**Critical Thinking**

CRIT 1101-3, CRN 29087

MW 2:10-3:25pm, T201

Spring, 2025

Dr. Benjamin Buckley, Lecturer of Philosophy

Office: Arts & Sciences G105-J

Office Hours: MW 3:30 – 5:00pm; TR 12:30pm – 2:00pm

Monday and Wednesday office hours will be held in person, Tuesday and Thursday office hours will be online. Should you wish to meet with me on Teams during these times, please send me an e-mail and we can schedule it.

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**Introduction:** Every class you take in college will help strengthen your critical thinking skills in one way or another. This, however, is likely the only class you will take that focuses on thinking itself – teaching you methods and tools of analyzing language and arguments, as well as giving you quite a bit of practice using these skills. We are surrounded by information, much of it good, most of it bad. Critical thinking helps you sort through this information, analyze it for its trustworthiness, organize it, and present it convincingly to others. We will spend this semester studying the logical structure of language, various levels of evidence presented for different types of conclusions, good reasoning and bad reasoning, and how to tell the difference between the two.

**Catalog Description:** A course focusing on skills essential to effective critical thinking in both academic and general use. The study of important common components (issue, method, evidence, conclusion) provides a basis for the construction, analysis, and evaluation of arguments in a variety of contexts. The course also addresses fundamental elements of informal logic (e.g., induction, deduction, fallacy-avoidance) and of elementary formal logic (e.g., tests for validity) as they inform good reasoning in any context, from everyday decision-making to academic argumentation.

**General Education Outcomes:**

The Clayton State University Core Curriculum outcomes (see Area B) are located in the Graduation Requirements section of the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook - Clayton State University](https://www.clayton.edu/academic-catalog/). Direct link: <https://catalog.clayton.edu/graduation-requirements/undergraduate-graduation-requirements/core-curriculum/>

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

· Write, analyze, and evaluate arguments for strength and validity

· Improve their oral and written communication skills

· Analyze complex concepts, ideas, definitions, and arguments

**This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Institution area.**

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

* How does my institution help me to navigate the world?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

* Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically and solve problems related to academic priorities at their institution.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

* Critical Thinking
* Teamwork
* Time Management

**Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:** Learning Support students who are required to take ENGL 0099 and/or READ 0099 must exit the requirement(s) before they can enroll in this course.

**Computer Requirement:** Each CSU student is required to have “on demand access” throughout the semester to “an appropriate computing device” that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will be required to sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Computer Devices Policy, see the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook.](https://www.clayton.edu/academic-catalog/)

**Computer Skill Prerequisites:**

* Able to use the WindowsTM operating system
* Able to use Microsoft WordTM word processing
* Able to send and receive e-mail using the Clayton State University e-mail system using OutlookTM.

*Only use your CSU e-mail account or the e-mail system included in D2L to communicate academic information to your instructor.*

* Able to attach and retrieve attached files via email
* Able to use a Web browser

**Brightspace Desire2Learn (Online Classroom):**

On-line activity will take place in Brightspace Desire2Learn (D2L), the virtual classroom for the course, and in Microsoft Teams. Posting of your work in D2L is a course requirement.

You can gain access to D2L, by signing on to the SWAN portal. New students, or those who would like a refresh on Brightspace (D2L) features, can review the [D2L Video Tutorials - For Students](https://mediaspace.clayton.edu/channel/D2L+Tutorials+-+Students/147443331). For instructions on joining a Microsoft Teams meeting, see [this brief introduction](https://mediaspace.clayton.edu/playlist/dedicated/154255911/1_36cfqamx/1_k2i6yszn).

If you experience any difficulties in Desire2Learn or Microsoft Teams, please email or call The HUB at TheHub@clayton.edu or (678) 466-HELP. You will need to provide the date and time of the problem, your SWAN username, the name of the course that you are attempting to access or Teams meeting, and your instructor's name.

**University Services**

* **Disability Services:** Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center 255, 678-466-5445, [disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu).
* **The HUB:** The HUB provides free technological support to all Clayton State students. If you are having trouble accessing any part of this course, or if your laptop is having general problems, you are encouraged to call, e-mail, or visit the HUB to have them fix it as soon as possible. Contact them at 678-466-4357, or [thehub@clayton.edu](mailto:thehub@clayton.edu).
* **Center for Academic Success:** Clayton State offers free, one-on-one tutoring to students of all subjects. Call the CAS at 678-466-4070, or schedule an appointment on-line: [Tutoring - Clayton State University](https://www.clayton.edu/cas/tutoring/index.php)
* **Student and Family Resources:** A collection of campus and community resources, particularly focused on helping students who are parents or are caretakers, but also has links to job, financial, housing, health, and other services that can benefit many students. [Clayton State University - Family Resources](https://www.clayton.edu/family-resources/index)

**Text:** The textbook readings will be embedded in the D2L classroom.

**Evaluation: Grading Scale:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **A** | 90 - 100% |  |
| Homework | 20% | **B** | 80 – 89.5% |
| Attendance/Participation | 20% | **C** | 70 – 79.5% |
| Exams | 60% Total (15% each) | **D** | 60 – 69.5% |
|  |  | **F** | Below 60% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |  |  |
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**Requirements Explained:**

1. **Homework**: There will be a reading assignment from the textbook, and a homework assignment, due (almost) every week. The schedule at the end of the syllabus will guide you to what is due, and when.

The homework assignments are provided for you in D2L. You are expected to finish your homework, and grade it yourself; answer keys are provided. **You do not turn in your homework.** Instead, you will write an evaluation of how the homework went for you. You will be graded on how thorough your self-evaluation was. Self-evaluations will be uploaded to D2L, under the “Assignments” tab.

For any questions you struggled with and would like to review, please email me directly.

1. **Attendance/Participation**: Being in class, on time, and attending only to the business of the day, will get you your attendance point. If for any reason you need to be late, or cannot attend at all, you can earn your participation point online, by reading the online lectures and participating in the D2L discussion.

Each week there are two A/P points possible.

* Being in class, on time, and remaining attentive, will gain you one point each class period.
* Posting your own answer to the question asked in the discussion board will gain you one point that week. Responding to the posts of at least two classmates will gain you one point that week.

Thus, if you miss both classes in a week, you should read the online lectures, post in the discussion board, AND respond to the posts of at least two classmates. If you only miss one class that week, you still need to read the online lectures, but you can choose to either create your own post, or respond to the posts of at least two classmates.

**Note**: Should the entire class need to move online for any reason, everyone will need to read the online lectures, and participate in the discussion board.

1. **Exams**: There will be a total of four equally weighted exams. The exams will be a mixture of true and false, multiple choice, and problem solving. The best way to study for the exams is to complete your homework thoroughly and on time, and to review it before the exam. There will be a study guide for each test. The tests will be online.

**Major Student Activities:**

* Reading the assigned chapters in the textbook.
* Reading the online lectures, watching video lectures, attempting “practice quizzes” for each unit.
* Participating in the weekly discussion.
* Completing the assigned homework in the textbook, grading it, and submitting a weekly self-evaluation.
* Completing each of the four exams.

**Mid-Term Progress Report:** The mid-term grade in this course, **which will be issued by March 4th**, reflects approximately 30% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, by mid-term. [Instructions for withdrawing are provided at this link.](http://www.clayton.edu/registrar/withdrawal) **The last day to withdraw without academic accountability is March 7th 2025.**

**General Policy:** Students must abide by policies in the [Clayton State University Student Handbook](https://www.clayton.edu/academic-catalog/index.php), and the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.clayton.edu/community-standards/code-of-conduct).

**University Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students’ ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

**Course Attendance Policy:** Attendance/participation is a graded element of the course. The student must be in class, on time, and participate only in the business of the class to earn that day’s point. If, for any reason, the student must miss class or come to class late, the student is responsible for reading online lectures, and participating in the online discussion. As in-person classes can be made up online, no excuses are accepted for missed classes.

**No Show Policy:** It is imperative that students have a successful start of each semester by attending class during the first week and no later than the second week of the semester. A registered student who does not attend at least one class session by **4 pm January 23rd**, will be reported a “no show.” The consequences of being reported as a no show are significant: the student will be dropped from the class and may suffer significant financial hardship.

**COVID-19 Health and Safety Statement**

Clayton State University is committed to providing and promoting a healthy and safe learning environment. Anyone who is feeling ill should refrain from coming to campus and should consult the symptoms related to COVID to determine if a visit to a physician or clinic is necessary. Individuals on campus who choose to wear a face mask are free to do so at any time.

**Personal/Emotional Concerns**

A range of issues can cause barriers to learning, such as stress, strained relationships, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and lack of motivation. During the semester, if you find that life stressors are interfering with your academic or personal success, consider contacting the Health and Wellness Center, which provides both health clinic services, and counseling. All students are eligible for counseling services at no charge. You can call the Health and Wellness Center at (678) 466-4940 or visit their website: [Health & Wellness Center - Clayton State University](https://clayton.edu/student-life/health-and-wellness-center.php)

**Disruption of the Learning Environment:** Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF. More detailed descriptions of examples of disruptive behavior is provided in the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.clayton.edu/community-standards/code-of-conduct).

**Online course disruptions** include abusive, insulting, or profane language used toward fellow students or the instructor through discussion boards or e-mail. The above policies will apply.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. Reliance on A.I. programs such as ChatGPT constitute dishonest behavior. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](http://www.clayton.edu/community-standards). Judicial procedures are described in the section of the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](http://www.clayton.edu/catalog-handbook) titled, Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Academic Conduct Infractions.

**Missed Work:** *Without an excuse, missed work cannot be submitted.* An excuse for missed work must be accompanied with documentation from a doctor or other competent authority that explains why the student was unable to submit the assignment on time.

* With a valid excuse, exams must be made up within four calendar days of the original test. The make-up test will be different from, and may be more difficult than, the test administered to the rest of the class.
* With a valid excuse, missed homework assignments and discussion assignments must be completed within a week of the original due date.

**Please contact your professor directly to arrange for late testing and/or assignment submission.**

**Readings and Important Dates**

*There will be at least one discussion assignment and homework assignment due (almost) every week. Homework self-assessments are due Saturdays at 11:59pm unless otherwise noted. Discussions submitted to earn attendance points are due the Sunday after the missed class.*

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| **Week** | **Reading and Homework Assignments** | **Homework** |
| **Week 1**  Begins Monday, January 13 | Monday: Introduction to critical thinking  Wednesday: Chapter 1, Section I | Chapter 1 Section I |
| **Week 2**  Jan 20 | Monday: No Class (MLK Holiday)  Wednesday: Chapter 1, Section II | No homework due |
| **Week 3**  Jan 27 | Monday: Chapter 1, Section II  Wednesday: Chapter 1 Section III | Chapter 1 section II |
| **Week 4**  Feb 3 | Monday: Chapter 1, Section III  Wednesday: Chapter 1 Section IV | Chapter 1 section III |
| **Week 5**  Feb 10 | Monday: Chapter 1, Section IV  Wednesday: **Chapter 1 exam** | Chapter 1 Section IV  **due Tuesday** |
| **Week 6**  Feb 17 | Chapter 5, Sections I and II | Chapter 5, Sections I and II |
| **Week 7**  Feb 24 | Chapter 5, Sections III and IV | Chapter 5, Sections III and IV |
| **Week 8**  Mar 3 | Chapter 6, Sections I and II | Chapter 6, Sections I and II |
| **Week 9**  Mar 10 | No classes; Spring Break March 2 - 8 | No homework due |
| **Week 10**  Mar 17 | Chapter 6, Sections III and IV | Chapter 6, Sections III & IV |
| **Week 11**  Mar 24 | **Monday: Chapters 5 and 6 exam**  Wednesday: Chapter 7, Sections I and II | Chapter 7, Section II |
| **Week 12**  Mar 31 | Monday: Chapter 7, Section III  Wednesday: Chapter 7, Section IV | Chapter 7, Sections III and IV |
| **Week 13**  Apr 7 | Monday: Chapter 7, Section V  **Wednesday: Chapter 7 Exam** | Chapter 7, Section V  **due Tuesday** |
| **Week 14**  Apr 14 | Chapter 9 | Chapter 9 |
| **Week 15**  Apr 21 | Chapter 10 | Chapter 10 |
| **Week 16**  Apr 28 | Chapter 11 | Chapter 11 |
| **Week 17**  May 5 | May 5th is the last day of classes; no work will be accepted after this day, no exceptions. |  |
| **Finals week**  May 6 - 12 | **Exam 4 Wednesday, May 7th** |  |