

## PHILOSOPHY 121: CRITICAL THINKING

Section 02

Monday and Wednesday, 3:30 – 4:45 PM, Virtual Classroom

*Instructor:* Dr. Ryan T. O’Leary

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*Zoom Office Hours:* 1:00 – 3:00 PM Monday and Wednesday

**Description:** According to the UW-SP Critical Thinking Center, critical thinking is the intentional process of identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing reasoning in deciding what conclusions to draw or actions to take. As such, it encompasses a wide variety of activities, including argumentation, decision making, and problem solving, and is encouraged by habits of mind like curiosity, confidence, intellectual humility, and persistence. In this course, we will study the fundamental principles of reasoning including recognition, analysis, and evaluation of arguments.

**Learning Objectives:** By taking this course, students will learn to:

1. recognize arguments,
2. track the elements of formal reasoning,
3. evaluate arguments,
4. take epistemic responsibility for their own thinking.

**Evaluation & Grading:** This course is self-paced. To move from one module to the next, you will need to meet or exceed a designated score on each assessment in your current module. You will be able to retake all the assessments as often as you like until you reach mastery. Your grade will be a function of how far you get by the last day of finals week. Obviously, I hope that you will work through to the end and get at least an A- because the skill set you will build is more valuable the farther you get in the course, but it’s up to you!

1. Completing Chapter 1 and stopping there will earn you a D.
2. Completing Chapter 2 and stopping there will earn you a D+
3. Completing Chapter 3 and stopping there will earn you a C.
4. Completing Chapter 4 and stopping there will earn you a B.
5. Completing Chapter 5 and stopping there will earn you an A-.
6. Completing Chapter 5 and one of the following application projects will earn you an A.

**Application Projects:** To achieve an A in the course, you must complete Chapter 5 and one of the following application projects. If you want to write a paper or create a video, please let me know that by the end of Week 10, so I can work with you to select a topic.

1. Participating in at least 11 weekly group discussions. You may earn your discussion point either by attending a Zoom class session or by posting in a discussion forum. Note that each Zoom session in a week will cover the same material, so you can choose whether to attend on Monday or on Wednesday. You do not need to attend both sessions in a given week.
2. Writing a brief (750-1000 word) argumentative essay (either in response to a short reading and given a prompt or on a pre-approved subject of your choosing).
3. Creating a short (2-3 minute) persuasive video (either in response to a short reading or video and given a prompt or on a pre-approved subject of your choosing).

## READING LIST

**Textbook:** *Critical Thinking*, by Dona Warren (assessable via Canvas)

### Application Project Readings:

Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy*, “Introduction”

Rene Descartes, selections from *Meditations I and II*

John Locke, selections from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

H. L. Mencken, “On the Penalty of Death”

## SUGGESTED COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule includes a “suggested completion date” for each module in Canvas in order to help you pace yourself, but please remember that these are only suggested dates.

### **Week 1: January 25 – 29**

“Getting Started”

### **Week 2: February 1 – 5**

Chapter 1 – “Premise / Ultimate Conclusion Arguments”

### **Week 5: February 22 – 26**

Chapter 2 – “Premise / Subconclusion / Ultimate Conclusion Arguments”

### **Week 8: March 15 – 19**

Chapter 3 – “Arguments with Dependent Reasons”

### **Week 12: April 12 – 16**

Chapter 4 – “Arguments with Independent Reasons”

### **Week 15: May 10 – 14**

Chapter 5 – “Arguments with Missing Conclusions”

## CONCERNS & RESOURCES

### Academic Concerns

Being a Pointer means going to class regularly, doing your work outside of class, and asking for help if there are questions or concerns.

**Academic Misconduct:** Copying off someone's test, plagiarism, claiming credit for work that is not yours, and all other forms of academic misconduct are not tolerated at UW-Stevens Point. If a student is confused about what exactly academic misconduct is, there is information available regarding rules and procedures for the [process](#). You can also visit with your faculty or learn how to cite the work of others at the [Writing Lab](#).

**Academic Success:** Your full-time job at UW-Stevens Point is *to be a student*. Being successful depend a lot on how much effort and time you invest. It also asking questions or finding support if you feel lost. We have an amazing [Tutoring-Learning Center](#) if you want to learn how to be a better student or need subject-specific help.

**Disability Services:** UW-Stevens Point is committed to supporting students with disabilities the academic and other accommodations, plus the auxiliary aids necessary to ensure your success. To learn more, check out their [site](#) or visit them in Albertson Hall, room 609 (library building).

### Other Concerns and Resources

Responding to student concerns with care, concern, and resources is critical in supporting the success of our students and campus community. Here is a brief list of helpful resources.

#### **Absence from Class**

Contact faculty directly or if a crisis/emergency  
Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Academic Difficulty**

Academic & Career Advising Center  
715-346-3226, [uwsp.edu/acac](http://uwsp.edu/acac)

Disability Services & Assistive Technology  
715-346-3365, [uwsp.edu/dtac](http://uwsp.edu/dtac)

Tutoring-Learning Center  
715-346-3568, [uwsp.edu/tlc](http://uwsp.edu/tlc)

Students should visit with faculty of the course in which they are having trouble.

#### **Add/drop Class; Withdrawal Questions**

Office of the Registrar  
715-346-4301 [uwsp.edu/registrar](http://uwsp.edu/registrar)

Students should visit with their Academic Advisor.

#### **Academic Misconduct**

Faculty for the specific course or Office of the Dean of Students to discuss process  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Alcohol or Drug Use**

Center for Prevention

715-346-3121, [uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv](http://uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv)

#### **Bias or Hate Incidents**

Office of the Dean of Students to report  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

Diversity and College Access  
715-346-4076, [uwsp.edu/dca](http://uwsp.edu/dca)

#### **Concerning Behavior**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Employment**

Campus Activities and Student Engagement  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)

#### **Family Crisis or Emergency**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Financial Insecurity**

Enrollment Services Center/Financial Aid  
715-346-3300; [uwsp.edu/enrollmentservices](http://uwsp.edu/enrollmentservices)

Emergency Grants

Office of the Dean of Student  
715-346-2611; [Grant Application Form](#)

Financial Coaching Program  
UW-Stevens Point School of Business and Economics

[Website](#) or email: [fincoach@uwsp.edu](mailto:fincoach@uwsp.edu)

Financial Literacy - Online  
[GradReady Program](#)

Financial Literacy - In Person  
Financial Literacy Association (Student Org.)  
College of Professional Studies, [finlit@uwsp.edu](mailto:finlit@uwsp.edu)

### **Food Resources**

The Cupboard - Stevens Point campus  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)  
[List of food resources in the community in Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wausau](#)

### **Housing/Roommate Concerns**

Residential Living (your Hall Director first)  
715-346-3511 (central office), [uwsp.edu/resliving](http://uwsp.edu/resliving)

### **Identity and Difference**

Diversity and College Access  
715-346-4076, [uwsp.edu/dca](http://uwsp.edu/dca)

### **Involvement**

Campus Activities and Student Engagement  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)

### **Legal Questions**

Student Legal Services  
715-346-4282, [uwsp.edu/dos/sls](http://uwsp.edu/dos/sls)

### **Loss of Family Member or Friend**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

### **Mental Health Concerns**

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

Mental Health Crisis Line (outside agency)  
866-317-9362 for after hours mental health support

### **Missing Student**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

University Police  
715-346-3456, [uwsp.edu/protsv](http://uwsp.edu/protsv)

### **Non-academic Misconduct**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

### **Physical Health / Injury**

Student Health Service (confidential resource)  
715-346-4646, [uwsp.edu/stuhealth](http://uwsp.edu/stuhealth)

### **Procedural Issue or Conflict**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

### **Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, or Harassment**

Office of the Dean of Students to report  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

CAP Services - Stevens Point (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-340-7882, 715-346-4039, 800-472-3377 (toll free), [kpétrick@capmail.org](mailto:kpétrick@capmail.org), [capservices.org](http://capservices.org)

PDC - Marshfield (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-421-1509 or 844-210-8899 (toll free)

The Women's Community - Wausau (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-842-8323 or 888-665-1234 (toll free)

Center for Prevention (confidential services)  
715-346-3121, [uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv](http://uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv)

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

University Police and Security Services to report  
715-346-3456, [uwsp.edu/protsv](http://uwsp.edu/protsv)

### **Title IX**

Haeryon Kim, 116 Old Main, 715-346-3020, [hakim@uwsp.edu](mailto:hakim@uwsp.edu), [Title IX site](#)

### **Transportation**

[UWSP Rideshare Facebook Page](#)  
[Stevens Point Bus Route](#)  
[Bus connections from Stevens Point](#)

### **Questions or Concerns Not Listed Here**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

