

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

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
Trimester 1, 2009

PHIL 123: Critical Thinking
CRN 13093

STAFF:

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:	Robin Sutton
Room:	MY 312	Room:	Murphy Building, MY 621
Phone:	463-6970	Phone:	463-5233 (extension 8556)
Email:	Stuart.Brock@vuw.ac.nz	Email:	robin.aldridge-sutton@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours:	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 10:00-12:00pm	Office Hours:	Friday 11:00-12:00
Lecturer:	David Eng	Tutor:	Joanna Baber
Room:	MY 716	Room:	Murphy Building, MY 712
Phone:	463-5699	Phone:	463-5233 (extension 8959)
Email:	David.Eng@vuw.ac.nz	Email:	joanna.hbaber@gmail.com
Office Hours:	By appointment	Office Hours:	Monday 2:00-3:00pm
		Tutor:	Alistair Hamel
		Room:	Murphy Building, MY 621
		Phone:	463-5233 (extension 8556)
		Email:	alistair.hamel@gmail.com
		Office Hours:	Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm

TRIMESTER DATES

Monday, March 2, 2009 – Wednesday, July 1, 2009

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3:10-4:00
Venue: Hugh Mackenzie Building, HM206

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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Students should be able to evaluate arguments and weigh up the evidence in support of a conclusion.
2. 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.

COURSE DELIVERY

This course will involve three lectures per week, and one tutorial. Attendance is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. Students will also be encouraged to work in small groups outside of the class and to participate in discussions online through the blackboard course page.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

During the twelve teaching weeks of trimester, there will be four contact hours a week. 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 the midterm break, students should sit a one-hour closed-book in-class test on that material. The test is designed to partially assess how well students have met the first learning objective. The test will be held during the usual lecture time (3:10-4:00) in HM206 on Monday April 27, 2009. 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 May 15, 2009 before 4:00 pm. The assignment is designed to partially assess how well students have met the first learning objective. 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 test is designed to assess how well students have met the second learning objective. 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>. The examination period for first trimester 2009 runs from Friday 12 June to Wednesday, 1 July 2009 [30%]

PENALTIES

Late assignments will not be accepted and there will be no make up tests for those who miss the in-class test unless the student has a legitimate excuse (see above for more detail).

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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.