



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

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University



# ARTS1362

Critical Thinking for Today's World

Semester Two // 2018

## Course Overview

### Staff Contact Details

#### Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Markos Valaris	m.valaris@unsw.edu.au	Virtual office hours (via Moodle): Thursday 3-4. You can also meet me in my office every thursday, 12-1	Morven Brown 339	5 2360

### School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

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

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

Phone: +61 2 9385 1681

Fax: +61 2 9385 8705

Email: [hal@unsw.edu.au](mailto:hal@unsw.edu.au)

### Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, their request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the attendance protocols in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

## **Academic Information**

For essential student information relating to: requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; 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/>

## **Course Details**

### **Credit Points 6**

### **Summary of the Course**

Subject Area: *Philosophy*

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.

### **At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to**

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
Final Essay	35%	26/10/2018 11:59 PM	2,3,4,6
Final Exam	35%	Not Applicable	1,2,3,4,5
Online quiz	10%	This is an online quiz. It will take place on Tuesday 21 August	1,2,3
Argument Analysis	20%	24/08/2018 11:59 PM	1,2,3,4

## Assessment Details

### Assessment 1: Final Essay

**Start date:** Not Applicable

**Length:** 1500 words

**Details:** Your task on the essay will be to develop a case for a particular position on a set issue or topic. You will be given a topic for debate, as well as a collection of source materials. You will have to select your point of view, state a thesis, find evidence to support it, consider objections, and explain how those objections can be rebutted. The essay will require them to synthesise the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course, and especially through the online collaborative activities. The essay is expected to be 1500 words long.

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

### Assessment 2: Final Exam

**Start date:**

**Details:** The final exam will include a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. It will cover material from the entire course. The final exam must be taken in person, on campus, during the formal examination period. It will be 2 hours in length. This is the final assessment for attendance purposes.

**Submission notes:** This is an in-person, formal examination, that will be scheduled centrally.

**Turnitin setting:** This is not a Turnitin assignment

### Assessment 3: Online quiz

**Start date:**

**Details:** Throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to assess your own understanding of the

core concepts and methods discussed by means of formative online quizzes and other activities. There will also be a summative mid-term online quiz. 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 4: Argument Analysis**

**Start date:**

**Details:** You will be asked to use the concepts and methods developed in the course, to analyse and evaluate the argument of a text assigned by the instructor. Your analysis should combine an argument map (or diagram) and text (about 700 words). Feedback will be via individual comments.

## Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

## 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](mailto: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.

## Late Assessment Penalties

Students are responsible for the submission of assessment tasks by the required dates and times. Depending on the extent of delay in the submission of an assessment task past the due date and time, one of the following late penalties will apply unless special consideration or a blanket extension due to a technical outage is granted. For the purpose of late penalty calculation, a 'day' is deemed to be each 24-hour period (or part thereof) past the stipulated deadline for submission.

- **Work submitted less than 10 days after the stipulated deadline** is subject to a deduction of 5% of the total awardable mark from the mark that would have been achieved if not for the penalty for every day past the stipulated deadline for submission. That is, a student who submits an assignment with a stipulated deadline of 4:00pm on 13 May 2016 at 4:10pm on 14 May 2016 will incur a deduction of 10%.

### ***Task with a non-percentage mark***

If the task is marked out of 25, then late submission will attract a penalty of a deduction of 1.25 from the mark awarded to the student for every 24-hour period (or part thereof) past the stipulated deadline.

*Example:* A student submits an essay 48 hours and 10 minutes after the stipulated deadline. The total possible mark for the essay is 25. The essay receives a mark of 17. The student's mark is therefore  $17 - [25 (0.05 \times 3)] = 13.25$

### ***Task with a percentage mark***

If the task is marked out of 100%, then late submission will attract a penalty of a deduction of 5% from the mark awarded to the student for every 24-hour period (or part thereof) past the stipulated deadline.

*Example:* A student submits an essay 48 hours and 10 minutes after the stipulated deadline. The essay is marked out of 100%. The essay receives a mark of 68. The student's mark is therefore  $68 - 15 = 53$

- **Work submitted 10 to 19 days after the stipulated deadline** will be assessed and feedback provided but a mark of zero will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component (hurdle requirement), a student will be deemed to have met that requirement;
- **Work submitted 20 or more days after the stipulated deadline** will not be accepted for assessment and will receive no feedback, mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will receive an Unsatisfactory Fail (UF) grade as a result of unsatisfactory performance in an essential component of the course.

This information is also available at:

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

## Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- \* Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- \* Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- \* Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,
- \* Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including "When to Apply", "How to Apply" and "Supporting Documentation" please refer to the Special Consideration webstie:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>



## 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 information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

**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>)

# Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

## Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 23 July - 29 July	Web	<p><b>Introductory Live Session:</b> 23 July 3-4 PM. Log in via Moodle to meet your instructor and peers.</p> <p><b>Unit 1: Introducing Critical Thinking</b></p> <p><b>Online Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: What Is Critical Thinking? Thinking Fast and Slow</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: What Is an Argument?</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Arguments and Reasons</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Truth, Facts and Objectivity</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<p><b>Formative Quizzes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: What Is Critical Thinking?</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2 Formative Quiz: Statements, Arguments and Reasons</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<p><b>Discussion Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and Discuss Simon Blackburn's "Relatively Speaking"</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<p><b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 26 July, 3-4 pm</p>
Week 2: 30 July - 5 August	Web	<p><b>Unit 2: Analysing Arguments</b></p> <p><b>Online Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Identifying Arguments and their Conclusions</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Identifying Premises</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Analysing Complex Arguments</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Justifying One's Premises</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<p><b>Formative Quizzes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: Identifying Arguments and their Conclusions</li> <li>• Mini-Lectures 2-3 Formative Quiz: Argument Maps</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<p><b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 2 August, 3-4 pm</p>
Week 3: 6 August - 12 August	Web	<p><b>Unit 3: Evaluating Arguments</b></p> <p><b>Online Lectures</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Validity and Soundness</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Examples of Analysis and Evaluation</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Hidden Premises</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Putting it All Together: An extended example</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: Validity and Soundness</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3 Formative Quiz: Hidden Premises</li> </ul>
	Assessment	<b>Argument Analysis Assessment Assigned</b>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour: 9 August, 3-4 pm</b>
Week 4: 13 August - 19 August	Web	<b>Unit 4: Objections and Refutations</b>  <b>Online Lectures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Objections and Counterexamples</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Reduction to the Absurd</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Parity Reasoning</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Vagueness and Slippery Slopes</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5: Analogies and Disanalogies</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: Counterexamples</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2 Formative Quiz: Reduction to the Absurd</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3 Formative Quiz: Parity Reasoning</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4 Formative Quiz: Vagueness and Slippery Slopes</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5 Formative Quiz: Analogies and Disanalogies</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Discussion Forum</b>  Read and discuss excerpt from Judith Jarvis Thomson's "A Defense of Abortion"
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour: 17 August, 3-4 pm</b>
Week 5: 20 August - 26 August	Assessment	<b>Online Quiz: 21 August</b>
	Assessment	<b>Argument Analysis assessment due on 24 August</b>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour: 23 August, 3-4 pm</b>
Week 6: 27 August - 2 September	Web	<b>Unit 5: Elements of Logic</b>  <b>Online Lectures</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: The Point of Logic: Formally valid arguments</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Propositional Logic: Variables and connectives</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Truth-Tables and Truth-Conditions: Conjunction</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Truth-Tables: Disjunction and Negation</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5: Truth-Tables for Complex Formulas</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 6: An Example</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: Formally Valid Arguments</li> <li>• Mini-Lectures 3-6 Formative Quiz: Translations into Propositional Logic</li> <li>• Mini-Lectures 3-6 Formative Quiz: Truth-Table Exercises</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 30 August, 3-4 pm
Week 7: 3 September - 9 September	Web	<b>Unit 5: Elements of Logic (contd.)</b>  <b>Online Lectures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 7: The Truth-Functional Conditional</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 8: More on the Conditional: The Wason Selection Task and Confirmation Bias</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 9: Recovering Logical Form</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 7 Formative Quiz: More Truth-Table Exercises</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 9 Formative Quiz: Recovering Logical Form</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 6 September, 3-4 pm
Week 8: 10 September - 16 September	Web	<b>Unit 6: Elements of Logic - Tautology, Contradiction, Consistency, and Validity</b>  <b>Online Lectures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Tautology, Contradiction, Equivalence, Consistency</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Using Truth-Tables to Test for Validity</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Validity with Truth-Tables: Examples</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Beyond Truth-Tables: Conditionals and possible worlds</li> </ul>

	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1 Formative Quiz: Tautology, Contradiction, Equivalence, Consistency</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3 Formative Quiz: Using Truth-tables to Test for Validity</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 13 September, 3-4 pm
Week 9: 17 September - 23 September	Web	<b>Unit 7: Probabilistic Reasoning</b>  <b>Online Lectures: available from 17 September</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Why Probabilities?</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Basic Laws of Probability</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Conditional Probabilities and the Probabilities of Conjunctions</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: The Conjunction Fallacy</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quiz</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lectures 2-3 Formative Quiz: Basic Laws of Probability</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 20 September, 3-4 pm
Break: 24 September - 30 September		
Week 10: 1 October - 7 October	Web	<b>Unit 7: Probabilistic Reasoning</b>  <b>Online Lectures: Available from 1 October</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5: Base-Rate Neglect</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 6: Bayes' Law</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 7: Bayes' Law: An application</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5 Formative Quiz: Base-Rate Neglect</li> <li>• Mini-Lectures 6-7 Formative Quiz: Bayes' Law</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 4 October, 3-4 pm
Week 11: 8 October - 14 October	Web	<b>Unit 8: Statistical Reasoning</b>  <b>Online Lectures: Available from 8 October</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: Variables and Distributions</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: The Normal Distribution</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: The Gambler's Fallacy and the Law of Large Numbers</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 4: Reversion to the Mean</li> </ul>
	Online Activity	<b>Formative Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lectures 1-2 Formative Quiz: Variables</li> </ul>

		and Distributions • Mini-Lectures 4 Formative Quiz: Reversion to the Mean
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 11 October, 3-4 pm
Week 12: 15 October - 21 October	Web	<b>Unit 8: Statistical Reasoning (contd.)</b>  <b>Online Lectures: Available from 15 October</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 5: Statistical Significance</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 6: Pitfalls of Statistical Reasoning</li> </ul> <b>Optional:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 7: Estimation and Confidence Intervals</li> </ul> <b>Unit 9: Causation and Causal Reasoning</b>  <b>Online Lectures: Available from 15 October</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Lecture 1: The Concept of Cause</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 2: Correlation and Causation</li> <li>• Mini-Lecture 3: Causal Reasoning</li> </ul>
	Web	<b>Formative Quiz</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit 8, Mini-Lectures 5-6 Formative Quiz: Statistical Reasoning and its Pitfalls</li> <li>• Unit 9, Lectures 2-3 Formative Quiz: Correlation, Causation and Causal Reasoning</li> </ul>
Week 13: 22 October - 28 October	Assessment	<b>Final Essay Due 26 October</b>
	Online Activity	<b>Virtual Office Hour:</b> 25 October, 3-4 pm

## Resources

### Prescribed Resources

Required readings for this course will be made available through Moodle, as required.

### Recommended Resources

The following books are recommended, and are available in the UNSW bookshop

- Walter Sinnott-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.*

- Richard Nisbett, *Mindware: Tools for Smart Thinking* (Penguin)

*Richard Nisbett is a renowned psychologist. This is not a textbook, but rather a guide to critical thinking for anyone who is interested in the topic. Nisbett draws on his considerable expertise on the study of thinking, as well as his long career teaching at the University of Michigan, to discuss what works and what does not in trying to improve our thinking skills.*

### Course Evaluation and Development

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

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