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ARTS1362

Critical Thinking for Today's World

Term Three // 2020

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Markos Valaris	m.valaris@unsw.edu.au	Virtual office hours (via Moodle): Thursday 12-1. Face-to-face meetings by appointment (and depending on public health advice)	Morven Brown 339	9385 2360

School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

Location: School Office, Morven Brown Building, Level 2, 258

Opening Hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Critical Thinking is a skill that allows you to evaluate, analyse and synthesise information gathered by observation, experience, reflection and communication. In a world that is saturated with information, critical thinking is crucial in deciding what to believe and what to do. As such critical thinking skills are essential to the conduct of a responsible and meaningful life, a successful professional career and successful studies. Critical thinking skills include knowing how to identify and assess arguments, how to construct your own good and persuasive arguments and how to communicate them, and how to recognise common pitfalls of reasoning and rhetorical tricks meant to mislead you. This course draws on examples from politics and policy debates, media and communication as well as ordinary life. It provides tools that can be useful in any program of study.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Use a variety of techniques to identify and reconstruct arguments.
2. Use a variety of techniques to assess the quality of reasoning.
3. Analyse, and assess different types of reasoning.
4. Construct logically structured and clearly expressed arguments.
5. Recognise and explain common pitfalls of everyday reasoning.
6. Seek out, identify, and synthesise information in order to defend or criticise a thesis or point of view.

Teaching Strategies

This course uses an online mode of delivery, through a mix of recorded lectures and interactive online activities. Lectures will present new material. Students will then have the opportunity to deepen their understanding through online collaborative activities.

Assessment

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Online quiz	10%	19/10/2020 11:59 PM	1,2,3
Argument Analysis and Evaluation	50%	25/10/2020 11:59 PM	1,2,3,5,6
Formal Exam	40%	Formal Exam Period	1,2,3,4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Online quiz

Start date: 12/10/2020 06:00 PM

Details:

This is a mid-term online quiz that covers weeks 1-4. You will be asked to answer 20 multiple choice questions.

Feedback will be given online via Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Assessment 2: Argument Analysis and Evaluation

Start date: 05/10/2020 07:00 AM

Length: Max: 1200 words

Details:

Use the concepts and methods developed in the course to analyse and evaluate the arguments in the text or set of texts assigned by the instructor. Your analysis should combine argument maps/diagrams and text. Total length should not exceed 1200 words.

Feedback will be via individual comments on Moodle, as well as model maps.

Additional details:

Analyse and evaluate the argument of ONE of the two assigned texts.

Read carefully both texts, and select **one** of them to analyse. (You do not have to agree with the argument you choose to analyse.) What is the argument's conclusion? What are the premises that are meant to support it? Remember that arguments can have hidden premises. Make sure you identify them.

Present the structure of the argument in diagram form. Make sure you clearly identify what is meant to be a reason for what. (You can draw the diagram using Word, or you can insert it as a picture.)

Evaluate the argument. Are all the steps valid? Is the argument sound?

Present and evaluate the **strongest objection** to the argument that you can think of. This can be your own, or drawn from the other text. (This need not be diagrammed.) Explain how the objection is meant to work. Does it challenge the validity of the argument, or only its soundness? Do you think the objection is successful?

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Formal Exam

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 2 hours

Details:

The final exam will cover material from the entire course, and have a multiple choice format.

The final exam must be taken in person, on campus, during the formal examination period.

It will be 2 hours in length.

Feedback will be given via a numerical grade. Further feedback available upon request and by appointment. This is the final assessment for attendance purposes.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
O Week: 8 September - 9 September	Online Activity	Introductions: introduce yourself to your virtual class-mates!
	Online Activity	Online Quiz: do you know the rules and requirements of this course?
Week 1: 14 September - 18 September	Module	Unit 1: Introducing Critical Thinking Watch mini-lectures 1-4. Complete 2 associated quizzes.
	Reading	Suggested: Nisbett, <i>Mindware</i> , Chapter 1 (available through Moodle) Blackburn, <i>Relatively Speaking</i> (available through Moodle)
	Online Activity	Virtual Introductory Session: Monday 14 September 4 pm (through Blackboard Collaborate on Moodle)
	Online Activity	Discussion Forum: Reason and the passions
	Seminar	Monday 4-5 PM: Live session. Introduction to the Course (online, on Moodle, via Blackboard Collaborate).
Week 2: 21 September - 25 September	Module	Unit 2: Analysing Arguments Watch mini-lectures 1-4. Complete 2 associated quizzes.
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 3 and part of Chapter 5 (pp. 79-89). Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
	Online Activity	Discussion Forum: Appeals to authority
Week 3: 28 September - 2 October	Module	Unit 3: Evaluating Arguments Watch mini-lectures 1-4. Complete 2 associated online quizzes.

		Make sure you read the "Veteran Suicides" article (available on Moodle) before watching lecture 4!
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 5 (pp. 90-110). Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
	Online Activity	Discussion Forum: Check my work!
Week 4: 5 October - 9 October	Module	Unit 4: The Balance of Reasons Watch mini-lectures 1-5. Complete 3 associated quizzes.
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapters 13 and 17. Available at UNSW bookstore/library. Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas"
	Online Activity	Discussion Forum: Prepare for the face-to-face review session
	Assessment	Argument Analysis Assessment Opens
Week 5: 12 October - 16 October	Seminar	Monday 4-6 PM: Review Session 1 (online, on Moodle, via Blackboard Collaborate). Make sure you are prepared for the online quiz and the Argument Analysis assessment!
	Module	Unit 5: Elements of Logic Watch mini-lectures 1-8. Complete 4 associated quizzes. There are 3 handouts (pdf, Moodle) summarizing important information.
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 6 (pp. 113-128 only). Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
	Assessment	Mid-term quiz (covers Units 1-4): open from 12 October
Week 6: 19 October - 23 October	Assessment	Mid-term quiz closes 19 October. Argument Analysis Assessment due 25 October.
Week 7: 26 October - 30 October	Module	Unit 6: Putting Logic to Work Watch mini-lectures 1-5. Complete 3 associated quizzes.
	Reading	Suggested:

		Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 6. Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
	Online Activity	Discussion Forum: "if... then..." again
Week 8: 2 November - 6 November	Module	Unit 7: Probabilistic Reasoning (part I) Watch mini-lectures 1-5. Complete 2 associated quizzes. There is a handout (pdf, Moodle) summarising important information.
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 7 (pp. 239-251 only). Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
Week 9: 9 November - 13 November	Module	Unit 7: Probabilistic Reasoning (part II) Watch mini-lectures 5-7. Complete 2 associated quizzes.
	Reading	Suggested: Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, <i>Understanding Arguments</i> , Chapter 11. Available at UNSW bookstore/library.
Week 10: 16 November - 20 November	Seminar	Monday 4-6 PM: Review Session 2 (online, on Moodle, via Blackboard Collaborate). Make sure you are prepared for the final exam!

Resources

Prescribed Resources

All required resources for this course will be made available online, via Moodle.

Recommended Resources

The following book is recommended, and is available from the UNSW bookshop and library:

- Walter Sinott-Armstrong and Robert Fogelin, *Understanding Arguments*, 9th edition (Cengage Publishing)

This is a textbook on critical thinking, which covers much the same material as this course. It is written in easy and accessible language, and may help you follow the course. Relevant bits will be identified throughout the course. However, the course has been designed so as to allow you to follow without a textbook.

Course Evaluation and Development

This course will be evaluated using UNSW's myExperience system. Informal feedback, in the form of suggestions or comments are very welcome from all of you at any time during or after the course.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.