

PHILOSOPHY 1250 COURSE OUTLINE
D. Whitling



I. **Text:** Bierman & Assali, *The Critical Thinking Handbook*, chs.1-8.

II. **Course Content & Tentative Schedule:**

Sep.12,15,19,21,26,28: **Ch.1:** "Linguistic Components of Arguments". Basic terminology which will be employed during the course. **Assignment:** Be sure to carefully read all the exercises and be prepared to answer them during the next class. A quiz is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Ch.2, Part I: "Elements of Arguments (pp.33-56)". What makes an argument work? Why are some good and others not so good? The first part of the chapter summarizes the basic ingredients of Aristotelian logic. **Assignment:** Pay close attention to the exercises 2.1-2.6. A quiz now enters the realm of probability.

Ch.2, Part II: "Elements of Arguments (pp.56-80)". This is a brief introduction to formal sentential logic which is the logic of computers. As usual, diligently peruse the remaining exercises. Quizzes will become common by this time.

Oct.3,5: **Ch.3:** "Reconstructing Arguments". How can written and spoken arguments be analyzed? How are an argument's assumptions identified? **Assignment:** Find a printed argument somewhere and analyze it in the manner suggested in the chapter. Due Oct. 10. Again, the exercises! A quiz is more than eminent.

Oct.10,12,17: **Ch. 4:** "Evaluation of Arguments": After reconstructing an argument, how may it be criticized or supported? **Assignment:** Write a brief critical essay (500-800 words) on a topic of your choice, following the guidelines in the chapter. Due Oct. 19. **Study for mid-term.**

Oct.19: Mid-Term

Oct.24,26,31,Nov.2,7: **Ch.5:** "Common Errors". Here the common "tricks of the trade" are identified and evaluated. **Assignment:** Take one question from each exercise and write it up to hand in next class.

Ch.6, Part I: "Inductive Arguments (pp. 183-200)". Introduction to the most common form of argumentation. **Assignment:** Study the first four exercises for a looming quiz.

Ch.6, Part II: "Inductive Arguments (pp.200-233)". Statistical reasoning is the focus of this part of the chapter. **Assignment:** Complete Exercise 6.8A (pp.232-33) to hand in next class.

Nov.9,14,16,21: **Ch.7:** "Reconstructing & Evaluating Inductive Arguments". Analyzing inductive arguments for clarity and strength. **Assignment:** Pay close attention to the exercises and there will likely be an in-class assignment.

Nov.23,27,29: **Ch.8:** "Common Errors in Inductive Reasoning". Considers statistical and other fallacies. **Assignment:** Exercises. What would you conclude about the probability of a quiz on the basis of previous classes?

Dec.5,7: Review for Final Exam.

III. EVALUATION

Evaluation will be based on a variety of short assignments and quizzes, a mid-term and a final exam.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION: The instructor may be reached at Grande Prairie Composite High School during the day at 532-7721.* The home phone number is 532-0293.

You may e-mail me at:

dwhitling@gppsd.ab.ca OR dwhit@telusplanet.net

*I prefer that you don't leave voice mail for me.