

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
Department of Arts, Education, and Commerce

COURSE PH 1250
 3 credits, University Transfer
 Winter 1998

TRANSFER U. of A. Phil 125; U. of C. Jr. Phil; U. of L. Logi 1000

INSTRUCTOR John O. Langenbach

LOCATION Office: C401 Ph: 539-2992
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OFFICE HOURS 10:00 MWF other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Elementary methods and principles for analyzing arguments will be covered. Topics may include informal fallacies, introduction of scientific method, elementary statistical reasoning, elementary propositional logic, rational decision procedures.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Improve the student's ability to analyze and critique arguments in ordinary language;
2. Introduce the student to some elements of scientific method;
3. Introduce the student to some of the theory and elements of statistical reasoning; and
4. Improve the student's ability to present clear and concise arguments.

TEXT Copi, Informal Logic

GRADING CRITERIA

1. Written work will be graded on a 1-9 stanine basis.
2. Assignments will be graded on content and quality of expression.
3. Course grades will be determined by averaging grades on written assignments.

Grading System

9	A+	} 90-100	Excellent	3	D+	} 45-49	Fail
8.5	A			2	D		
8	A-			1	D-		
7	B+	} 72-79	Good	2	F	} 26-24	
6.5	B			1	F		} 0-25
6	B-						
5	C+	} 57-64	Pass				
4.5	C						
4	C-						

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Exams** (50% of course grade. Each exam is worth 25% of course grade)
Each student shall write 2 one hour exams.
2. **Fallacies Notebook** (25% of course grade)
Each student shall write a notebook analyzing selected types of mistakes found in reasoning on radio and T.V., and in newspapers, magazines, etc.
3. Take-home Assignment on "Diagraming of Arguments" 25% of course grade.

REWRITES

You will be allowed to rewrite your first exam and your take-home assignment on "Diagraming Arguments" provided that

- a. Your work is done on time.
- b. You have missed no more than two classes dealing with the subject matter on which you are being tested.
- c. You have followed the protocol governing the assignment.

CHEERFUL POSTSCRIPT

Because of my belief in competency based learning, those who attend class and put out honest effort will be given every opportunity to do well in PH 1250. If we are all sincere in our efforts, grade, because of rewrites, was close to a '7'. Let's beat that this semester.

If you run into trouble, see me! Don't drop the course unless you discover that this course, the most enjoyable and enlightening course in the universe, is of no interest to you. If your only problem is grades, we can do something about that.

ASSIGNMENT PROTOCOL

Your assignment in diagraming arguments will require that you work together in a three person team.

You will:

1. Present your strongest argument favouring a position you are taking on a current social, political, moral or scientific issue. You will then write a detailed diagram of this argument.
2. You will offer a counter-argument to your main position. You will then write a detailed diagram of this counter-argument.
3. Finally, you will offer a defense of your main position against the counter argument. You will then write a detailed diagram of this counter-argument.

Your work will be graded on the strength and originality of your arguments, and on the correctness of your diagrams.

All work must be presented clearly and neatly (or I won't mark it).

You will place the names of all three team members at the top of each page. You will sign, at the end of your work, a statement reading:

"I am satisfied that I and the other members of my team each did a fair share of the work required in this assignment."

DEPARTMENT

In the early 1950's, Clark Kerr, Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, one of the finest universities in the world, announced that the only purpose of a university is to turn out products for use by business and industry. That simple, and by today's standards, innocuous statement, caused a near student riot. We did not identify ourselves as "products" and many, and perhaps most, did not see a university education as essentially career training. Though possible careers might be attached to a university degree, the primary focus was on gaining enlightenment or wisdom, which had been the primary purpose of all university education from the days of Plato's and Aristotle's Academy and Lyceum to nearly the present day. Times, how they have changed.

Today, an extremely small minority of students are here for enlightenment. Virtually all want a degree so they can get a better, higher paying job than those who attempt to enter the work force out of high school. Given that this is our students' primary focus, it behooves us, as instructors, to train you with that in mind. Accordingly, there will be a number of expectations for this course which are consistent with and expected of anyone involved in a professional career.

The following shall not be allowed in class:

1. Gum chewing (You would never attend a business meeting chewing gum. If your boss does, you will soon be his or her boss.)
2. Eating food (Unless I serve it - which is unlikely)
3. Wearing hats (You wouldn't meet a client wearing a hat, unless you are selling hats.)
4. Placing feet on a desk or chair (Self-explanatory)
5. Talking, whispering, passing notes, etc., unless it is part of the class activities (This distracts others.)
6. Working on assignments for other courses (This insults your boss.)
7. Reading something other than the text or notes for this course (This really insults your boss.)
8. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through your comment, audible noise, facial expression, or body language unless you are prepared to debate your position openly in class (Most stopped doing this after junior high.)
9. Absenteeism (You are allowed to miss three class sessions, no questions asked, though I may give you a phone call at home to see if you are in need of my assistance, understanding, encouragement, etc.)
10. Handing in written assignments late (Imagine what your boss would say if you told her that you did not have an important report finished in time to present it to a rich client.)

A FEW NOTES ON PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of these notes is to introduce you to some aspects of what you can expect in a philosophy course. First, unlike the silly G.P.R.C. advertisement, philosophy courses don't **ROCK**. Philosophy, as well as any other course worthy of an academic institution, is too exciting and valuable to fit such a shallow description. Furthermore, your philosophy instructor, as well, I suspect, as any other serious College instructor, is not "cool." I never have been "cool." Instead, I have always managed to have a life. I've never had the time or inclination to be "cool." Does this mean that philosophy classes are boring, a waste of time, drudgery, etc.? It may mean that to "spin-doctors" and junior high-school students, but certainly not to anyone with an ounce of maturity.

I have taught philosophy for more years than you have lived. And, I still consider it the most exciting subject known to humankind. I suspect every instructor who is not brain-dead can say this of his or her area of expertise. I certainly hope so. What makes philosophy exciting are the questions which we wrestle with. To the philosopher, either the professional or the lay person, these questions are those which go to the core of our being. They include the most important questions you will ever face in your life:

- What is the meaning of life?
- How can I be moral?
- Does God exist?
- What is God's nature?
- What is the nature of Being?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- How can we know what is finally and ultimately real in the universe?
- Can we explain the myriad of world facts by reference to a single principle?
- Are there parallel worlds?
- Can faith prove anything?
- Can we prove the existence of the devil?
- Who am I?
- Where am I?
- Is time or space real?
- Is death the end?
- Are there absolute truths?
- Are there veridical experiences?
- Are there non-rational truths?
- Does creation conflict with evolution?
- Can science teach us any truths?
- Does the scientific method rest on solid principles?

This list could go on for pages. If you ever concerned yourself with issues like these, and find such thoughts exciting and important to your enlightenment, then you will find philosophy both fun and worthwhile.

COURSE DIFFICULTY

Every philosophy course at G.P.R.C. is of average difficulty to the average student with the average background for academic studies. It is this way by design. Nearly every university course at this college has the same credit weight. Each course should, therefore, demand approximately the same amount of work from you. Any instructor who states that his or her course is worthy of more of your time than the average is behaving unethically. Such an attitude is tantamount to saying that his or her course is of greater value than others, which denigrates some other instructor's work, and by implication may be seen as denigrating that other instructor. Any course can be made so difficult that no person could pass. Also, any course could be made so easy that Rosebud, my son's hedgehog could pass. The secret to good course design is to challenge students without destroying them through impossible or unreasonable demands. All of this notwithstanding, there will be some variations.

Students, as well as humans of every stripe, vary in their native abilities. Some are gifted artists, or writers, or mathematicians, or scientists, or Those with particular gifts will find course work in the areas of their gifts easier than some others might find it. Also, some students come to the College with weak preparation for university studies. These students may have to work especially hard to catch up. (Fortunately, your instructors at this College are more than happy to help you in this endeavor.)

I sincerely hope that you will find your philosophy courses challenging and exciting, and that you come away from the course a bit wiser, and with a sense of accomplishment.