



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 123: Critical Thinking

TRIMESTER 1 2013
4 March – 3 July 2013

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 4 March to 7 June 2013

Easter break: 28 March to 3 April 2013

Mid-trimester break: 22–28 April 2013

Study week: 10–14 June 2013

Examination/Assessment Period: 14 June to 3 July 2013

Students who enrol in PHIL123 must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Dr Stuart Brock
Room No.: MY701
Email: stuart.brock@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By Appointment

Contact details and further information about tutors is available on blackboard.

Class times and locations

Can be found on the Victoria website at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/subjects/coursecatalogue>

It is advisable to check the above for any changes to the timetable programme.

Lecture Time: Tue, Wed, Fri 10-11

Lecture Venue: Maclaurin LT101

Tutorials:

For Tutorial times and venue see the website below

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/lecture-timetable>

Teaching/learning summary

This course will involve three lectures per week, and one tutorial. Friday lectures will 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

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the Course Blackboard site.

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 who pass this 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.

Graduate attributes

As with all Philosophy 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

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes>

Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to the course throughout the trimester. This includes

weekly attendance at lectures and tutorials and revision for and completion of all set assessment tasks.

Group work

The course will involve a small group work component. The group project will be group assessed (i.e., all contributing members of the group will be assigned the same grade for the project). Group work will contribute to 5% of the overall assessment. It is also a mandatory course requirement that all students contribute to a group project. Details of the group project appear under 'assessment requirements.'

Readings – Set texts

Students must purchase the PHIL 123 course book. There will also be information about additional readings posted on the Blackboard course page.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre Foyer from 11 February to 15 March 2013. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks, Ground Floor Easterfield Building, Kelburn Parade.

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.

Materials and equipment

Students will 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, see the course coordinator as early as possible to be given assistance.

Assessment requirements

The assessment will be based on the following: one group project (worth 5%); one assignment (worth 30%); seven mini-tests (each worth 5%); and one final examination

(worth 30%). Students will also be required to complete an e-portfolio for the class (see Mandatory Course Requirements below).

TESTS: On most Fridays 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 objectives. The tests will be held during the usual lecture time (10:00-10:50) 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 seven 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 three or more tests, and have a legitimate excuse for missing them, will be assigned an average of their other grades for all except the first two tests missed (e.g., if you miss three tests and have a legitimate reason for missing all three, you will get 0 for the first two tests and the average grade for the third). 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 counts as reasonable. More details about the tests are posted on blackboard. [35%]

GROUP PROJECT: The group project is due on Friday April 12 at 10:00am. The project is designed to assess how well students have met the first learning objective. Projects should be handed into the course coordinator at 10:00am in Maclaurin LT101. If students wish to hand their project in at an earlier time, it must be submitted to one of the administrators in the Philosophy Programme Office (MY 518) and **checked off the PHIL123 project list**. The project will require students to work together in assigned groups to diagram an argument using the methods and tools discussed in lecture. Groups will be assigned in the tutorial of the week beginning March 18. Students will be required to use the argument software *Rationale* to complete their project, and are advised to keep a copy of their project. Late projects will not be accepted. Individual students who do not contribute to the group work and individuals that are part of a group that fails to hand in a project will be given an opportunity to hand in another make-up project. A make-up project will count towards the student's mandatory course requirements but will not be given a numerical grade (unless the course coordinator is satisfied that there was a legitimate reason for the failure to submit or contribute). More details of the project are posted on blackboard. [5%]

ASSIGNMENT: The assignment is due on Tuesday May 7 at 10:00am. The assignment is designed to assess how well students have met the first learning objective. Assignments should be handed in to the course coordinator at the beginning of the lecture that day. If students wish to hand their assignment in at an earlier time, it must be submitted to one of the administrators in the Philosophy Programme Office (MY 518) and **checked off the PHIL123 assignment list**. The assignment will require students to diagram someone else's

argument using the methods and tools discussed in lecture. The argument will be a recently published opinion piece chosen by the student (but not chosen by anyone else). Students will be required to use the argument software *Rationale* to complete their assignment, and are advised to keep a copy of their assignment. More details of the assignment are posted on blackboard. [30%]

FINAL EXAMINATION: After completing the course, students should sit a two-hour closed-book examination on all of the material covered in the course. The examination is designed to assess how well students have met both of the course learning objectives. The examination will be composed of true/false, short answer, and problem questions. More details about the examination 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 2013 runs from 14 June to 3 July. Students who enrol in this course must be able to attend an examination at the University during this period. [30%]

Penalties

Late submission of assignments will be penalised. For each week or part thereof of lateness, a late assignment gets a 5 point penalty, up to three weeks, after which the assignment will get a zero mark. (i.e. 1-7 days late a loss of 5%; 8-14 days late a loss of 10 %; 15-21 days late a loss of 15%, and after that a zero mark.) Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances. 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.

Groups that fails to hand in a project (and individuals who fail to contribute to group work) will be given an opportunity to hand in another make-up project. A make-up project will count towards a student's mandatory course requirements but will not be given a numerical grade (unless the course coordinator is satisfied that there was a legitimate reason for the failure to submit or contribute).

Mandatory course requirements

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- submit a project (as part of group work), and
- complete and engage reflectively with the eportfolio

Return of marked course work

Assignments, projects and tests will be returned during tutorials. If students fail to attend these tutorials in a given week, they may collect their assessment tasks from the tutors during their office hours.

Class representative

A class representative will be elected in the first week, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. 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>

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 (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic.