

PHIL 100
Reasoning: An Introduction to Critical Thinking

Winter 2022

CRN 12455, Section AB4

Tuesdays 8:30-11:20, Room ABA 360

Professor: Dr. Joseph Carew
Contact: Joseph.Carew@ufv.ca

Office Hours:

By appointment on Zoom due to Covid restrictions

The University of the Fraser Valley is located on the unceded territory of the Stó:lō peoples. We gratefully acknowledge our ability to live and work on the traditional territory.

Academic Calendar Description

Good reasoning is the basis for successful thought and action. This course introduces methods for creative and successful reasoning such as analyzing and evaluating evidence, recognizing different forms of arguments, and applying innovative, critical thinking to both practical and theoretical issues.

Detailed Course Description

Reasoning can be defined as the process of thinking about something logically. When we reason, we therefore endeavor to draw conclusions based on information, facts, or data in such a way that the evidence that we appeal to is intended to support our conclusions. While reasoning is the primary method used in science, philosophy, and law (as well as other disciplines), it is also something we use in our day-to-day lives—indeed, often without realizing it. We use it when we mull over a point in our heads, talk out a problem with friends, try to understand whether an opinion we hear voiced is right or wrong, or even watch videos on YouTube. In short, whenever you wonder whether a belief of any kind is justified, you are engaging in reasoning because you are analyzing and evaluating beliefs, or the statements they occur in, by determining whether there is a convincing argument to be made for them.

In this course, we will study skills that relate to good reasoning. These skills require and develop the attitude of critical thinking, which can be understood as the unbiased consideration of beliefs. We will examine what makes for good and bad reasoning and how we can employ these skills to assess the evidence people give to back up their beliefs via arguments (e.g., in conversations, social media, advertisements, and political speeches). We will look at, among other things, the following elements: how to recognize, analyze, and evaluate arguments; how to spot fallacies; and how to effectively make different kinds of arguments. The course will take examples from academic and everyday contexts to demonstrate the importance of good reasoning and critical thinking. In so doing, we will also emphasize the social and political implications of the ability to reason well and think critically.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be better equipped (1) to give good reasonings for their beliefs and (2) identify when the reasonings provided by themselves or others for their beliefs are bad. As such, students will find resources to assist them in making more informed judgments and decisions, all the while learning how to become better readers, writers, and speakers.

In particular, upon completion of the course students will be able to:

- Distinguish between arguments and other forms of persuasion.
- Identify arguments in a variety of real-life and academic contexts (e.g., by identifying implicit premises and conclusions).
- Recognize different forms of arguments (e.g., deductive and non-deductive).
- Use key concepts of reasoning (e.g., truth, validity, soundness, and relevance).
- Identify common instances of faulty reasoning.
- Learn how to express their reasonings more convincingly.
- Learn to engage in unbiased, objective analysis and evaluation.

Texts

The following textbook is required and is the basis for coursework. It is available through UFV's bookstore.

- Ronald Munson and Andrew Black. *The Elements of Reasoning*. 7th edition. United States: Cengage, 2017.

Student Evaluation

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Four Short Assignments | 20% |
| • First Exam | 40% |
| • Second Exam | 40% |
| • Optional Final Exam | <i>See below for details</i> |

All assignments and exams will be made available via Blackboard. They are **open-book** and **asynchronous**. I will post detailed overviews of each assignment and exam, as well as study guides for each exam, as we proceed through the course.

Assignments:

There will be a total of four short assignments—two before the first exam and two before the second exam. These are designed to help ensure that you understand the material and know how to properly complete the exercises.

Exams:

A combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The first test is on material from the first part of the course and the second test is on material from the second part of the course.

Optional Final Exam:

The final exam is **optional** and **cumulative**, meaning it covers material from the entire course. Each exam is worth 40%. The two **highest** marks count toward your final grade.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 11): Introduction to Critical Thinking

Week 2 (January 18): Recognizing Arguments

- Chapter 1 (1-14)

Week 3 (January 25): Analyzing Arguments

- Chapter 2 (15-29)
- Deadline for Submitting Standard Form and Implicit Inferences Assignment

Week 4 (February 1): Deductive Arguments

- Chapter 3 (30-36)

Week 5 (February 8): Non-Deductive Arguments

- Chapter 3 (37-50)
- Deadline for Submitting Evaluating Arguments Assignment

Week 6 (February 15): First Exam

- Chapters 1-3

****Reading Week: February 20-27****

Week 7 (March 1): Valid Argument Forms

- Chapter 4 (51-65)

Week 8 (March 8): Valid Argument Forms, Continued

- Chapter 4 (51-65)

Week 9 (March 15): Fallacies

- Chapter 8 (127-152)
- Deadline for Submitting Valid Argument Forms Assignment

Week 10 (March 22): Fallacies, Continued

- Chapter 8 (127-152)

Week 11 (March 29): Using Critical Thinking To Write Better

- Chapter 12 (206-214)
- Deadline for Submitting Fallacies Assignment

Week 12 (April 5): Review

- Chapters 1-4, 8, and 12

Week 13 (April 12): Second Exam

- Chapters 4, 8, and 12

Course Guidelines and Rules

- 1 *Email Format:* emails to the professor must indicate your name, student number, and the course number with section number. Please provide a course-specific subject line. I will respond within 2 business days.
- 2 *If you miss a test or assignment,* you must contact the professor within 48 hours. If you are excused (for medical reasons, bereavement, etc., as determined by the professor on a case-by-case basis), you must reschedule the test or discuss a plan to make up for it with the professor.
- 3 *Late assignments:* any assignment handed in late will be penalized by 5% per day for a maximum of 7 days. Late assignments after this point will not be accepted, except at the professor's discretion.

Institutional Procedures and Policies

Students registered in UFV courses should be aware of the following institutional procedures and policies:

About Covid, and returning to campus: please consult the official [UFV Return to Campus webpage](#).

Daily Assessment: All individuals entering UFV campus spaces are currently required to [conduct a self-assessment health check](#).

If you are sick: The option of requiring a doctor's note to document a short term illness is suspended. Please do the following:

- Do not come to campus.
- Contact your instructor to explain your situation.
- Submit a [student declaration of absence form](#) to your instructor and work together on a plan for you to make up any missed learning activities or assignments. This applies to both online classes or scheduled face-to-face classes.
- Communicate with your instructor if you are unable to complete the course due to illness and request an [Incomplete Grade Contract](#).

Guidelines for suspected or confirmed Covid case on campus: Please familiarize yourself with [this document](#), which provides the necessary guidelines for how to deal with confirmed or probable cases of covid on campus.

Attention: If you communicate to a UFV staff or faculty member by email, Blackboard Course Messages, or phone that you have Covid, being tested for Covid, or exposed to Covid, UFV staff or faculty will complete a [Priority Access to Student Supports \(PASS\) referral](#) and Student Services will follow-up with you to assess your situation.

Priority Access to Student Supports (PASS): UFV faculty and staff may use the PASS program to connect you to supports and resources to help you succeed in your courses. Such assistance may include putting you in touch with an academic advisor, financial aid, a counsellor, or another resource. PASS referrals are also used for reporting positive cases of Covid-19, as well as for those who may have to self-isolate as a result of contact. If your instructor is concerned about your progress, he/she may refer you to PASS. The referral is treated confidentially and is sent because your instructor cares about your progress and success. Your response to PASS is entirely voluntary. Instructors will let you know they are making a referral. If you do not wish your instructor to make a referral to PASS on your behalf, please let them know by using your UFV email.

Visit ufv.ca/student-services/PASS for more information.

UFV Academic Policies

For a full list of UFV policies please refer to the [University Secretariat website](#). Below is an overview of policies that directly relate to your success:

Grading: All undergraduate students at UFV are evaluated using the same grade scale:

A+	90-100	B	73-76	C-	60-62
A	85-89	B-	70-72	D	50-59
A-	80-84	C+	67-69	F	<50
B+	77-79	C	63-66		

All students who are admitted to, or declare, a program or program option require a [minimum program grade point average \(PGPA\) of 2.00](#) (3.00 for graduate level) on all courses taken at UFV that are used to meet program requirements.

Academic Misconduct: UFV Policy 70 includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, impersonation, improper access to examination materials, falsification or unauthorized modification of an academic document/record, resubmission of work, improper research practices, obstruction of the academic activities of another, and aiding and abetting.

Attendance Policy: UFV Policy 62 states that instructors may withdraw students who do not attend the first class and penalize lack of regular attendance. Instructors are expected to advise students of penalties at the start of term.

Audit Policy: UFV Policy 108 explains that a student intending to audit a course must do so before 30% of the course is complete. Please refer to [Important Dates](#).

Final Exams: UFV Policy 46 explains that final exams are scheduled by the institution during the pre-determined final exam period. Students must be available for the entire exam period and should not make travel or other plans which conflict with this schedule. Instructors are entitled to require that students take all examinations at the times scheduled.

Final Grade Appeals: UFV Policy 217 outlines the appeal process for final grades. All appeals

must be made within 14 days of the final grade becoming available.

[Pre-requisites: UFV Policy 84](#) states that the minimum grade required for a prerequisite course is C- unless another grade is stated.

[Safe Student Learning Community: UFV Policy 204](#) states “Students are required to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner, consistent with the university mission, policies, and regulations, and in compliance with federal, provincial, and municipal laws.

Students will be held accountable for their actions whether acting alone or in a group.” Further information can be found on the [Safe Student Community website](#).

[Withdrawal: UFV Policy 81](#) states students may choose to withdraw from a course without penalty before completing 60% of the course. Students withdrawing before they have completed 30% of the course will not receive a “W” on their transcript; students withdrawing after completing 31% to 60% of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. A “W” has no academic penalty and is not counted in the student’s GPA. After 60% of the course has been completed, students must apply for [Late Withdrawal](#). Please be aware of [semester withdrawal deadlines](#).