



**PHIL 2003: Critical Thinking**  
Winter 2018  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:05—5:25 p.m.  
Kailash Mital Theatre, Southam Hall

*Instructor information*

Dr. David Matheson  
Department of Philosophy  
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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00—4:00 p.m.  
(Note that my administrative obligations as chair of the department will occasionally require me to cancel my regularly scheduled office hours. If you don't find me in my office during these hours, feel free to email me for an alternative appointment.)

*Description & objectives*

Critical thinkers are skilled at distinguishing good and bad reasons for belief. Critical thinkers do not just uncritically believe whatever they are prompted to believe; they consider the reasons they have been given for belief, and believe when those reasons are good but withhold belief when the reasons are bad.

The main objective of this course is to introduce you to the basic principles of good and bad reasons for belief, so that you can become a critical thinker in whatever walk of life in which you find yourself. Having accomplished this main objective, toward the end of the course we will turn our attention to a secondary objective: to consider the ways in which critical thinking can be enhanced by, and enhance, your capacity for creative thought.

*Lecture attendance, lecture schemata & text*

Most of the material covered in this course will be based on my in-class lectures. Note, accordingly, that *lecture attendance is essential for this course*: you are expected to attend all the lectures and to take good notes. To assist you with the notetaking, I will post “lecture schemata” on cuLearn in advance of the associated lectures. These schemata are essentially just sets of incomplete lecture notes that you will be expected to fill in based on your lecture attendance.

Because this is university and you're all adults, I don't keep a record of lecture attendance. But don't be misled by this into thinking that you can regularly skip lectures and still do well in the course. And be forewarned: if you do skip lectures—if you miss them for anything other than a legitimate, verifiable reason (ask me in advance if you're genuinely unsure about what this means)—you're on your own when it comes to filling in the relevant lecture schemata: I won't help you fill them in after the fact.

As far as texts go, only one is required, and it's available at the University Bookstore:

Weston, A. & B. Stoyles. (2010). *Creativity for critical thinkers (Canadian edition)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### *Evaluation*

Your overall grade for the course will be determined by your performance on three in-class tests, as follows:

- Test 1: 35% of overall grade
- Test 2: 35% of overall grade
- Test 3: 30% of overall grade

These tests will take place on January 25, March 1, and March 27, respectively. There is no formally scheduled final examination for this course.

### *Schedule*

Jan 9 & 11	<i>Introductory</i> The importance of good reasons for belief. Arguments as reasons for belief. Detecting reasons for belief by identifying arguments.
Jan 16 & 18	<i>The elements of arguments</i> Atomic & molecular propositions. Logical operators. Conjunctive, disjunctive, negative & conditional propositions. Necessary & sufficient conditions. Categorical propositions.
Jan 23 & 25 ( <b>Test 1</b> )	<i>Argument structures</i> Simple & complex arguments. Arrow diagrams. Deductive & nondeductive arguments.
Jan 30 & Feb 1	<i>Assessing premise truth</i> Trustworthy & untrustworthy sources. Confirming & conflicting evidence. The method of counterexamples.
Feb 6 & 8	<i>Assessing deductive arguments</i> Deductive validity & logical form. Valid forms. Formal fallacies.
Feb 13 & 15	<i>Assessing nondeductive arguments</i> Nondeductive logical strength. Common types of nondeductive argument. Inference to the best explanation: the fundamental type?
<i>Winter Break</i>	
Feb 27 & Mar 1 ( <b>Test 2</b> )	<i>Informal fallacies</i> Begging the question. Appeal to inappropriate authority. Hasty generalization. Ad hominem. Post hoc. Distinction without a difference. False dilemma.
Mar 6 & 8	<i>Probability</i> The relevance of probability to premise truth and logical strength. Basic insights from the probability calculus: proportionality, joint probabilities & alternative probabilities.

- Mar 13 & 15 *Dealing with expert disagreement*  
The necessity of trusting experts. The prevalence of expert disagreement. Can a layperson ever have good reason to believe one disagreeing expert over another? Layperson heuristics for dealing with expert disagreement.
- Mar 20 & 22 *Thinking critically about moral matters*  
Cognitivism vs. noncognitivism. Particular moral propositions and general moral principles. Arguments for particular moral propositions. Arguments for general moral principles.
- Mar 27 (**Test 3**) & 29 *Creative thinking and its methods*  
The nature and value of creative thinking. Inviting exotic associations. Going public. Comparing and contrasting. Exaggerating. Mixing and matching. Trying prevention. Thinking laterally. Seeing opportunities.
- Apr 3 & 5 *Creative thinking for critical thinkers*  
Connecting creative and critical thinking. Generating good arguments of your own. Applying the methods of creative thinking to the assessment of arguments.
- Apr 10 *Review*

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2017-18)

### Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

### Deferrals for Final Exams:

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

### Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Religious obligation:** write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC

website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

### Important Dates:

Sept. 6	Classes start.
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes for Fall term and Fall/Winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 9	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 23-27	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for summative or final examinations in Fall term courses before the official examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of Fall term classes. <b>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</b> Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a Fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 8	Classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the Winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from Winter term courses or from the Winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 19-23	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 27	Last day for summative or final examinations in Winter term or two-term courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 30	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 11	Last day of two-term and Winter term classes. <b>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</b> Last day for academic withdrawal from Fall/Winter and Winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for Winter term courses.
Apr. 14-26	Final examinations for Winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 26	All take home examinations are due on this day.

### Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising">www.carleton.ca/academicadvising</a> ng 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/">http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/</a> 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735