



SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 123: CRITICAL THINKING**

TRIMESTER 1 2010
1 March to 30 June 2010

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 1 March 2010 to 4 June 2010

Mid-trimester break: 5 April to 18 April 2010

Study week: 7 June to 11 June 2010

Examination/Assessment period: 11 June to 30 June 2010

Students who enrol in this course must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period.

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at the following url:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

LECTURERS

Stuart Brock
(Course Coordinator)

MY312

(04) 463-6970

Stuart.Brock@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: Mon10:00-11:00

David Eng

MY 716

(04) 463 5699

David.Eng@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: Tue10:00-11:00

TUTORS

David Gilbert

Janice Hunt

Udayan Mukherjee

Tutor contact details are available on the staff information page on Blackboard

Class times and locations

Lecture time: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 11:00-11:50

Lecture venue: Hugh Mackenzie 206

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 delivery

This course will involve three lectures per week, and one tutorial. Lectures and tutorials will run for 50 minutes. 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.

Communication of additional information

Additional information will be conveyed to students, for example via Blackboard.

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*: Basic Decision Theory; Probability and Statistical Reasoning; Decisions under Uncertainty or Ignorance; Creative Thinking and Problem Solving; Game Theory; Paradoxes of Rationality. A more detailed lecture outline is posted on blackboard.

Learning objectives

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. evaluate arguments and weigh up the evidence in support of a conclusion.
2. make rational decisions based on the hypotheses they come to believe after consideration of such arguments. The final exam will examine this skill.

Graduate attributes

As with all PHIL courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. For more details please consult our website www.victoria.ac.nz/phil/degrees/index.aspx

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 nine hours per week. Independent work during other periods (preparing for the test and exam, and writing up the assignment) should equal roughly 44 hours in total.

Readings

Students must purchase the PHIL 123 course book.

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from vicbooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Assessment requirements

The assessment will be based on the following: one assignment (worth 40%); one test (worth 25%); and one final exam (worth 35%).

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 (11:00-11:50) in HM206 on Tuesday April 20, 2010. The test will be composed of true/false, 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. [25%]

ASSIGNMENT: The assignment is due on Friday May 14, 2010 before 11:00 am. 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) or to the lecturer at the beginning of lecture that day. The assignment will require students to analyse someone else's argument 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 is designed primarily to assess how well students have met the second learning objective. The exam will be composed of true/false, short answer, and problem questions. More details about the exam 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 2010 runs from 11 June to 30 June. [35%]

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).

Mandatory course requirements

There are no mandatory course requirements for PHIL 123.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. His or her name and contact details will be posted on blackboard. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

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>

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

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

The AVC(Academic) 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. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx