

# PHL 201 A0: Critical Thinking

CRN#22527

RSN 133MTh10:00-11:20

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Land

Office: CLE B 331

Office Hours Tue 1:30-3:00 and by appt.

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## Course Description

we have good reasons for what we think and do. Having good reasons increases the probability that our beliefs are true and our actions successful. This in turn gives us greater control over our lives and improves the chances of accomplishing our goals individually and collectively. This course aims to develop critical thinking skills by introducing you to a set of principles for analyzing and evaluating arguments. The principles apply to a great variety of topics and contexts—for instance, to academic reading and writing, business, politics, and social interactions. Therefore, the course is not focused on a particular academic discipline. Instead, it develops key analytic skills that will serve you well in a wide variety of both academic and non-academic contexts. Topics to be covered include argumentation and inductive reasoning, common mistakes in reasoning, bias, experts, and scientific reasoning, among others. All of these topics will be treated informally and not technically, with a focus on ordinary language and familiar situations. In particular, we will not use any mathematical or formal logical techniques.

## Learning Outcomes

By

- constructing arguments to support your own claims
- x communicating effectively
- x reading academic texts and writing academic papers

To achieve these outcomes you will learn to

- x decide when to trust the opinion of others, including experts and media sources
- x assess the validity of arguments
- x identify mistakes in reasoning
- x identify cognitive biases and develop strategies for guarding against them
- x appreciate how scientific reasoning works

## Course Website

This course has an associated website on Uvic's D2L Brightspace tool. This will be used for assignments, communication, and to make available additional materials. You can access your customized D2L Brightspace

Textbook

## 1. Homework Quizzes

Each week without a major assignment (except the final week) will have a homework quiz. This is usually (but not always) a 10 question online quiz (typically a mix of short answer, T/F, and M/C).

- x You are required to complete

1. during the term when all course requirements can be completed by the student before the LQ VWUXFWRU PXVW VXEPLW WKH ILQDO JUDGHV WKHVH and
2. after the term has ended or when course requirements cannot be completed before final grades are submitted (including deferrals, extended deferrals, aegrotats, withdrawals under extenuating circumstances and backdated drops).

For additional details, please see [regulations](#) and [guidelines](#) on academic concessions. If you foresee or experience circumstances that prevent you from completing course



If you have a question about assignments, due dates, or other course policies, the syllabus should be your first resource. We will not respond to any emails that ask questions which are answered in the syllabus. Your second resource should be the discussion board, which is accessible through the course website. You are encouraged to use this feature to discuss questions about course mechanics as well as course content.

### Student Conduct

The University of Victoria is committed to providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of our community, including students, have both the right to experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment. For details on the rights and responsibilities this involves please read through [the Faculty Code of Professional Behaviour for Students](#). This document also contains links to applicable university policies. It is part of your responsibility as a student in this course to know your responsibilities as outlined in the code of professional behaviour (which covers, among other things, attendance, classroom behavior, online conduct in university learning systems, and academic integrity).

Intellectual property of materials on *D2L Brightspace*

You are responsible for what you submit. If an generated text turns out to include mistakes, you are responsible for including these in your assignment.

### Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you require academic accommodations you need to register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (<https://www.uvic.ca/accessiblelearning/index.php>). Please do so as early as possible. You can find information about academic accommodations through the Centre for Accessible Learning website.

### Significant Dates (<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>)

- x Sun, Jan 21: last day for 100% reduction of fees
- x Wed, Jan 23: last day to for adding second term courses
- x Sun, Feb 1: last day for 50% reduction of tuition fees. 100% of tuition fees will be assessed for courses dropped after this date.
- x Thu, Feb 2: last day for withdrawing from second term courses without penalty of failure

### Grading Scheme

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definition
90-100	A+	9	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
85-89	A	8	
80-84	A-	7	
77-79	B+	6	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
73-76	B	5	
70-72	B-	4	
65-69	C+	3	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities
60-64	C	2	

respectful, open-minded manner. If you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department.

For additional information regarding grades, please see the most recent edition of the [Uvic Undergraduate Calendar](#). All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to percentage scores. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference.

### Counselling Services

Your mental health is as important as your physical health. During the semester you might feel overwhelmed, lonely, or stressed about your academic performance. You might experience a personal or family tragedy. The University provides FREE counselling services (Check [www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/](http://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/) for more information).

### Course Experience Surveys (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.