Course Overview

PHIL3420 - CRITICAL THINKING

Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: John Wright
Room: MC113
Ph: (02) 49 215182
Fax: 49 21 6933
Email: John.Wright@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Mon 3.30-5.30pm

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
There is no text for the course. A series of exercises will placed on blackboard each week, and answers will also be put on blackboard soon after. Opportunity will be given during class time to discuss the exercises.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2010

CTS Download Date: 15.7.10
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: Class</th>
<th>2 by 1 hour tests, worth 19% each</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examination: Formal</td>
<td>A 2 hour examination at the end of semester, worth 62%</td>
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Assumed Knowledge
NIL

Callaghan Campus Timetable
PHIL3420
Critical Thinking
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2010
Lecture Tuesday 15:00 - 17:00 [MC110]

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;

b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.
**Plagiarism** is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one's own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

**Turnitin** is an electronic text matching system. During 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 text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking);
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

**RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS**

Students can access the University's policy at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html)

**MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM**

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS**

*Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations* items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in **Late Penalty** (under student) at the link above.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

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

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html)

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

**Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:**

- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

*Late applications may not be accepted.* Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

**STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS**

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 contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, 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 on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability.

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

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

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit: www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie Student Hub</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
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<td>City Precinct</td>
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<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>The University of Newcastle</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Block, Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widderson Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Macquarie NSW 2444</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 49215000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore students</td>
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<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

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<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>Dean of Students Office</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In doing this they provide information and advice and help students resolve problems of an academic nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/</a></td>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/</a></td>
<td>Fax: 02 4921 7151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Dean-of-Students@newcastle.edu.au">Dean-of-Students@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards</th>
<th>University Complaints Managers Office</th>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html">www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html</a></td>
<td>The University is committed to maintaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards</td>
<td>and enhancing fair, equitable and safe work practices and promoting positive relationships with its staff and students. There is a single system to deal with all types of complaints, ranging from minor administrative matters to more serious deeply held grievances concerning unfair, unjust or unreasonable behaviour. <a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/complaints/">http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/complaints/</a></td>
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**General enquiries**

**Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie**

Phone: 02 4921 5000  
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

**Ourimbah**

Phone: 02 4348 4030  
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

**Campus Care**

The Campus Care program has been set up as a central point of enquiry for information, advice and support in managing inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviour.  

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This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

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**Studentmail and Blackboard:** Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

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.

**Important Additional Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details  
- Online copy submission to Turnitin  
- Penalties for Late Assignments  
- Special Circumstances  
- Return of Assignments  
- Preferred Referencing Style  
- Student Communication  
- Essential Online Information for Students
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
*Translation of English sentences in to the language of quantificational logic.

WEEK SIX:
Revision Lecture

*Class Test*

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

*Class Test*

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