

Syllabus: Phil 195-10, Summer 2012  
Clear and Critical Thinking

Instructor: Richard Fry

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Office Hours: before and after class by appointment

Class meeting time: MTWR, 1:00-3:00PM

Meeting place: Walsh 491A

**Course Description:** What should we believe? One answer is that we should believe what we have reason to believe. Which reasons are good and which are bad? This will be the central question of this course. We will examine strategies for offering reasons, and the myriad ways they can go wrong. We will then turn to an examination of classic and contemporary debates in philosophy, purporting as they do to give us reason to believe certain propositions relating to the existence and character of God, the nature of our personal identity over time, the existence and knowability of an external world, and the nature of the mind. After this, we will turn to debates that arise in popular media today: we are offered reasons every day in the newspaper and on TV. We will examine the structure and character of these exchanges and see what kind of reasons they give us to believe their conclusions. Each student will be responsible for presenting on two pieces, one historical/philosophical and one contemporary/popular, with a final paper consisting in a written and extended version of one of these presentations.

**Required Texts:**

Personal Identity, ed. John Perry, 2nd Edition, University of California Press  
ISBN: 9780520256422

Debra Jackson & Paul Newberry, Critical Thinking: A User's Manual, Wadsworth  
ISBN: 9780495814078

Renee Descartes, Meditations, Objections & Replies, Hackett Publishing  
ISBN: 9780872207981

**The Honor Code and Plagiarism:**

You are expected and required to uphold standards of academic honesty in this course. Plagiarism of ideas or words is unacceptable. Familiarize yourself with what counts as plagiarism:

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>

The Honor Council (<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/>) adjudicates cases of suspected academic dishonesty. In effort to uphold this university's high standards, I will submit any and all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the Honor Council, who will investigate. Confirmed academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course.

**Policies:**

**You are responsible for being prepared for class.**

This includes reading assigned material, thinking about it so that you can ask intelligent questions and arriving on time. Because of the condensed nature of the course, no unexcused absences will be allowed.

**You are responsible for comporting yourself in an appropriate manner.**

This includes both actively participating in discussion as well as treating other members of the class with respect and courtesy. Laptop use is prohibited.

**You are responsible for turning in your work on time.** Each 24 hours or portion thereof that a piece of written work is late will result in the subtraction of  $\frac{1}{3}$  letter grade. All work more than a week late will receive an F. **Under some circumstances, it is possible to get an extension for written work**, or a reassignment of presentation day if it is impossible to submit the work or present on that day because of illness, injury or family emergency. **If you need an extension or reassignment**, email me *as soon as possible* with a brief description of your situation and how long you think it will take you to resolve the issue. I will then respond and we will work a timeframe out for the extension/reassignment. **Extensions must be requested before the assignment is due.**

Grade appeals: if you believe the work you submitted deserves a different grade than it received, you may ask *in writing* for reconsideration. Your request must be submitted *within one week*, but no sooner than *two days after* the assignment is returned. Your written request *must explain why* you believe the work deserves a different grade. Most appeals will not result in a change of grade, but if a change is made please note that the grade may be either higher or lower.

**Assignments and Assessment**

*Dates and details for these assignments will be distributed during the term.*

(1) **Test:** there will be one short written test covering materials from *Critical Thinking*. You will be expected to be able to identify, analyze and criticize arguments. This assignment is **worth 20%** of your grade.

(2) **Argument presentation, philosophical:** you will present on an argument from the history of philosophy. You will be expected to situate the argument in the surrounding philosophical text and context, talk through one way of viewing that argument, as well as reasons for and against viewing the argument that way. You will be responsible for leading the class through the associated text and moderating the discussion. This assignment is **worth 20%** of your grade.

(3) **Argument presentation, popular:** this assignment will be much the same as (2) above, but the work you present on will be from contemporary, popular media instead of the history of philosophy. You are not expected to defend the conclusion of the argument (and sometimes it's better if you don't have a strong opinion either way!) but you are expected to present the author's reasoning and any problems with it, as above. This assignment is **worth 30%** of your grade.

(4) **Written report:** for your final assignment, you will provide a short (3-4pp) written report that summarizes the best way of viewing the argument you presented on from (2) or (3) above and your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of that argument. This assignment is **worth 20%** of your grade.

(5) **Participation:** your participation in class, both its quantity and quality, will be **worth 10%** of your grade. Your completion and discussion of assigned homework will also figure in to your participation grade.

Class Schedule: Phil 195-10, Summer 2012  
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
4 <b>Introduction</b> (CT) Ch.1&2	5 <b>Arguments</b> (CT) Ch.3	6 <b>Diagramming and Fallacies</b> (CT) Ch.4&5	7 <b>Evaluation: Categorical</b> (CT) Ch.6&7
11 <b>Evaluation: Truth-Functional</b> (CT) Ch.8	12 <b>Evaluation: Inductive</b> (CT) Ch.9,10&11	13 <b>Review</b>	14 <b>Test</b>
18 <b>Philosophical Arguments:</b> <i>Meditations</i> 1 & 2	19 <b>Outlining &amp; Structure:</b> Arguments in <i>Meditations</i> 3	20 <b>Personal Identity Intro</b>	21 <b>Personal Identity's Beginnings:</b> Locke (& Perry) (in <i>PI</i> )
25 <b>Personal Identity Presentations:</b> Butler, Reid, Williams, Parfit, Hume (in <i>PI</i> ), Kant, Olson (handout)	26	27 Personal Identity Wrap Up / <b>Arguments in Culture Today</b>	28 <b>Conferences</b> for Presentation Prep
2 <b>Pop Culture Argumentation Presentations</b>	3	<b>4th of July</b> (class canceled)	5 Wrap Up, <b>Final Papers Due</b>

Book list: Jackson & Newberry - Critical Thinking (CT),  
Descartes - *Meditations*, Perry - Personal Identity reader (*PI*)

Resources: Phil 195-10, Summer 2012  
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*Philosophical Resources*

**The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:** <http://plato.stanford.edu>  
**Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy:** <http://www.iep.utm.edu>

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*Academic Resources*

**Academic Resource Center:** Leavey Center, Suite 335  
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu> and [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)  
The Academic Resource Center arranges accommodations for students with disabilities and provides assistance with study skills.

**Writing Center:** 217A Lauinger Library  
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu> and [writingcenter@georgetown.edu](mailto:writingcenter@georgetown.edu)  
The Writing Center provides one-on-one assistance with academic writing skills. Their website also has many useful links for improving your writing.

**Scholarly Research and Academic Integrity**

Resources are available at <http://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/academic-integrity/refresher-tipsheet>

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*Health and Wellness Resources*

**Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS):** Eastern Side of Darnall Hall  
(202)687-6985 and <http://caps.georgetown.edu>  
24-hour doctor on-call: (202)444-PAGE  
CAPS is a primary mental health resource assisting students in overcoming difficulties that interfere with the attainment of their personal and educational goals.

**Health Education Services:** 207 Village C West  
(202)687-8949 and <http://healthed.georgetown.edu>  
Health Education Services is comprised of health professionals who are available to help students deal with a range of health issues, including pregnancy, alcohol and drug issues, eating disorders, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and stress management. All services are individualized, confidential, and free for students.

**Student Health Center:** Ground Floor, Darnall Hall  
Appointments: (202)687-2200; General info: (202)687-4500  
<http://shc.georgetown.edu>