



SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 123: CRITICAL THINKING**

TRIMESTER 2 2011
11 July to 12 November 2011

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 11 July to 14 October 2011

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2011

Study week: 17–21 October 2011

Examination/Assessment period: 21 October to 12 November 2011

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

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

LECTURER AND COURSE COORDINATOR

Stuart Brock

MY 701

(04) 463-6970

Stuart.Brock@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: By appointment

TUTORS

Udayan Mukherjee

Agata Orlowicz

Brendan Vize

Tim Newton-Howes

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

Class times and locations

Lecture time: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 13:10-14:00

Lecture venue: Maclaurin 101

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. Tutorial groups will be posted on blackboard on the Friday of the first week of the course.

Course delivery

This course will involve three lectures per week, and one tutorial. Thursday lectures will usually involve a mini-test on material covered in the previous week. 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 Prescription

This course provides an introduction to the theory 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

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.

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, which will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 4 to 22 July 2011. After week two of the trimester all student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order 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 nominated collection points at each campus. 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.

Additional Required Materials

Students will also be required to buy the computer program *Rationale* and use it for their assignment, and some tutorial exercises and mini-tests. The program is available to download at the following url: www.mindmuse.com.au/Thinking_Skill_Solutions/VUW.html.

The program usually costs \$69USD, but Victoria students enrolled in PHIL123 will be able to purchase it from this personalised webpage for the substantially reduced price of \$27.50NZD. Purchases should be made in the first week of the course. Be aware, though, that Rationale is PC software. If you have a Mac, you will need virtual software plus the Microsoft Windows operating system. If you do not own a PC or a Mac with Windows and virtual software, please see the course coordinator in the first week to make alternative arrangements.

Assessment requirements

The assessment will be based on the following: one assignment (worth 30%); eight mini-tests (each worth 5%); and one final exam (worth 30%).

TEST: On most Thursdays students will be required to complete a short test (approximately 20 minutes) on material covered the week before. The test will be designed to partially assess how well students have met both of the course learning objective. The tests will be held during the usual lecture time (13:10-14:00) in MC101. The test will be composed of one or more problem questions designed to get students to apply skills learnt the previous week. Each of a student's best eight test results will count towards his or her final grade. Each of these tests is worth 5% of the final grade. Tutorials will be designed to prepare students for the test that week. Students who miss any tests 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. More details about the tests are posted on blackboard. [40%]

ASSIGNMENT: The assignment is due on Monday September 12 at 13:10. The assignment is designed to assess how well students have met the first learning objective. Assignments should be handed in to the lecturer at the beginning of the lecture that day or to Sophia Zhao in the Philosophy Programme Office (MY 518) if they are handed in any earlier. The assignment will require students to diagram someone else's argument using the methods and tools discussed in lecture. Students will be required to use the argument software *Rationale* to complete their assignment, and are advised to keep a copy of their assignment. 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. More details of the assignment are posted on blackboard. [30%]

FINAL EXAM: After completing the course, students should sit a two-hour closed-book exam on all of the material covered in the course. The exam is designed to assess how well students have met both of the course learning objectives. 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 second trimester 2011 runs from 21 October to 12 November. Students who enrol in this course must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during this period. [30%]

Return of assignments

Initially all assignments and completed mini-tests will be returned in tutorials. Uncollected work will be available from the Programme office Monday - Friday between 2-3pm.

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 week and that person's name and contact details will be made available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class via 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>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.