



PHIL 2003A: Critical Thinking
Summer Term 2013
Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:35 a.m.-2:25 p.m.
2104 Canal Building

Instructor Information

Dr. David Matheson
 Department of Philosophy, 3A45 Paterson Hall
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 Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Description & Objective

We are constantly asked to believe things, both in everyday settings and in more esoteric contexts. Sometimes what we are asked to believe strikes us as supported by good reasons, sometimes by bad reasons, and sometimes by no clear reason at all. The main objective of this course is to introduce you to some basic tools for the formation of reasonable belief, by making explicit standards that govern your intuitive competence at recognizing good and bad reasons for belief, and thereby to sharpen your skills for independent, critical thought.

Lecture Schemata, Exercises & Supplementary Readings

There is no required textbook for this course; all relevant material will be presented in the class lectures. Your instructor will periodically post lecture schemata on cuLearn, to help ensure that you understand the core concepts from the lectures. These schemata will indicate the relevant core concepts, while leaving blank the details of the lecture discussions of them. Your instructor will also periodically post brief exercises related to examples discussed in the lectures, to help ensure that you can properly apply the core concepts.

Accordingly note that class attendance for this course is essential. Simply reading the posted lecture schemata and exercises alone will be a poor substitute for reading them in the light of the lecture discussions. You should not expect to do well in the course if you fail regularly to attend class.

The following, supplementary (but not required) readings will inform our approach to a few of the course topics. These supplementary readings are accessible to you through the MacOdrum Library's holdings, and your instructor will show you how to access them at the relevant times.

Goldman, A. (2001). Experts: Which ones should you trust? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 63, 85-110.

Harman, G. (1965). The inference to the best explanation. *The Philosophical Review*, 74, 88-95.

Jackson, F. (1984). *Petitio* and the purpose of arguing. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 65, 26-36.

Evaluation

Your overall grade for the course will be determined by your performance on a midterm and final examination, as follows:

Midterm examination: 40% of overall grade
 Final examination: 60% of overall grade

The midterm examination will take place in class on May 23. The final examination will take place during the early summer term examination period, June 21-26.

Calendar

May 7	Why reasonable belief matters Arguments as reasons for belief Detecting arguments
May 9	The elements of arguments Statements and truth-values Atomic statements Molecular statements Conditional statements Disjunctive statements Conjunctive statements Negative statements
May 14	Identifying argument structure Complex and simple arguments Deductive and nondeductive arguments
May 16	Assessing arguments Soundness, premise truth, and logical strength Assessing premise truth Trustworthy and untrustworthy sources Confirming and conflicting evidence Definitions and the method of counterexamples
May 21	Assessing deductive arguments Deductive validity and logical form Valid forms Formal fallacies
May 23	Midterm examination
May 28	Assessing nondeductive arguments Nondeductive logical strength and context Varieties of nondeductive argument and their pitfalls
May 30	Assessing nondeductive arguments (cont'd) Inference to the best explanation The most fundamental type? Data and competing explanations Adjudication heuristics for competing explanations
June 4	Informal fallacies Begging the question Appeals to inadequate authority, popularity, force, pity, and ignorance
June 6	Informal fallacies (cont'd) Slippery slope, hasty generalization, genetic, straw person, <i>tu quoque</i> , <i>ad hominem</i> , <i>post hoc</i> , distinction without a difference, equivocation,

	false dilemma
June 11	Moral reasoning The susceptibility of moral claims to reasoning Justifying particular moral claims Two kinds of general moral principle Justifying general moral principles
June 13	Expert disagreement The necessity of trusting experts The prevalence of expert disagreement Reasons for the layperson to trust disagreeing experts? Adjudication heuristics for trusting disagreeing experts
June 18	Review
June 21-26	Examination period Final examination (TBA)

Relevant Department of Philosophy and University Policies

Deferrals for term work

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Academic integrity

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the university's academic integrity standards, and to avoid violating and abetting other students in the violation of test and examination procedures. (See Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, Section 14 and especially Sub-section 14.12, <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>.)

Academic accommodation 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 for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC

website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

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

Important Dates

May 6	Classes start.
May 13	Last day for registration and course changes for early summer courses.
May 17	Last day for registration and course changes for full summer courses.
May 20	Statutory holiday, university closed.
May 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from early summer courses.
June 7	Last day to withdraw from full summer courses with a full fee adjustment.
June 18	Last day for early summer classes. 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 courses that end on this day.
June 18	Last day for academic withdrawal from early summer courses.
June 21-26	Final examinations.
July 1	Statutory holiday, university closed.
July 3	Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.
July 9	Last day for registration and course changes for late summer courses.
July 19	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from late summer courses.
Aug. 5	Statutory holiday, university closed
Aug. 15	Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for late and full summer term classes. 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 courses that end on this day.
Aug. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from late summer and full summer courses.
Aug. 17-22	Final examinations.

Addresses

Department of Philosophy:	3A46 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Paul Menton Centre:	500 University Centre www.carleton.ca/pmc 520-6608
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library www.carleton.ca/wts 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735