

**PVAMU Course Syllabus for:
Philosophy 2303 – Critical Thinking
Division of Social Work, Behavioral and Political Sciences**

Division of Social Work, Behavioral, and Political Sciences

Brailsford College of
Arts and Sciences

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Office Hours:

**Course Location &
Class Meeting Days & Times:**

Course Abbreviation and Number: PHIL 2303

Catalog Description: (3-0) Credit 3 semester hours

Course is designed to develop students' ability to recognize and evaluate arguments. Focus will include:
The most frequently encountered fallacies and errors in reasoning; the use/abuse of statistics; and
principles of logic as applied to daily life.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1123

Co-requisites: none

Required Text: Howard-Snyder et al. (2009). The Power of Logic, 5th Ed., McGraw Hill, New York.

All other required texts and videos will be provided by the instructor on ecourses.

Online Videos:

Frontline: College, Inc. <http://video.pbs.org/video/1485280975>

Access to Learning Resources:

PVAMU Library:
phone: (936) 261-1500;
web: Bookstore: <http://pvamu.edu/pages/3585.asp>
University
phone: (936) 261-1990;
web: <https://www.bkstr.com/Home/10001-10734-1?demoKey=d>

Course Goals or Overview:

The objective of this course is to introduce the student to tools of critical thinking, textual analysis, and communication skills. Utilizing these skills, we will analyze philosophical and real-world issues.

Course Objectives/Accrediting Body

At the end of this course, the student will demonstrate problem solving skills and critical thinking skills in relationship to philosophical thought.

This course meets the core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

This course meets the core objective of **Critical Thinking** by requiring students to identify, analyze and synthesize arguments, test arguments for validity, and compose sound arguments. These tasks are performed through written, oral, and visual media.

Critical Thinking

This course meets the core objective of **Communication** by requiring students to write, speak, and visually represent sound arguments that they have composed. These requirements include both quantitative and qualitative data in spoken and representative form.

Communication

This course meets the core objective of **Social Responsibility** by requiring students to work in groups for some projects and tasks, which include open consideration of different group members' viewpoints, as well as viewpoints presented by the professor. Students must be responsible for being considerate of different viewpoints, especially with regard to debate.

Social Responsibility

This course meets the core objective of **Personal Responsibility** by requiring the students to identify, analyze, and synthesize causal arguments, in addition to composing their own causal arguments that relate directly to their goals and to ethical situations.

Personal Responsibility

Aligns with:

Alignment with Academic Program

1	Be able to recognize and apply basic patterns of logical reasoning within ethical contexts.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Critical Thinking
2	Be able to describe selected theories with meta-ethics and normative ethics, as well as selected arguments for and against those theories.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Communication
3	Demonstrate insight into their own ethical approach to moral decision making in reference to meta-ethical and normative ethical theory.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Personal Resp.
4	Define key concepts and terms associated ethical reasoning and ethical theory.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Critical
5	Be able to summarize the contribution of historically significant figures in the field of moral philosophy/ethics.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Thinking
6	Discuss in both oral and written discourse the ethical theories and issues explored in the course such as Virtue Ethics, Kantian Moral Theory, Utilitarianism, and Pragmatism.	Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Social Responsibility
.		Teach 1 and 2 Reinforce 3	Communication

Course Assignments & Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

Exams – 5 written and multiple choice exams will be administered throughout the semester. These have 10 questions and be based on the previous weeks' readings.

Weekly Comprehension Assignments – there will be weekly assignments (written and multiple choice) that are to be completed online or in class. These will be 5 questions each and based on that week's readings. These cannot be taken if missed.

In-class Presentation – each group must give one in-class presentation at the beginning of a scheduled class over that class's reading for the day. The presentation will be 20 minutes long and will include a summary of the reading, statistical and graphical data, an argument and at least 5 questions generated by the students.

Reading Assignments – daily readings designed to supplement and reinforce course material. These assignments will be taken from current sources and will pertain to current ethical, social, and cultural issues.

Class Participation and Course Rule-Following – daily attendance and participation in class discussions. In addition, all students must closely follow the course rules (see **Class Participation** and Dr. Tschaepe's List of Rules below).

Course Procedures

Exams

The student must complete all exams as indicated by the course syllabus. Exams will be both written and multiple choice. Exams will require the student to analyze, synthesize and evaluate arguments (both formal and informal). There will be no make-up exams offered unless official documentation for an absence is provided (**50%** of grade). Most exams are on ecourses.

Weekly Assignments

The student must complete all of the in-class writing assignments and provide a presentation for each writing assignment. Weekly assignments will cover specific argumentative forms, fallacies, and processes of evaluation covered in class. These assignments cannot be taken if missed during the allotted time (**10%** of grade). Many assignments are on ecourses. These will be announced in class. You must check ecourses regularly to see if there is a new weekly assignment.

In-class Presentation

This group assignment will be assigned in the middle of the semester. Each group is expected to present an argument concerning an ethical issue that involves cultural and social considerations, which will include statistical data and graphic representations as support for their argument.

Reading Assignments

The student is to complete all reading assignments as indicated by the course syllabus.

Class Participation

The class schedule and lecture topics lend themselves particularly to class dialogue and interaction. Class discussion should be informed participation based upon the class lecture and the assigned reading material for the day. The student's semester class participation average will constitute **30%** of the student's semester grade. Simply showing up for class every day will earn you a "C" for participation.

Grading Matrix

Instrument	Value (percentages)	Total %
Exams (written and multiple choice)	5 exams worth 10% each	50
Weekly Assignments (written and multiple choice)	10 assignments worth 1% each	10
In-class Presentation of an ethical issue	1 presentation	10
Class Participation/ Discussion/Following Rules	30% of grade	30
Total:		100

University Rules and Procedures

Disability statement (See Student Handbook):

Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in class should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal laws, a student requesting special accommodations must provide documentation of their disability to the SSD coordinator.

Academic misconduct (See Student Handbook):

You are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course and all other courses. Make sure you are familiar with your Student Handbook, especially the section on academic misconduct. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures.

Forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.
2. Academic misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism.

Nonacademic misconduct (See Student Handbook)

The university respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires campus conditions that do not impede their exercise. Campus behavior that interferes with either (1) the instructor's ability to conduct the class, (2) the inability of other students to profit from the instructional program, or (3) campus behavior that interferes with the rights of others will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures.

Sexual misconduct (See Student Handbook):

Sexual harassment of students and employers at Prairie View A&M University is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Attendance Policy:

Prairie View A&M University requires regular class attendance. Excessive absences will result in lowered grades. Excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, may result in a student's course grade being reduced or in assignment of a grade of "F". Absences are accumulated beginning with the first day of class.

Student Academic Appeals Process

Authority and responsibility for assigning grades to students rests with the faculty. However, in those instances where students believe that miscommunication, errors, or unfairness of any kind may have adversely affected the instructor's assessment of their academic performance, the student has a right to appeal by the procedure listed in the Undergraduate Catalog and by doing so within thirty days of receiving the grade or experiencing any other problematic academic event that prompted the complaint.

**Philosophy
2303
Schedule
Fall 2013**

Week	Reading
1	Syllabus; Handouts/Videos provided by instructor on e-courses Introduction: What is critical thinking and why is it important? Video, Frontline: College, Inc. http://video.pbs.org/video/1485280975
2	Chapter 1, Basic Concepts Weekly Assignment #1: Definitions (written)
3	Chapter 2, Identifying Arguments Weekly Assignment #2: Arguments and Nonarguments (multiple choice) Weekly Assignment #3: Well-crafted Arguments (multiple choice)
4	Chapter 2 continued Weekly Assignment #4: Argument Diagrams (written) Exam #1: Multiple Choice exam consisting of identifying and evaluating valid arguments.
5	Chapter 3, Logic and Language Weekly Assignment #5: Using Definitions to Evaluate Arguments (multiple choice)
6	Chapter 4, Informal Fallacies Weekly Assignment #6: Fallacies of Irrelevance (written) Weekly Assignment #7: Fallacies of Ambiguity (written)
7	Chapter 4 continued Exam #2: Multiple Choice exam that requires students to identify and label fallacious arguments. MIDTERM EXAM
8	Chapter 5, Categorical Logic: Statements Weekly Assignment #8, Immediate Inferences (multiple choice)
9	Chapter 6, Categorical Logic: Syllogisms
10	Chapter 6 continued Exam #3: Written examination consisting of composition of syllogistic arguments in standard form.
11	Chapter 7, Truth Tables Weekly Assignment #9, Symbolizing English Arguments (written)
12	Chapter 7, Truth Tables continued Exam #4: Multiple Choice exam consisting of identifying and evaluating symbolized arguments.
13	Chapter 8, Statement Logic: Proofs Weekly Assignment #10, Equivalence Rules (multiple choice)
14	Applying Critical Thinking to Ethical Decision-making In-class Presentation: 2-5 minute presentation of an ethical argument pertaining to current cultural and social issues, followed by written peer-evaluation of form.
15	Review for Final Exam Final Exam: Written essay consisting of a 1-2 page argument concerning an ethical subject chosen by the professor.

Assignment Guidelines and Formatting

1. General Information

Complete syllabus can be downloaded/printed from e-course page content page for the class

Dr. Tschaepe's Office: Woolfolk 316

Dr. Tschaepe's Email: MDTschaepe@pvamu.edu

Students are responsible for all required readings/viewings for the class. Attendance Policy: Attendance will be taken each day via sign in.

2. Grading criteria: 5 Examinations (each exam = 10% of grade); 10 short assignments (each assignment = 1% of grade); In-class Presentation = 10%; Participation = 30%.

3. Examinations

Unless otherwise noted, examinations will be available on the ecourses website for this specific course and section.

Grading Scale:

90-100: A

80-89: B

70-79: C

60-69: D

0-59: F

Make-up examinations will be in essay format.

Time for Make-up examinations must be arranged within 5 days after the examination, which the student missed, and the student must provide official documentation for absence.

Make-up examinations will be taken in Dr. Tschaepé's office or in an examination room with a proctor present.

Only those students who have a valid excuse (University Excused Documentation, Doctor's note) will be permitted to take the make-up examination.

If the student has not made up the missed examination within one week of the exam, that student will receive an automatic F for the examination.

4. Class Reading

Each student must read all of the readings required for each class *before* that particular class as indicated by the syllabus.

Evidence of not having done the reading will detract from the student's participation grade.

5. Attendance: Attendance to each class is mandatory. Students cannot pass the class without attending.

College of Arts and Sciences Student & Staff Aspiration Statement

The faculty and staff of the College of Arts and Sciences at PVAMU are committed to providing the best possible quality education to its students. To that end, we will work hard to prepare the students for success by setting the proper academic environment and background necessary to facilitate learning. In order for us to be successful, there are some basic expectations our students must demonstrate. These expectations are a simple ingredient to foster camaraderie and '*esprit de corps*' in every class and classroom on campus. Additionally, these are lifelong fundamental learning skills to better prepare students for success in America's job market.

CAS student expectations:

- You are expected to come to class prepared and on time.
- Higher education is an investment in your future, to that end; you must endeavor to be properly equipped for class. (i.e. School supplies, text, and other supporting materials).
- Resolution of any classroom issues (i.e. Grades, course materials, etc) should begin with the instructor.
- If you must leave early, notify the instructor before the class begins, sit by the door, and exit quietly.
- Be considerate of your fellow classmates; please turn off all phones, pagers and other electronic devices.
- Do not talk to other students during lecture. If you have a question or a comment on the subject being discussed, address it to the instructor directly.
- Walk quietly through the hallways, classes in other rooms may still be in session.
- Please refrain from eating, drinking, sleeping in class, using profanity, and engaging in any form of horseplay in the classroom it is disruptive to your fellow classmates.
- Be respectful, civil, polite and considerate when dealing with you professors as well as your fellow classmates.
- Student attire is based on personal preference and taste. The rule of thumb is simple, if it projects a statement which is offensive to others, then maturity should dictate that it is probably not a good idea to wear in class.
- Enthusiasm is infectious, a smile and positive attitude will go far to motivate and charge your professors and fellow classmates.

