberria Altuna	eetxeber@uwo.ca
	Mr. Matthew Howery	mhowery@uwo.ca
	Mr. Robert Munro	rmunro9@uwo.ca
	Mr. Daniel Viger	dviger2@uwo.ca

### Description

This course teaches a basic set of skills that will improve your ability to think clearly and rationally. It will help you avoid fallacies and inconsistencies, uncover implicit assumptions, and become aware of your own biases. These skills will help you identify and assess claims and arguments, such as those encountered in your coursework, in conversation, and online.

The course has a strong focus on hands on practice with immediate feedback, which is facilitated by its unique blend of online and in-class components:

- In-class components:
  - Attending one weekly one hour lecture
  - Attending one weekly one hour tutorial
- Online components:
  - Reading online modules
  - Viewing online presentations
  - Completing practice exercises (ungraded, credit given for completion)
  - Completing assignments (graded)

Note: There is also an exclusively online version of this course, which covers the same material. You may wish to consider whether an online or a blended course best suits your learning style.

### Readings

- Required readings: Selected modules from Joe Lau's Critical Thinking Web: <http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/> (free)
- Optional: Joe Lau. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking and Creativity: Think More, Think Better*. Wiley, 2011. (Hard copy available at bookstore and from publisher, E-text available from publisher)

## Requirements

Practice exercises (online)	10%
Assignments (online)	30%
Tutorial participation	10%
Midyear examination (December)	20%
Final examination	30%

## Objectives

This course aims to teach students to

- identify, understand, and evaluate claims and arguments,
- understand the difference between different types of claims and arguments,
- depict the structure of statements and arguments using symbolic and graphical tools,
- recognize rational and non-rational influences on belief formation, including biases,
- understand the importance and relevance of critical thinking skills, and
- know when to apply critical thinking skills in both everyday and academic contexts.

## Electronic devices

The use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices for course-related activities, such as accessing the reading modules or exercises, is permitted in class. The use of such devices for other activities is not permitted, except in cases of emergency (e.g., a dependent needs to contact you).

## Department policies

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://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.

## Mental health

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.

September 11, 2016