

Reasoning: An Introduction to Critical Thinking



Fall 2026

Section AB2

Thursdays 11:30 am – 2:20 pm, D 136

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The University of the Fraser Valley is located on the unceded territory of the Stó:lō peoples. We gratefully acknowledge our ability to live and work on the traditional territory.

PHIL 100: Reasoning

Course Description

This course examines the essentials of good reasoning and, in so doing, teaches you how to become a better critical thinker. To this end, we will study the key concepts and practice the basic skills involved in the systematic analysis, evaluation, and formulation of arguments. Throughout the course, we will also emphasize the social, political, and ethical importance of the capacity to reason well and think critically.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Distinguish arguments from other forms of persuasion and types of speech (e.g., pathos and explanations).
- Recognize arguments (e.g., by identifying inference indicators and enthymemes).
- Analyze arguments (e.g., by reconstructing simple and complex arguments).
- Evaluate different types of arguments (e.g., categorical syllogisms and inductive generalizations).
- Describe the defining characteristics of good and bad arguments (e.g., relevance and inadequate evidence).
- Use key concepts of reasoning (e.g., logical necessity and probability).
- Detect fallacies (e.g., appeal to inappropriate authority and *ad hominem*).
- Recognize misleading and manipulative instances of propaganda.
- Engage in ethical reasoning.

Texts

The textbook listed below is required and is the basis for coursework. It is available through the bookstore. Other readings will be made available on Brightspace.

- Ronald Munson and Andrew Black. *The Elements of Reasoning*. 7th edition. United States: Cengage, 2017.

Assessment	Attendance	10%	
	Quizzes	5%	
	Midterm Exam	35%	October 15
	Presentation	15%	November 5 & 26
	Final Exam	35%	<i>See university exam schedule</i>

Attendance

Regular class attendance and participation in class discussions and activities are crucial for your success in the course.

Quizzes

Four short quizzes will help students monitor their progress.

Exams

The exams will assess students' understanding of the key concepts and their ability to perform the skills developed throughout the course. The final exam is cumulative. Possible exam components include multiple-choice questions, true-or-false questions, critical thinking exercises, and mini-essays.

Presentation

The presentation will be a short group project. Each group will be assigned a critical thinking concept to teach to the class and illustrate with independently researched, real-life examples.

Course Schedule

Unit	Date	Topic
1	Sep. 10	The Nature of Reasoning
2	Sep. 17	Recognizing Arguments <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 1, 1-9
3	Sep. 24	Analyzing Arguments <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 2, 15-25 - After-Class Quiz 1
4	Oct. 1	Evaluating Deductive Arguments <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 3, 30-35
5	Oct. 8	Evaluating Non-Deductive Arguments <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 3, 37-44 & 46-48 - After-Class Quiz 2
	Oct. 15	Midterm Exam
6	Oct. 22	Building and Weighing Arguments "The Language of Argument"
7	Oct. 29	Fallacies of Argumentation <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 8, 127-135
8	Nov. 5	Dialectical Fallacies <i>The Elements of Reasoning</i>, Chapter 8, 135-141 - After-Class Quiz 3
9	Nov. 19	Propaganda "Rational versus Irrational Propaganda," 509-515 & 524-530

10	Nov. 26	Propaganda Techniques • "Rational versus Irrational Propaganda," 516-522
11	Dec. 3	Ethical Reasoning • "Two Schools of Ethics" • After-Class Quiz 4
	TBD	Final Exam

Course Policies and Procedures

Professionalism

I require that students maintain a professional attitude. This entails completing all readings before each session, paying attention during lectures, participating meaningfully in class discussions, completing in-class activities, arriving on time, not leaving early, and being respectful to the instructor and one's peers.

Email Communication

The subject line should include the course number and the nature of the inquiry. I do my best to respond within 2 workdays. If that timeframe has passed without a reply, feel free to reach out with a friendly reminder. Should it be an urgent matter, indicate so in the subject line. That way, I can prioritize getting back to you as soon as possible. Kindly note that UFV's Instructional Responsibilities Policy 46 states that "Instructors are not expected to respond to student emails on weekends or statutory holidays."

AI Use

Students are strictly prohibited from using generative AI for any coursework. In alignment with UFV's Student Academic Misconduct Policy 70, it "shall be an offense knowingly to [...] submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source." This includes work created by generative AI tools.

Missed Exams

Should you miss an exam, please contact me within 24 hours, if possible. If you are excused (for medical reasons, bereavement, etc., as determined on a case-by-case basis), you must reschedule through [Assessment Services](#).

Presentation Drafts

I appreciate the eagerness to learn that students display when asking for feedback on drafts. However, I cannot provide this service. Reviewing academic work for some students but not others creates an uneven playing field that is contrary to the principle of fairness. I encourage you to make use of my office hours for any specific questions or concerns you may have regarding your presentation. For general help on academic work, the [Academic Success Centre](#) offers [individual tutoring](#) and [writing support tools](#).

Late Quizzes

Late quizzes will not be accepted, except under extenuating circumstances.

Redoes

While I admire the dedication to academic success that students show when they request to redo coursework, I do not permit redoes. It is inequitable to offer some students and not others the opportunity to improve their grades. The best way to succeed is to be engaged throughout the term. I encourage you to make use of my office hours throughout the term for any specific questions or concerns you may have regarding course material, learning outcomes, and requirements. For your information, the [Academic Success Centre](#) and the [Library](#) offer support in the form of [tutoring](#) and [consultation](#), [writing support tools](#), and [Citation Style Guides](#) to aid you in your studies. By taking advantage of all the resources available to you, you will be prepared for each requirement by its scheduled time.

Grade Grubbing

Grade grubbing is when a student requests, threatens, or pleads for a grade increase for no legitimate academic reason. Instances include asking or begging for a grade bump, seeking preferential treatment, and disputing grades on subjective rather than objective criteria. The course syllabus clearly articulates students' responsibilities in demonstrating learning outcomes through the listed requirements and policies regarding missed requirements. Furthermore, the grading scheme and rubrics will be made available on Brightspace. There will be no grade changes that are not rightfully earned.



"A wise man [...] proportions his belief to the evidence."

— Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. 10