



School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations
Te Hunga Aro Whakamuri

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
Trimester 2, 2008

PHIL 123: Critical Thinking
CRN 13093

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS:

The Philosophy Programme's office is located in Murphy Building (abbreviated as MY) Room 518 and the direct phone number is (04) 463-5368.

Course Coordinator:	Stuart Brock	Tutor:	Matt Gers
Room:	MY 312	Room:	Murphy Building, MY 621
Phone:	463-6970	Phone:	463-5233 (extension 8556)
Email:	Stuart.Brock@vuw.ac.nz	Email:	matt.gers@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours:	Monday and Wednesday 10:00-12:00pm	Office Hours:	Thursday 1:00-2:00pm

Lecturer:	David Eng	Tutor:	Alice Monro
Room:	MY 716	Room:	Murphy Building, MY 705
Phone:	463-5699	Phone:	463-5233 (extension 8938)
Email:	David.Eng@vuw.ac.nz	Email:	Alice.Monro@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours:	By appointment	Office Hours:	Wednesday 3:00-4:00pm

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 4:10-5:00
Venue: McLaurin Building, MC102

Students are also strongly encouraged to sign up for weekly tutorials using S-Cubed. Information about S-Cubed can be found by clicking the course information icon in the blackboard course menu. Tutorials commence in the **second** week of the course.

COURSE CONTENT:

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students should be able to evaluate arguments and weigh up the evidence in support of a conclusion. The first test and assignment will examine this skill. Students should also be able to make rational decisions based on the hypotheses they come to believe after consideration of such arguments. The final exam will examine this skill.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

During the twelve teaching weeks of trimester, there will be four contact hours a week: three lectures and one tutorial. Independent working hours during teaching weeks should average at eight hours per week. Independent work during other periods (preparing for the test and exam, and writing up the assignment) should equal roughly 36 hours in total.

READINGS:

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

Texts are available from Student Notes. Students can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz, or email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS:

The assessment will be based on the following: one assignment (worth 40%); one test (worth 30%); and one final exam (worth 30%).

TEST: After completing the first six modules, students should sit a one-hour closed-book in-class test on that material. The test will be held during the usual lecture time (4:10-5:00) in MC102 on Monday September 1, 2008. The test will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and problem questions. More details about the test are posted on blackboard. Students who miss the 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. [30%]

ASSIGNMENT: The assignment is due on Friday September 19, 2008 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 a 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. [40%]

FINAL EXAM: After completing the last six modules, students should sit a two-hour closed-book exam on that material. The exam will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and problem questions. More details about the test are posted on blackboard. Information about the examination rules and timetable can be found at the following web address: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/exam-timetable.aspx>. [30%]

ATTENDANCE

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.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are no mandatory course requirements for PHIL 123.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information or notices about this course will be posted on Blackboard.

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:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

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 hardcopy or under “about Victoria” on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under “Course Outline General Information” at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support