

PHL 212: Critical Thinking
University of Tampa, Spring 2007

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Course Objective: This course is designed to strengthen students' skills in reasoning about problems and issues of everyday life by helping them to distinguish between good and bad arguments. Students work to achieve these goals through reading and discussion of course materials. Some of the topics to be considered include the structure of inductive arguments, rhetorical fallacies, critiques of media reports and advertising, and the connection between logic and belief.

Required Text*: Kahane and Cavender, *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric* 10th ed. (Wadsworth, 2006) ISBN: 9780534-626044

* = There will be other readings assigned, available for download on my website. They are denoted on the schedule below with an '[E]'

Course Schedule:

All dates and content scheduled below are tentative and subject to change by the Instructor!

DATE	ASSIGNMENT	TOPIC
15 Jan:	No class, MLK	
17 Jan:	Introduction	
22 Jan:	Kahane, p. 1-19; Ex. 1-1 and 1-2	Arguments
24 Jan:	Kahane, p. 22-29, 38-45	Background Beliefs
29 Jan:	Kahane, p. 47-70	Fallacies of Evidence
31 Jan:	Ex. 3-1	
5 Feb:	Kahane, p. 73-89	Inductive Fallacies
7 Feb:	Ex. 3-2	
12 Feb:	Kahane, p. 91-109	More Inductive Fallacies
14 Feb:	Ex. 5-2 and 5-3	
19 Feb:	TBA	
21 Feb:	TBA	
26 Feb:	Review	

28 Feb:	Midterm	
5-7 Mar:	No class: Spring Break.	
12 Mar:	Kahane, p. 119-141	Impediments
14 Mar:	TBA	Impediments
19 Mar:	Kahane, p. 145-68	Language Games
21 Mar:	TBA	Language Games
26 Mar:	Kahane, p. 229-259	Media
28 Mar:	TBA	Media
2 Apr:	Kahane, p. 263-309	Advertising
4 Apr:	TBA	Advertising
9 Apr:	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" [E]	
11 Apr:	James, "The Will to Believe" [E]	
16 Apr:	Media Projects	
18 Apr:	Media Projects	
23 Apr:	Media Projects	
25 Apr:	Media Projects	
30 Apr:	Review for Final	
2 May:	Final Exam (3:45-5:45)	

Evaluation:

One main point of evaluation is (at least) one presentation and a short paper critically analyzing rhetorical or persuasive methods in media reports or advertising, which I will call the 'media project.' The media project is designed to provide the student with application of some of the skills learned throughout the semester. Guidelines for this assignment to be announced. In addition, there will be two exams given during the regularly scheduled class time (dates subject to change):

- ◆ Midterm Exam: 28 February
- ◆ Final Exam: 2 May

Anyone who cannot take either exam must make arrangements to make it up at least one week prior to the scheduled exam date. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "F" for said exam.

The following weighting will be used to calculate your grade:

Attendance and Homework "controls"	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Media Project(s)	20%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	30%

Expectations, Suggestions and Mandates for an efficient class:

1. Please arrive to class on time and expect to stay the entire duration of the class. If this is an impossibility, please make every attempt to notify me in advance of tardiness or absence.
2. Especially true in philosophy more than most other areas of study, diligence is important. The difficulty of the subject is indirectly proportional to the amount of work put into the course. Expect to have up to five hours a week of reading and practice in order to get an "A" for the course. Additionally, for these reasons, attendance is of vital importance.
3. Please come to class prepared (i.e., any reading assigned read, any questions concerning exercises or lectures prepared, etc.)
4. Please be respectful of each other in the class. There will be times when students disagree about a topic discussed in class. This is a didactic process, not a combative one.
5. Due to the great excess of material and limited time in which we must over ground, please do not create a disruption for those people who are attempting to learn. Disruptions include blurting out answers, name calling, chiding each other, snoring, etc. Laughing at the Instructor's jokes is obviously exempted from this policy. In addition, personal audio devices (except those in use to record lectures) and loud crunching snack foods are prohibited from the classroom. ***PLEASE TURN OFF your cellphones in class.***
6. Please feel free to make mistakes. We all will from time to time, even your omniscient instructor.
7. Please feel free to make use of my office hours. Waiting until the last moment in the semester to catch up is not advisable. I am excellent at fixing small problems, but horrendous at fixing large ones. The only difference between small and large problems is time.
8. Have fun! The material is only as dry as you make it out to be. Sharpening one's mind can be an exhilarating process.