

# Critical Thinking

## (Philosophy 7 Section 2907)

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 Santa Monica College  
 Phil Adjunct Off: T/Th 9:30-11

Spring 2009, T-Th 8-9:20AM, Rm HSS 156  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Critical thinking skills are skills in making good judgments. These skills are indispensable for practical success, but more importantly for one's development as a responsible and happy human being. Your judgments affect everything you think, say, and do. This course covers the logical principles of sound reasoning that can be applied to our everyday concerns as citizens, parents, consumers, business people, etc.. It can help students more clearly understand the nature of reasoning, language, and communication. With consistent practice what is offered here can improve skills of reasoning, communicating and decision making, as well as promote better understanding, greater autonomy, and a more adequate world view.

Course topics will include;

- 1) The distinctions and relations between: logic and truth, logic and emotion, and logic and reasonableness,
- 2) The centrality of our attitudes, habits, and biases in the opinions we hold, our reactions to others, and how we think.
- 3) Faulty conceptions of truth replaced with the idea of well-reasonedness
- 4) The nature of interpretation and how to overcome problems of meaning
- 5) Recognition and use of basic patterns of reasoning in deductive and inductive arguments and explanation.
- 6) How to better recognize and avoid common fallacies (errors in reasoning)
- 7) Critical thinking is an ethical issue insofar as poor reasoning has negative consequences for others.
- 8) It is sometimes erroneously believed that we cannot judge people's values and feelings as better or worse, as more or less appropriate or inappropriate, that we can only reasonably argue over facts, but not over matters of value because "values are too subjective" or "too difficult to argue about" or "feelings can never be wrong. They "just are." We can however, make reasonable value judgments and judge whether feelings are warranted, justified, or appropriate.

**Note:** A) If you drop the class, do so officially or you could receive an F. **Drop Deadlines: 3/8 w/o W, 4/12 w/W, 5/17 w/approval**  
 B) You are subject to exclusion if you miss more than 4 hours. Following an absence, find out what you missed.  
 C) Late arrival or early departure: sit near the door. After arriving, do not leave and re-enter class except for emergencies.  
 D) **Beepers/cell phones** should be turned off **before** entering class.  
 E) Please see me first for help or complaints.

**TEXT:** Pickard, D., *Logic, Truth, and Reasoning: A Textbook in Critical Thinking*, 2002/2008. (P)

**GRADING:** Course grades will be determined by: Four exams, 100 pts. each on the Pickard text. Only *one make-up* exam with 5-10% deducted from high scores. Possible Quizzes. Allowable absence: 3 hours per semester unless you are getting an A or B.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment DUE</u>
2/17	Introduction	
2/19, 2/24	Logical Consistency, Key Terms, Importance of Critical Thinking	P 1
2/26, 3/3-5, 3/10	Truth, Belief	P 2
3/12, 3/17 (3/19 no class)	Argument Analysis and Evaluation	P 3 1 <sup>st</sup> Part
	<b>EXAM 1</b> (3/24)	<i>Review P 1-3</i>
3/26, 3/31	Argument Analysis and Evaluation	P 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> Part
4/2, 4/7, 4/9	Language and Meaning	P 4
4/13- 4/19	Spring Break	
	<b>EXAM 2</b> (4/21)	<i>Review P 2-4</i>
4/23, 4/28	Evaluating Deductive Arguments: Categorical Syllogism	P 5
4/30, 5/5, 5/7	Evaluating Deductive Arguments: Hypothetical & Disjunctive Syllogisms	P 6
	<b>EXAM 3</b> (5/14)	<i>Review P 5-6</i>
5/26, 5/28	Detecting Pseudo Arguments: Fallacies	P 7
6/2, 6/4	Detecting Pseudo Arguments: Fallacies	P 7
6/9	<b>EXAM 4 &amp; COMPREHENSIVE FINAL, Make ups: 3:30-6:30PM</b>	<i>Review P 7</i>

**This outline is subject to revision. Carefully follow announcements in class or online of any changes.**