

Course Syllabus

Philosophy 115: Critical Reasoning

Autumn Quarter 2013

Instructor: Jason Benchimol

This is an online course. There are no meeting dates or times. The course will start on 23 Sep 2013 and will end on 11 Dec 2013.

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

GRADES/ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be based on points earned in the following categories:

Homework Assignments (5): 90 points possible

Quizzes (5): 120 points possible

Exercises (25): 100 points possible (4 points each)

Midterm Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

During the quarter, it will be possible to earn up to 510 points. To be guaranteed a final grade of 'A-' or higher, a student will need to earn at least 410 points (roughly 80% of the total possible points). To be guaranteed a final grade of 'B-' or higher, a student will need to earn at least 320 points (roughly 60% of the total possible points). To be guaranteed a final

grade of 'C-' or higher, a student will need to earn at least 255 points (50% of the total possible points). Any student who earns fewer than 255 points will receive a final grade that is lower than 'C-'. **Please note the nontraditional nature of this grade translation scale.**

THIS IS AN ONLINE COURSE

It is the sole responsibility of the student to ensure that he or she has access to a reliable Internet connection for purposes of working through the course. It is the sole responsibility of the student to ensure that he or she is aware when graded work is available and when it is due. I assume that students are logging in to the course site on a daily basis (including weekends and holidays). An inability to connect to the Internet or to the Canvas site (whether this is due to a problem on the user's end or the server's end) will not be accepted as an excuse for failing to turn in work on time.

LATE POLICY - READ CAREFULLY

Any points earned on work that is marked late by the Canvas system will not count towards a student's final grade. The Canvas system will mark work as late if it is turned in at the very last minute it is due. No points will be credited towards a student's final grade for work that is marked late, regardless of the reason why it was submitted late.

I kindly ask that students not request credit for work that has been submitted late. Please do not tell me why your work was submitted late. The final grade translation scale has 'roominess' built into it to account for lateness: unlike courses that utilize more traditional grade translation scales, it is not necessary to earn at least 90% of the possible points to earn a grade of at least 'A-'. Infrequent lateness will not seriously jeopardize a student's final grade.

Again - please do not request credit for work that has been submitted late, and please do not tell me why your work was submitted late. In the event that you've had to submit your work late, for whatever reason, you will not be able to receive credit towards your final grade for it.

PASSING THE COURSE

In order to earn a passing grade (where 'passing grade' is defined as a final letter grade of C- or higher) in this course, a student must:

- (1) earn at least 255 points; and
- (2) submit all five (5) homework assignments; and
- (3) submit all five (5) quizzes; and
- (4) submit at least fifteen (15) of the exercises; and
- (5) complete both exams.

These five requirements, taken together, are the *minimum requirements* for passing the course with a grade of 'C-' or higher. Any student who does not fulfill one of these requirements will be at risk for course failure.

The best way to ensure that you'll pass the course with a grade of 'C-' or higher is to try to earn as many points as you can, and to submit all the graded work on time. It is in each student's best interest NOT to miss any work or to turn in any work late.

MODULE SCHEDULES AND DUE DATES

Module 1 - 23 Sep - 29 Sep

Reading: Feldman, chs. 1 and 2

Homework Assignment 1: available 25 Sep-29 Sep (due 29 Sep 23.59 PDT)

Quiz 1: available 1 Oct - 3 Oct (due 3 Oct 23.59 PDT)

Module 2 - 30 Sep - 20 Oct

Reading: Feldman, chs. 3 and 4

Homework Assignment 2: available 16 Oct-20 Oct (due 20 Oct 23.59 PDT)

Quiz 2: available 22 Oct - 24 Oct (due 24 Oct 23.59 PDT)

Module 3 - 21 Oct - 3 Nov

Reading: Feldman, ch. 5

Homework Assignment 3: available 31 Oct-3 Nov (due 3 Nov 23.59 PST)

Quiz 3: available 5 Nov-7 Nov (due 7 Nov 23.59 PST)

NOTE: MIDTERM EXAM MUST BE COMPLETED ON 30 OCT BETWEEN 00.00 PDT AND 23.59 PDT. THE MIDTERM EXAM WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE ON THIS DATE. SET ASIDE AT LEAST 3 HOURS TO WORK ON THE EXAM ON 30 OCT.

Module 4 - 4 Nov - 24 Nov

Reading: Feldman, ch. 6 and parts 1 and 2 of ch. 7

Homework Assignment 4: available 20 Nov-24 Nov (due 24 Nov 23.59 PST)

Quiz 4: available 26 Nov-28 Nov (due 28 Nov 23.59 PST)

Module 5 - 25 Nov - 8 Dec

Reading: Feldman, remainder of ch. 7

Homework Assignment 5: available 4 Dec - 8 Dec (due 8 Dec 23.59 PST)

Quiz 5: available 7 Dec-9 Dec (due 9 Dec 23.59 PST)

NOTE: FINAL EXAM MUST BE COMPLETED ON 11 DEC BETWEEN 00.00 PDT AND 23.59 PDT. THE FINAL EXAM WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE ON THIS DATE. SET ASIDE AT LEAST 3 HOURS TO WORK ON THE EXAM ON 11 DEC.

Please refer to the Canvas site for information regarding due dates for exercises and exams.

INFORMATION PERTINENT TO STUDENT LIFE AND AFFAIRS AT BELLEVUE COLLEGE

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

A link to the Arts and Humanities Policies page (Student Procedures and Expectations): <http://bellevuecollege.edu/ArtsHum/policy.html>

A link to the Arts and Humanities Commitment to Student Growth and Development page: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/ArtsHum/AHGdIns-StdntGrwth.htm>

Links to the Reading and Writing labs:

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/asc/reading/>

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/asc/writing/>

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

Information about Bellevue Colleges copyright guidelines can be found at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.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 B132 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 DRC located in Library Media Center

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/1213.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.