

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations

Philosophy Programme
Third (Summer) Trimester, 2006

PHIL 123 (CRN 14512 and 13093) CRITICAL THINKING

Course Outline

Philosophy Programme

The Philosophy Programme is located on the fifth, sixth, and seventh floors of the Murphy Building (abbreviated 'MY'). The Philosophy Programme Office is located in Murphy 518, and has a direct line, (04) 463-5368.

Lecturer and Course Coordinator

Stuart Brock

Office: MY 701

Telephone: (04) 463-6970

Email: Stuart.Brock@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: by appointment

(NOTE: there will be at least one tutor available for consultation between 4:00 and 5:00 pm every day of lectures every weekday before the tests).

Class Times and Room Number

A detailed timetable is available on blackboard. It is also available from the Philosophy Programme Office (MY 518).

Additional Information

All course information and course announcements will be posted on blackboard.

Course Aims

This course aims to provide an introduction to the theory and practice of critical thinking. Students will learn how to evaluate arguments and weigh up the evidence in support of a conclusion. Students will also learn how to make rational decisions based on the hypotheses they come to believe after consideration of such arguments.

Course Objectives

Students who pass the course will be able to think creatively and critically. They should be able to making rational and independent decisions, and communicate their ideas clearly and effectively.

Course Content

PHIL 123 covers two related topics—theoretical rationality and practical rationality—and is taught through ten different modules. *Theoretical Rationality*: Truth and Other Perspectives; Argument Reconstruction; Argument Evaluation; Argument Diagramming; Fallacies and Errors in Judgment. *Practical Rationality*: Basic Decision Theory and Cost-Benefit Analysis; Probability and Statistical Reasoning; Decisions under Uncertainty or Ignorance; Creative Thinking and Problem Solving; Causation and Intervention Logic. A more detailed lecture outline is posted on blackboard.

Key Texts

Students must purchase the PHIL 123 course book, available at Student Notes.

Assessment

One assignment (worth 40%); and two tests (worth 30% each).

ASSIGNMENT: The assignment is due on Thursday January 18, 2007 before 4:00 pm. Assignments should be handed in to Sophia Zhao in the Philosophy Programme Office (MY 518). The assignment will require students to analyse someone else's argument (in an editorial, journal article, policy statements, etc.) using the methods and tools discussed in lecture. More details of the assignment are posted on blackboard. Late assignments will only be accepted if the student has legitimate excuse for failing to get it in on time. Requests for an extension should be made *before* the due date, and should be directed to the course coordinator. If the reason is medical, a doctor's certificate must accompany the request. An excuse will count as legitimate only if it can be demonstrated that you could not reasonably have been expected to hand the assignment in on time given your circumstances. The course coordinator will decide what is reasonable in these circumstances.

TESTS: After completing the ten modules, students should sit two short answer tests: one on theoretical rationality (TR), the other on practical rationality (PR). You have a choice as to when you sit the tests, but you may only sit one TR test, and only one PR test. Times and locations for each test appear below:

Theoretical Rationality Test:

Either: Monday December 18, 9:00-10:50 am, Hunter 323
Or: Tuesday December 19, 1:10-3:00 pm, Hunter 323

Practical Rationality Test:

Either: Monday December 18, 1:10-3:00 pm, Hunter 323
Or: Tuesday December 19, 9:00-10:50 am, Hunter 323

Students who miss a test will have the opportunity to sit a make up test only if they have a legitimate excuse for missing it. Requests to do a make-up test must be made as soon as possible after the test date, and should be directed to the course coordinator. If the reason is medical, a doctor's certificate must accompany the request. An excuse will count as legitimate only if it can be demonstrated that you could not reasonably have been expected to make it to the test given your circumstances. The course coordinator will decide what is reasonable in these circumstances.

Relationship between Assessment and Objectives

The two tests evaluate students' knowledge of the theory of critical and creative thinking. The assignment gives students an opportunity to apply that knowledge in an in-depth manner.

Workload

The workload per week will depend on how quickly a student hopes to complete the course. (This course aims to give students a significant degree of flexibility here.) The overall workload, however, should be roughly equivalent to any first year 100 level subject. The University's guideline for a 100-level twelve-week 18 point course is 12 hours per week, including class time.

Mandatory Course Requirements

Sitting a version of both tests and submitting an assignment are mandatory course requirements for PHIL 123.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is recommended but not required. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on missing material if they have missed a lecture. The lecturer will *not* cover material discussed in lectures on an individual basis.

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.