PHIL3420 - CRITICAL THINKING

Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: John Wright
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Consultation hours: tba

Semester: Semester 2 - 2007
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture

Brief Course Description
One set of skills required in any occupation are those of critical thinking and of evaluating the logical status of arguments. How can we tell the difference between valid and invalid arguments? How do we go about constructing arguments which we can know to be valid? These are the questions that form the focus of the course. The course is specifically designed to impart to students skills tested in the Graduate Skills Assessment Test.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
Exercises and notes will be placed on blackboard.

Course Objectives
(1) To impart to students skills in critical thinking and problem solving.
(2) To impart to students skills in critically evaluating and appraising the arguments of others.
(3) To impart to students the ability to construct valid arguments of their own.
Course Content
This course gives students skills in critical thinking about and evaluating ideas in a range of fields. Questions to be considered include: what makes an argument valid? How can we tell valid from invalid arguments? How can we construct valid arguments?

Assessment Items

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Examination:</th>
<th>2 by 1 hour tests, worth 19% each</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Examination:</th>
<th>A 2 hour examination at the end of semester, worth 62%</th>
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<td>Formal</td>
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Assumed Knowledge
NIL

Callaghan Campus Timetable
PHIL3420
CRITICAL THINKING
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2007
Lecture Wednesday 15:00 – 17:00 [MC110]

Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items
Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.
Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html) for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

Changing your Enrolment

The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2007
For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2007
For Trimester 1 courses: 16 February 2007
For Trimester 2 courses: 8 June 2007

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.
To change your enrolment online, please refer to

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html

Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

Callaghan campus

• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

City Precinct

• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

Ourimbah campus

• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty websites

Faculty of Business and Law


Faculty of Education and Arts

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/

Faculty of Health

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/

Faculty of Science and Information Technology

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/

Contact details

Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie

Phone: 02 4921 5000

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah

Phone: 02 4348 4030

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students

Resolution Precinct

Phone: 02 4921 5806
Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:  

**Alteration of this Course Outline**

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

**Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards**

**Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards**

**Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards**

**STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS**

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator. Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

**Studentmail and Blackboard**

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Further Information**

Details about aspects of the course are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

WEEK ONE:
The main purposes of the course.
Basic Concepts. General lay out of area.
  *Argument and rhetoric
  *The study of argument.
    *Pure Logic/Applied Logic
    *Formal Logic/Informal Logic
    *Deductive logic, inductive “logic”, abduction

The rudiments of logic: logical form
  *Analogy with mathematics. (Leibniz)
  *Translation in to logical form.

WEEK TWO:
Logical form. The logical connectives.
Some main concepts in the theory of argument:
  *Common valid arguments
  *Common fallacies
  *Enthymemes
  *Identifying enthymemes.
  *Examples.

WEEK THREE:
Truth-Tables. The construction of truth-tables
  *Strengths of identifying valid arguments by truth-tables
  *Shortcomings of identifying valid arguments by truth-tables

WEEK FOUR:
Logical Deduction-I
The rudiments of logical deduction
  *The construction of enthymemes required to make an argument valid
    *Critical Analysis of arguments. Some worked examples.

WEEK FIVE
Logical Deduction - II
  *Worked examples

Introduction to quantificational logic.
  *The quantifiers “ “ and “ ”
    *Translation of English sentences in to the language of quantificational logic.

WEEK SIX:
Revision Lecture
WEEK SEVEN:
Quantificational logic - continued.
* Fallacies involving the quantifiers
* Ambiguities of scope

Modal concepts. The modal operators: Necessity and possibility. " " and “ ”.
* Valid modal arguments
* Modal fallacies
* Applications to arguments.

WEEK EIGHT:
Worked examples

WEEK NINE:
Inductive Logic. Evidential support weaker than deductive support.
* Induction. Mill’s methods
* Probability. Failures of transitivity with probabilistic reasoning.
* Abduction. Inference to the best explanation
* Simplicity. Ockham’s razor
* Ad hocness
* Quine’s desiderata.

WEEK TEN:
Revision Lecture

WEEK ELEVEN:
More argument forms and fallacies
* Begging the question
* Slippery slope arguments. The Sorites paradox.
* Onus arguments. Disagreements about onus.
* Appeals to authority
* Arguments appealing to the motives or moral character of the arguer. Ad hominem arguments.
  * Reductio ad absurdum (in the informal sense).
  * The inference from “a reason” to “the reason”.

WEEK TWELVE:
More advanced worked examples.

WEEK THIRTEEN:
Rhetoric.
* What is rhetoric?
* The status of rhetoric
* Common rhetorical devices
* Identifying rhetorical devices.