INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THINKING
PHILOSOPHY 49, Section: 79349, Location: Room 450
Spring 2013
MW 2:30 pm – 3:50 pm

Professor Rebecca Smith
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Office Hours:
M: 2:00 – 2:30 pm
T: 2:00 – 2:30 pm
W: 2:00 – 2:30 pm; 4:00 – 6:00 pm
TH: 10:30 – 11:10 am
And by appt.

Core Competencies
This class focuses on three of Cabrillo’s four core competencies:
I. Communication
II. Critical Thinking & Information Competency
III. (Not Applicable)
IV. Personal Responsibility and Professional Development

Course Objectives
Critically analyze arguments from a variety of sources utilizing the critical thinking techniques presented in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize the premise(s) and conclusion of an argument and whether or not the premise(s) provide grounds for the conclusion.
2. Distinguish between deductive and inductive arguments.
3. Distinguish between validity and invalidity. Recognize when a deductive argument is valid and when invalid.
4. Recognize the problem with a fallacious argument (whether formal or informal) and cite the particular fallacy committed in those cases in which the fallacy committed is one we have covered in class.
5. Present critical analyses of major philosophical problems via written work and class presentation. This consists of the explication of concepts and issues we have covered in the texts and lectures and the application of these concepts and issues to philosophical problems as dramatized in the particular films we will view and as encountered in your other course studies at Cabrillo, in the news.

Reading, Homework and Responsibilities
DON’T EMAIL ME IF YOU MISS CLASS, READ THE FOLLOWING AS TO WHAT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS AS A STUDENT IN THIS COURSE. The readings will be available online. I will provide the links for you on Blackboard. If you miss class it will be your responsibility to find out what we covered in lecture. Any PowerPoint lectures I do in class, I will post on Blackboard. Understand that by looking at these lectures, it still may not be altogether clear to you what we did in class. Therefore it will be your responsibility to discuss with another student what it is we covered and ask that student for her or his lecture notes. Then if you have questions with regard to these notes, you should come to my office hours. The point of this discussion here is that if you miss class, it is your responsibility to do some work here.
You should always read the material we will discuss that day before having come to class and be prepared to discuss it.

**Class Requirements**

Midterm: 200 points possible  
Final: 300 points possible  
Journal/Writing Exercises: 200 points possible  
Quizzes: 100 points possible  
4 Film Exercises: 100 points possible  
3 Roundtables: 1st: 30 points, 2nd: 30, 3rd: 40 = total 100 points possible  
3 Fallacy Findings: 1st: 30 points, 2nd: 30, 3rd: 40 = total 100 points possible  
3 Argument Clinics: 1st: 30 points, 2nd: 30, 3rd: 40 = total 100 points possible

All work is required and missing any assignment is sufficient grounds for failing the course regardless of your final point total, this will be left up to the discretion of the professor

**Grading Scale**

A: 1080 - 1200  
B: 960 - 1079  
C: 840 - 959  
D: 720 - 839  
F: below 720

**Midterm**

You can expect multiple-choice questions and possibly true/false or yes/no questions and possibly matching questions. **You will need to bring an aperson (light blue scantron, you can get them at the bookstore) to class on the day we have the exam. NO NOTES, NO BOOK ALLOWED. MAKEUPS WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, AND I DO MEAN EXTRAORDINARY (THINK APOCALYPSE). DOCUMENTATION WILL BE REQUIRED. MOREOVER, YOU CAN EXPECT THE MAKEUP TO GIVE YOU A HEADACHE, YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE IT IN MY SMALL OFFICE WITH ME BREATHING DOWN YOUR NECK, AND YOU CAN BET IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE ORIGINAL MIDTERM. ANYONE MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM AND WILL RECEIVE AN F.**

**Final**

You can expect multiple-choice questions and possibly true/false or yes/no questions and possibly matching questions. **You will need to bring an aperson (light blue scanron, you can get them at the bookstore) to class on the day we have the exam. NO MAKEUPS, NOT FOR ANY REASON. ANYONE MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM AND WILL RECEIVE AN F.**

**Journal/Writing Exercises**

These will be posted up on blackboard. You will have a period of two week in which to submit your answer. These will be short writing assignments, minimum of 250 words, maximum of 350 words. If you want me to look at a rough draft of your work, you must bring in a hard copy to my office and we will go through it during office hours.

Failure to submit your answer in the allotted time will constitute failure to complete the exercise. (That includes if Blackboard is down. You have three weeks in which to submit these so plan accordingly.)
It is your responsibility to plan ahead of time when it comes to figuring out what computer you will be working on. You should also arrange for a backup computer to use just in case you have difficulty with the first one. See Blackboard for access to computers on campus. You should provide yourself with more than one option.

**NO EMAILED SUBMISSIONS OR HARD COPIES AFTER THE ALLOTTED TIME WILL BE ACCEPTED. THEY WILL NOT BE READ.**

**Excellent writing assignments will consist of the following:**
They will tackle the assignment given and not stray from that assignment.
They will meet the word count (following the specified guidelines above).
The argument presented will be clear and coherent. You should be clear on what your conclusion is and the premises, which should provide support for your conclusion. The entire essay should be relevant to the argument you are presenting.
The essay will exhibit logical structure and flow. The writer will make logical connections between his or her sentences and develop his or her reasoning (an essay ought never to read like a grocery list). The essay will transition from one paragraph to the next.
The essay will have been adequately proofed, making no errors in grammar and punctuation.
The essay will exhibit a sophisticated understanding of the material (philosophical concepts and problems) we’ve covered in class as well employ a sophisticated use of vocabulary.

Excellent writing assignments will receive an *[asterisk]. Any and all asterisks will be considered when it comes to calculating a student’s final grade for the course and might warrant raising the student’s grade.

**Quizzes**
These will be up on Blackboard on specified Fridays for a 24-hour period. I will discuss how this will work in more detail in class.

**4 Film Exercises**
We will view films in the class and do group work, raising questions and developing arguments concerning the philosophical issues in the films. On a viewing date, there will be a sign-up sheet, which you will sign at the beginning of class. There will be a short reflective writing exercise, which you will submit at the end of class. You will receive full points as long as you perform both tasks. Once I begin class, you will not be able to sign-in, which means you will count as absent and will receive no points. **NO EXCEPTIONS, NO MATTER WHAT THE EXCUSE.**

**Movies**
We will watch, discuss and evaluate some movies relevant to the issues we are discussing. The viewing of the movie while perhaps not as rigorous as the reading of a philosophical text does require focus on your part. The movies will dramatize particular questions, concerns and/or problems, which we have been reading about in the texts and discussing in lecture. Our aim then will be to identify the philosophical import of the film and to analyze it in light of the texts and lectures. In the event that I assign a particular film and we are unable to watch all or any of it during class time, the student will be required to watch the film outside of class and come to class prepared to discuss it. The films might be difficult to watch due to some disturbing subject matter and scenes of both a violent and sexual nature. If any student has a concern about this she or he should come talk to me outside of class. That being said, a student’s concern does not negate the student’s responsibility for viewing these films. If any student feels (for whatever reason) that they cannot watch any of the films, they should drop the course. If a film is assigned, it is your responsibility and obligation as a student of this course to watch it. If you cannot meet this obligation, you should not be in this class. What follows is a list of the films.
This is only a possible list. Do not expect that we will watch all of these films or any particular one of these films. If we do, however, watch a film it will be chosen from this list.

Alfred Hitchcock’s *North by Northwest*
Christopher Nolan’s *Memento*
Harold Ramis’ *Groundhog Day*
Monty Python’s *The Meaning of Life*

### 3 Roundtable Presentations (300 word minimum – 350 word maximum)

You will come up with an example, which helps to clarify a philosophical issue or problem we have been covering in class. I will post the assignment up on blackboard. You will submit your argument supporting the case that your example is a good example of the problem on Blackboard; typing your answer in the submission box. There will be a specified date and time by which you must submit your example. (I will go through how you do this on Blackboard in class.) We will discuss some of the students’ examples in class. You should come to class prepared to discuss your example (failure to do so will result in point deductions). The discussion could take place during more than one class. Students will be invited to weigh in on the examples. Your score will be determined by the written assignment you submit and your attendance during the roundtable discussions. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. IF YOU ARE ABSENT YOU WILL HAVE FAILED TO ADEQUATELY COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED, NOT FOR ANY REASON.** You will count as absent for the discussion if you are not present by the time I begin the discussion.

### 3 Fallacy Findings (200 word minimum – 250 word maximum)

You will locate a fallacy we have covered in class (out there in the world, so to speak). You might find it in a textbook, in the news, or on a blog, for instance. I will post the assignment up on blackboard. You will submit your argument supporting the case that your example is a good example of the fallacy on Blackboard; typing your answer in the submission box. There will be a specified date and time by which you must submit your example. (I will go through how you do this on Blackboard in class.) We will discuss some of the students’ examples in class. You should come to class prepared to discuss your example (failure to do so will result in point deductions). This could take place during more than one class. Students will be invited to weigh in on the examples. Your score will be determined by the written assignment you submit and your attendance during the fallacy discussions. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. IF YOU ARE ABSENT YOU WILL HAVE FAILED TO ADEQUATELY COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED, NOT FOR ANY REASON.** You will count as absent for the discussion if you are not present by the time I begin the discussion.

### 3 Argument Clinics (200 word minimum – 250 word maximum)

These will involve you locating a particular argument (once again, out there in the world, so to speak) and presenting it to the class. There are a variety of sources from which you might locate the argument (e.g. from one of your other courses, one of your textbooks, the political arena, the news, etc.) I will post the assignment up on blackboard in the Assignments folder. You will submit your argument on Blackboard, typing your answer in the submission box. There will be a specified date and time by which you must submit your example. (I will go through how you do this on Blackboard in class.) We will discuss some of the students’ examples in class. You should come to class prepared to discuss your example (failure to do so will result in point deductions). This could take place during more than one class. Students will be invited to weigh in on the examples. Your score will be determined by the written assignment you submit and your attendance during the discussions. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. IF YOU ARE ABSENT YOU WILL HAVE FAILED TO ADEQUATELY COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED, NOT FOR ANY REASON.** You will count as absent for the discussion if you are not present by the time I begin the discussion.
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Students are welcome to run their examples/arguments by me in advance. I encourage you to do so, in order to make certain you are on the right track. But you should make a point of doing so early. If you contact me too close to when the assignment is due, I may not be able to get back to you in time.

Excellent writing assignments will consist of the following:
The following criteria for the journal/writing exercises. See section on this above.

Failure to complete any of the above work could result in a failure to pass the course even if you have an A on all the work you have completed. In other words, completion of all the work above is considered mandatory for passing the course.

Discussion: You are not graded on participation in the class. But participation has proved to be a good indicator of success in the course as it helps in comprehension as well as the student’s acquiring the skills necessary to good critical reasoning. I take participation into consideration at the end of the term. It can make a difference for a student whose performance places them on the border between two grades.

Extra Credit: There is none. Just do the work assigned to you. BUT, substantive and substantial contribution to our discussions will be taken into consideration when calculating your final grade for the course.

Academic Integrity
Students are responsible for doing their own work. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any work deemed not to be the student’s own will result in the following: (1) a failing grade (F) for the course, (2) dismissal from the course and (3) a frank discussion with me about the matter. There is a fourth possible consequence and that is that I will submit a report at which point disciplinary action will be taken. But I suspect #3 will be the most painful of the consequences of committing plagiarism. If I were you, I wouldn’t risk it. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center here at Cabrillo. They have general guidelines as to plagiarism and how to avoid it on their website. 

(www.cabrillo.edu/services/writingcenter/Plagiarism.html)
If you have any further questions or concerns come see me.

Writing Center
Speaking of the Writing Center, they are a great resource for students. They are located at Room 1060W of the Learning Resources Center on the third level, behind the library. I will refer students who I believe could benefit from the tutoring they provide. Don’t hesitate to come talk to me about this if you feel you might benefit from such help.

Attendance: The course is structured in such a way that requires regular attendance. Attendance alone will not assure you of a high grade or even a passing grade but missing frequently will almost assuredly lead to a poor one. Every student is expected to attend regularly.

Blackboard
A complete schedule of the course (i.e. what we will be doing on a particular day) will be posted on the Blackboard calendar. I will post the schedule month by month. You should
make a habit of checking blackboard frequently, certainly before you come to each class as I may periodically post announcements concerning the class.

Note: The Professor (that’s me) reserves the right to modify this syllabus as events warrant including the point scale above, which may be modified depending on the performance of the class.

**Classroom Decorum Guidelines**

We all must agree in advance to a code of behavior in the classroom that will promote an equal opportunity to learn for all students. Remember, we are only in class three hours per week. So let’s use our time wisely and agree to the following.

**Cell Phones and Beepers and Pagers:** Shut them off before you enter class. I’ll have to shut mine off too (and if I don’t, you have permission to call me on it, just don’t use your cell phone to do it).

**Class Participation:** During most classes you will have an opportunity to ask questions and respond to questions. I will call on you if you raise your hand. Just respect the time constraints of the class and that you are one of a number of students. Give other students equal opportunity and remember that sometimes dialogue may have to be cut short in order to get through the material.

**Arriving Late:** If you arrive late, just take your seat in as quiet a manner as possible and no need for excuses (unless they are particularly interesting ones that involve Marat Safin, Wynton Marsalis, Daniel Craig or Monica Bellucci). That being said, you should not make a habit of this. If you are considerably late consistently, I will consider dropping you from the course.

**Sleeping:** If you didn’t get a good night sleep, bring a double shot of espresso with you. In fact, if you did get a good night sleep, bring a double shot of espresso. In other words, try your best not to (i.e. slumber). Think of it this way, if you’re going to be sleeping wouldn’t you rather be doing so in the comfort of your own bed, with the lights dimmed and listening to some nice comforting music like Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin or the Doors? Rather than in an uncomfortable chair with harsh florescent lighting and my voice interrupting your dreams with talk of *red herring*? Of course if you absolutely must, be warned. Stay at the back of the room, no sleepwalking, no talking in your sleep unless it’s of philosophic import and by all means, snore quietly.

**Food:** I’ve got no problem with it so long as what you bring doesn’t pose a disruption to other students. Bringing a *little* something to eat and/or drink with you to class is fine with me so long as you take your trash with you and dispose of it in the trashcan, don’t make a mess at your desk and above all don’t talk with food in your mouth.