

Philosophy 57: Logic and Critical Reasoning Fall 2015

Instructor:	Nathan Osborne
Email:	nathan.osborne@sjsu.edu
Office and Office Hours:	FO 208, TuTh 12:15-1:15PM
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday Thursday 10:30-11:45AM
Location:	DMH 149B

Course Description:

This course is aimed at developing practical reasoning skills. Through the practice of argumentation in relation to current and classic controversies, this course is designed to improve your reasoning skills as well as your critical writing capabilities. Along the way, students will also explore informal fallacies, basic rules of deduction and induction, issues pertaining to the ethics of belief, and some general reflections on the political dimensions and promise of argumentation.

Course Goals:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between reasoning (e.g., explanation, argument) and other types of discourse (e.g., description, assertion)
2. Identify, analyze, and evaluate different types of reasoning
3. Find and state crucial unstated assumptions in reasoning
4. Evaluate factual claims or statements used in reasoning, and evaluate the sources of evidence for such claims
5. Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism
6. Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system
7. Locate, retrieve, organize, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information of relevance to the subject matter of the course in an effective and efficient manner
8. Reflect on and learn from past successes, failures, and come up with alternative strategies for problems that arise

GE/SJSU Studies Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate, orally and in writing, proficiency in the Area A3 Learning Outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. Locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.
2. Present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view.

3. Effectively locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of one's ideas.
4. Identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument.
5. Effectively distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).

Required Texts/Readings:

- *A Rulebook for Arguments* (fourth edition) by Anthony Weston
- Herbert Marcuse – “*An Essay on Liberation*”
- Phil 57 Course Pack

Any additional readings or handouts I will provide them via email or in class

Classroom Protocol:

A good philosophy class is centered not on a dull lecture and student regurgitation of information, but rather on dialog and debate in conjunction with a guided discussion designed to break down the readings into something more manageable. With this in mind, the class will have a strong emphasis on in-class discussion, and therefore attendance, preparation (having actually read the assigned reading), and participation will all be essential to your experience in this course and will make up a considerable portion of your final grade. We will work frequently in small groups, and it will be imperative that we all work together to foster a trusting and comfortable environment for everyone.

With that in mind, respect for one another is absolutely *essential* for this class. Feel free to disagree and debate with each other, but do so in a respectful manner. For example, try to refrain from interrupting others while they are talking, and remember to critique the *idea*—and not the *person*—you are debating. Coming to class and maintaining an open mind is also vital for good dialog to flourish.

Any disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated. Please feel free to email or speak to me if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the classroom environment. Similarly, I will speak to you if I perceive any problematic assumptions, biases, or prejudices that are making others uncomfortable.

Assignments and Grading Policy:

The class is broken into Four units.

In **Unit I** we will learn about the foundation for critical thinking – the argument. In this section we will learn about the basis of a valid argument, what comprises an argument, how to successfully construct an argument, the basic rules of logic, and finally we will explore the common logical fallacies that can be committed (all too often in current debates). This section will include a ***test*** on the logical fallacies and deductive arguments.

After learning about what a strong argument is, we will begin to study the difference between authentic (critical) and inauthentic (uncritical) thought.

Thinkers from **Unit II** will focus on how this plays out on an objective /societal level. We will explore various modern philosophers' radically different takes on the nature of mankind and how he should be governed. This section will be concluded with an in class film in which you will compose an **essay** engaging with the thinkers and their relation to the film.

Thinkers from **Unit III** will tend to focus on the individual. We will concentrate on the Existentialist branch of Philosophy and they approach truth and critical theory from the subjective standpoint; seeking to find individual truth and cultivate the self. In their world "God is Dead¹," and we will discover that such a statement is not as frightening or blasphemous as it seems and we will see why they believe it is in fact quite liberating. This section will also be concluded with an in class film in which you will compose an **essay** engaging with the thinkers and their relation to the film.

In **Unit IV** we will explore the dangers inherent in uncritical thought, especially in regards to the political realm. To help illustrate this we will explore one of the darkest hours in human history; and we will investigate the role uncritical thought played in it and how to potentially combat it.

Participation is a key component in your overall experience in the classroom, which is why it is being weighed so heavily. Participation is not merely showing up and sitting quietly (though a low attendance tends to correlate with a low participation grade); it is making your presence known by participating in class and small group discussions and in class writing assignments. The frequency of participation and quality of comments will be taken into consideration when assigning a grade (this does not mean you will be marked down for asking questions, on the contrary I encourage you to ask questions about anything you don't understand); what this deals with namely goes back to being respectful of others and staying on a *relevant* topic during class discussions.

With regards to **Absences** – they cannot be made up (though a family or medical emergency can potentially be excused. If something like this does come up please email me)

The **Final Project** will be centered on finding an example of philosophical critical theory today and analyzing it using at least one of the thinkers to back up your argument. In this way, you will demonstrate what you have learned throughout the course by relating it to the world in which you live.

→ **Late Assignments** will have a -1 point penalty for every day it is late and will NOT be accepted after a week past the original due date.

Grading Criteria:

A: Superior achievement; far exceeds demands of assignment.

¹ Save for Kierkegaard, as we shall see he was a committed Christian.

- B:** Goes beyond adequate achievement; exceeds demands of assignment.
- C:** Achieves assignment purpose adequately; fulfills assignment.
- D.** Problems outweigh strengths, does not quite fulfill assignment.
- F:** Problems overpower strengths, clearly does not fulfill assignment.

Grade Breakdown

Unit 1 Test: 15
 Unit 2 Paper: 20
 Unit 3 Paper: 20
 Unit 4 Assignment: 5
 Participation: 20
 Final: 20

Grading Scale:	
A (93-100)	A- (90-92)
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)
B- (80-82)	C+ (77-79)
C (73-76)	C- (70-72)
D (64-69)	F (0-69)

Total: 100 points

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all

infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html) is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to inspire them to become independent learners. The Center's tutors are trained and nationally certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). They provide content-based tutoring in many lower division courses (some upper division) as well as writing and study skills assistance. Small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring are available. Please visit [the LARC website](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/) for more information at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. The [Peer Mentor Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>

Philosophy 57: Logic and Critical Reasoning

The schedule is subject to change (with fair notice). If any changes are made I will notify you in class and/or via email.

Table 1 Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/20	- Introduction and Syllabus
2	8/25 8/27	- Critical Thinking with <i>Calvin and Hobbes</i> - Rulebook for Arguments (Ch 1,2,3, 4)
3	9/1 9/3	- Rulebook for Arguments (Ch 5,7,8,) - Rulebook for Arguments (Ch6)
4	9/8 9/10	- Rulebook for Arguments (Appendix I: common fallacies) - Rulebook for Arguments Conclusion / Test Prep
5	9/15 9/17	- Rulebook for Arguments Test - Le Guin: "Staying Awake" Groupwork
6	9/22 9/24	- Kant: "What is Enlightenment" - Habermas: "Notes on a Post-secular Society"
7	9/29 10/1	- Marcuse: <i>An Essay On Liberation</i> - Marcuse: Advertising (group-work)
8	10/6 10/8	- <i>Unit 2 Movie</i> Unit II Essay Assigned - <i>Unit 2 Movie</i>
9	10/13 10/15	- Kierkegaard: "Modes of Existence" Lecture - Kierkegaard: "Concluding Unscientific Postscript" Unit II Essay DUE
10	10/20 10/22	- Nietzsche: "The Gay Science" - Existentialism Lecture (De Beauvoir)
11	10/27 10/29	- De Beauvoir: "The Woman in Love" - De Beauvoir: "The Woman in Love" (continued)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
12	11/3 11/5	- <i>Unit 3 Movie</i> Unit III Essay Assigned - <i>Unit 3 Movie</i> (continued)
13	11/10 11/12	- Arendt: "Eichmann in Jerusalem" - Arendt: "Eichmann in Jerusalem" (continued)
14	11/17 11/19	- Arendt Groupwork Unit III Essay Due Unit IV Assignment Assigned - <i>Band of Brothers "Why We Fight"</i> & discussion Final Assigned
15	11/24 11/26 thanksgiving	- <i>Banality of Evil</i> Discussion Continued - Thanksgiving Break
16	12/1 12/3	- Freire: "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Ch1 Unit IV Assignment Due - Freire: "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Ch2
17	12/8	- Class Symposium Final Paper Due