Syllabus
Reasoning and Rational Decision Making
PHIL/LEAP 1250: class # 1239/10184
Designation: QB
Credit: 3 Units

Instructor: Dr. Chapman Waters
Office: CTIH 441
Office Hours: TBD
Email: chapman.waters@utah.edu
Class Location: BU C 107
Class Time: Tu/Th 9:10 - 10:30am
Prerequisites: none

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for people who are interested in applying reasoning skills to everyday issues and debates. The primary goal is to enable students to reconstruct and evaluate arguments from a wide variety of sources and to invent good arguments of their own. Though the approach is largely informal, we will study two areas of logic in some depth, namely, deductive and inductive logic.

Among other things, students will learn to recognize arguments when they are present (not all persuasive writing contains arguments); reconstruct them (by identifying their premises and conclusion, and outlining their structure); evaluate them (that is, decide whether they are valid or invalid, sound or unsound, inductively strong or weak); diagnose what is wrong with bad arguments; construct good arguments of their own.

Required Text

Grading and Course Requirements

Grades will be given on a 0-100 point grading scale:

- 100-93: A
- 92-90: A-
- 89-87: B+
- 86-83: B
- 82-80: B-
- 79-77: C+
- 76-73: C
- 72-70: C-
- 69-60: D
- 59-0: E/F
Final grades will be determined by five quizzes, a mid-term exam, and a final exam. These will be weighted as follows:

- 50% Quizzes
- 25% Mid-Term Exam
- 25% Final Exam
- 0% Class Participation

QUIZZES
There are five quizzes, but only those four with the highest scores will count toward your final grade. They are all “take home” quizzes and will be administered and turned in through the Canvas course webpage. You’ll be given anywhere from 15 minutes up to a few days to complete them, depending upon content and difficulty. Some quizzes will be multiple choice, or based on class readings, while others will be more involved. The content and style of the more involved quizzes will vary. For instance, you may be asked to reconstruct and evaluate an argument from a passage provided to you (e.g. a newspaper editorial or public policy debate); to engage in an online discussion or debate with your classmates; to identify, reconstruct, and evaluate an argument in media or pop-culture that you find on your own; to formulate your own arguments and say something more about them; to solve a logic puzzle, among other things.

EXAMS
The exams will consist in true/false and multiple choice questions. Exams may also contain short answer and/or short essay questions. The final is comprehensive.

CLASS PARTICIPATION
Officially, class participation counts for 0% of your final grade, but it can potentially help you. Participation will be taken into account at the end of the semester when calculating final grades. If a student is within 2 percentage points of a higher grade, then the student’s participation during lectures (or lack thereof) will be taken into consideration. No students will receive a lower grade in virtue of a lack of participation.

NOTE: The first step to getting participation points at the end of the semester is regularly showing up to class with your textbook. We will often do exercises from the textbook during lectures, so it is essential that you bring your book to every class. However, merely showing up to class with your textbook is not sufficient; you must also engage with the course material in a way that is obvious to the instructor. For instance, answering questions, asking relevant questions, and engaging in classroom discussion are all good ways to participate. In addition, emailing me concerns/questions about course topics, attending office hours, or starting online discussions (about course topics) on the Canvas course webpage are also good ways to participate.

Course Policies

- Attendance: I do not take attendance, but students are responsible for everything covered in class. Fair Warning: this is a challenging course. If you do not show up to lecture regularly—or if you fail to keep up with course topics as we cover them—you should not expect to get a good grade.
• **Excused Absences:** In the absence of justifiable prior arrangements or cases of serious, unexpected and documented medical emergencies or bereavement, quizzes and exams must be taken as scheduled. Failure to do so results in a grade of “0” for the relevant quiz or exam. For circumstances that are not emergencies, students must send the instructor a request to take the exam or quiz at another time; this request should be sent a sufficient amount of time before the officially scheduled exam or quiz for the student to learn whether the excuse is acceptable.

• **Academic Integrity:** You are expected to do your own work on all quizzes and exams. The minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a failing grade in the course. You will also be reported to the University’s Academic Misconduct Committee. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the University’s policy on academic misconduct. For further information about this, consult the following website:

   https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php.

• **Course Conduct:** Students are expected to be respectful to each other and the instructor. Please do not have conversations with others during lecture. If you do, I will ask you to stop. If you do not stop, you will be asked to leave. You should arrive on time and you should not start packing up your things before the class has ended.

• **Electronic Devices:** Please put all electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, etc.) on silent or vibrate when class is in session.

• **CANVAS:** The Canvas course webpage is your contact point for this course. The “homepage” will provide a detailed course schedule that will be updated as we go (dates of exams and quizzes, as well as daily reading assignments, can be found there). Also recall that quizzes will not be taken in class but through Canvas. In addition, course materials (additional readings, course handouts, grades, powerpoint slides, class-related hyperlinks, etc.) will be posted on the Canvas course webpage.

**Course Schedule**

This syllabus in NOT a binding legal contract. I reserve the right to revise the course schedule as I see fit. Below, there is a general indication of the progression of the course; if you want to see the “official” course schedule, however, you should consult the CANVAS course page.

**Weeks 1 - 4 Intro to Arguments and Logic**

Textbook Chapters 1 - 3  
Quizzes 1 & 2

**Weeks 5 - 10: Deductive Logic**

Textbook Chapters 8 - 9  
Quiz 3  
Mid-Term Exam

**Weeks 12 - 16: Inductive Logic**

Textbook Chapters 4, 6, & 7  
Quizzes 4 & 5
Finals Week: Thursday 4/23 – Wednesday 4/29

Final Exam Time: Tuesday April 28th, 8:00 - 10:00am

Other Policies and Resources

Veterans Center
If you are a student veteran, I want you to know that the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: [http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/](http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/). Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

LGBT Resource Center
If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone*. Additionally, please know that the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: [http://lgbt.utah.edu](http://lgbt.utah.edu). Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language
If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language development and writing. These resources include: the Department of Linguistics ESL Program ([http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/](http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/)); the Writing Center ([http://writingcenter.utah.edu/](http://writingcenter.utah.edu/)); the Writing Program ([http://writing-program.utah.edu/](http://writing-program.utah.edu/)); the English Language Institute ([http://continue.utah.edu/eli/](http://continue.utah.edu/eli/)). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

ADA
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Nondiscrimination
The University of Utah does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or protected veteran’s status, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries concerning perceived discrimination or requests for disability accommodations may be referred to the University’s Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066.

Sexual Misconduct/Title XI
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same
kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801- 581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Wellness Statement

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

University Safety Statement.

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Philosophy Resources: (helpful for research and getting a better handle on complex issues)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: https://plato.stanford.edu/
Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: https://www.iep.utm.edu/