

PHIL 156.004/655: Reasoning and Critical Thinking		Fall 2005
Instructor: Dr. Richard Hayes	Classroom: Mitchell Hall 101	
Office hours: Tuesday 2:00–4:00PM	Or by appointment	
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1 Course description

Most intellectual endeavors, as well as most enterprises in life itself, involve argumentation. From short letters to the editor to complex philosophical essays, and from simple everyday discussions to sophisticated legal debates, arguments are constantly invoked to support or criticize points of view. The purpose of this course is to help students learn how to analyze, evaluate, and construct arguments. (An argument is a piece of reasoning, not a quarrel or a fight.)

Throughout the semester we will be looking at short samples of writing taken from current newspapers, magazines and the Internet. The samples chosen for this purpose will include pieces written about currently controversial issues.

The last two weeks of the semester will be set aside for one-on-one consultations. There will be no classes during this period, but I will see each one of you for a half-hour appointment. As the time for this draws near, I will give instructions on how to make an appointment with me and how to prepare for your appointment so that we make maximum use of our time together.

2 Textbook and other resources

- The textbook is available in the UNM bookstore. Used copies may be available.

William Hughes and Jonathan Lavery, *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills*. 4th edition. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004.

- Various other resources will be available on WebCT, a web-based facility used in many courses at UNM. To gain access to that, open a web browser such as Netscape, Mozilla, Firefox or Internet Explorer, and open the URL <http://webct.unm.edu>. You log in by using your UNM NetID and password. Once logged in you will see a list of all the courses you are enrolled in that have webct accounts. Click on the link to this course.
- During this semester we will be reading and discussing in class several short writings, which will be placed on webct and on <http://ereserves.unm.edu>. (The password for this course is lobo156.)

3 Schedule of lectures and discussions

All references to chapters and page numbers in the following table are to the textbook mentioned above.

Date	Topic
Aug 23	Preliminaries
25	Reasoning and critical thinking (ch. 1, pp. 17–29)
30	Complexity, meaning and functions of language (ch. 2, pp. 33–46)
Sep 1	Definitions (ch. 2, pp. 47–60) First writing assignment due
6	Clarity and ambiguity (ch. 3 pp. 61–68)
6	Further dimensions in clarifying meaning (pp. 69–81)
13	Reconstructing arguments (ch. 4, pp. 83–94)
15	Argument structure (95–104)
20	Assessing arguments (ch. 5, pp. 107–113)
22	Truth claims (ch. 6, 115–131) Second writing assignment due
27	Assessing premises (pp. 132–143)
29	Assessing relevance (ch. 7, pp. 145–160)
Oct 4	Assessing adequacy (ch. 8, pp. 161–178)
6	Deductive reasoning (ch. 9, 179–196)
11	Inductive reasoning (ch. 10, 197–216)
13	No classes (Fall break)
18	In-class exam
20	Scientific reasoning (ch. 11, pp. 219–249)
25	Moral reasoning (ch. 12, 251–272)

	27	Arguing back (ch. 13, pp. 273–282)
Nov	1	Irrational techniques of persuasion (ch. 14, 283–300)
	3	Critiquing the media (ch. 15, 301–323)
	8	Writing and assessing argumentative essays (ch. 16, 325–343)
	10	In-class exam
	15	Discussion of writings
	17	Discussion of writings
	22	Discussion of writings
	24	No classes (Thanksgiving vacation)
	29	
Dec	1	Scheduled meetings to discuss final essay
	6	
	8	Scheduled meetings to discuss final essay
	13	Final essay due

4 Basis for grading

Your final grade will be based on two short assignments, two in-class examinations and one persuasive essay. The details of these assignments will be given as the semester progresses.

Assignment	Due date	Weight
First short assignment	September 1	10%
Second assignment	September 22	15%
In-class exam	October 18	25%
In-class exam	November 10	20%
Persuasive essay	December 13	30%
Total		100%

N.B. Assignments handed in late will receive a penalty of one-third of a letter grade per day late. That is, if an assignment is due on Tuesday and is handed in on Wednesday and is evaluated as an A paper, the grade recorded will be A-. If handed in on Thursday, it will be recorded as B+, and so on. **Papers must be handed in as physical copies; no e-mail transmissions will be accepted.**