

Philosophy 115: Critical Reasoning

Summer Quarter 2012

Instructor: Jason Benchimol

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This is an online course. There are no meeting dates or times. The dates of instruction are 25 Jun 2012 to 9 Aug 2012.

Course Overview:

We encounter arguments in all spheres of our daily lives. Arguments, whether made by family members, scientists, politicians, or media figures, are tendered in support of some position or other. This course is designed to introduce you to the various forms of argumentation and the ways to assess the strengths/limitations of those arguments. By the end of the course, you should be able to extract arguments from a variety of sources and offer a philosophical analysis of each.

Goals and Objectives:

- Development of the ability to identify different forms of argument
- Development of the ability to extract and reconstruct arguments from different media
- Development of strategies for critically evaluating arguments
- Practice the development of analytical writing skills
- Development of the philosophical vocabulary necessary to practice effective critical thinking

Required Text:

Richard Feldman, *Reason and Argument* (2nd ed), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999. ISBN: 0-13-624602-8

Additional reading materials may be provided on our Vista site. You'll be responsible for these readings as well. The reading load for the course will be heavy. Not only do we have a text to read, but in order to develop good argument analysis skills, we'll need to turn to additional sources such as newspaper articles and the like. A student who hopes to be successful in this course will need to budget plenty of time to read carefully and closely. This course aims to develop a *skill*, rather than to transmit to students a *body of knowledge*. The best, and likely only, way to successfully develop a skill is to spend lots of time practicing with examples and exercises. The workload for this course will, for this reason, be relatively heavy. Bellevue College expects that a student will spend roughly 15 hours per week doing assigned work for a 5-credit course. The amount of work assigned in this course may take up to 15 hours per week (on average) to complete. Moreover, spending 15 hours per week doing assigned work for this course cannot guarantee that a student will *succeed* in the course. Students who wish to succeed in the course may need to spend additional time doing course-related work. All of this is to provide reasonable notice that the workload for the course is, relatively speaking, heavy, and to ensure that students are aware from day 1 of the course that working hard in this course will not guarantee (although I suspect it will make probable) success in the course.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING THE SUMMER TERM: The duration of the summer term is just under seven weeks. During this time, we will cover the equivalent of material that would be covered during a full, ten-week term at BC. Students are hereby advised of the compressed nature of the summer term.

Grades/Assessment

Your final grade will be based on points earned in the following categories, and weighted according to the following percentages:

Homework Assignments	30%
Participation/Discussion	20%
Quizzes (4)	20%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	30%

More information related to assignments, assessments, and grading can be found on the Vista site.

INFORMATION PERTINENT TO STUDENT LIFE AND AFFAIRS AT BELLEVUE COLLEGE:

A link to the Philosophy department's web site: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/philosophy/>

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp>

Division Statements

You should also review the Arts and Humanities Expectations posted here:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/policy.html>

Information about Bellevue Colleges copyright guidelines can be found at:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.html>

A good resource for Plagiarism is the Writing Lab: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/Plagiarism.html>

Student Code of Academic Conduct

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.” The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at: http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050_Student_Code.asp

Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC: All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: <https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam> .

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services website.

Disability Resource Center (DRC) The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter. The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc

Public Safety

The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department's well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

Academic Calendar

The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

Enrollment Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/>. On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.

College Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/0910.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

ONLINE COURSE

It is the sole responsibility of the student to ensure that she has access to a reliable Internet connection for purposes of working through the course. An inability to connect to the Internet cannot count as an excuse for failing to turn in work on time. You are not required to be online at any particular time or on any particular day. However, I will assume that you are checking in with the course at least once every 48 hours. You are responsible for ensuring that you are checking in often enough to catch any important all-course communication I may have sent, or to be apprised of any changes in due dates or assignments.

TENTATIVE COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. In the event of a change, timely advance notice will of course be provided.)

The course is organized in four segments. Each segment must be completed by the required completion dates stated below.

SEGMENT 1: 25 Jun - 2 Jul

1. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Reading: Feldman, Chs. 1 and 2

Required Completion Date: 2 Jul 2012, 23.59 PDT

SEGMENT 2: 3 Jul - 13 Jul

1. WELL-FORMED ARGUMENTS

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 3

2. DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE STRENGTH

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 4

Required Completion Date: 13 Jul 2012, 23.59 PDT

SEGMENT 3: 14 Jul - 25 Jul

1. RECONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS

Reading: Feldman, Chs. 5 and 6

2. EVALUATING ARGUMENTS

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 7

Required Completion Date: 25 Jul 2012, 23.59 PDT

SEGMENT 4: 26 Jul - 7 Aug

1. STATISTICAL ARGUMENTS AND PREDICTIONS

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 9

2. CAUSAL ARGUMENTS

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 10

3. MORAL ARGUMENTS

Reading: Feldman, Ch. 11

Required Completion Date: 7 Aug 2012, 23.59 PDT

Final exam must be completed by 9 Aug 2012, 23.59 PDT