

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Course Syllabus

PHIL 2303: Introduction to Logic
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Spring 2023
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Required Textbooks:

Logical Reasoning, Bradley H. Dowden (available in Canvas)
Schaum's Outline Logic 2nd Edition, John Nolt, ISBN: 9780071755467 (available in bookstore)
Conspiracy Theories: Philosophers Connect the Dots, ISBN: 9780812694796

Course Description:

An introduction to informal, formal, and inductive logic including fallacies, propositional logic, and scientific arguments

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to...

1. describe different kinds of arguments, definitions, and diagrams
2. identify informal fallacies
3. analyze categorical propositions
4. use Venn diagrams to determine the validity of categorical syllogisms
5. use truth tables to determine validity and consistency
6. use implication and replacement rules to complete proofs
7. translate statements into symbolic form
8. analyze the strength of an analogical argument
9. compare alternative theories
10. evaluate arguments using the criteria of adequacy
11. analyze scientific arguments

Grading:

Initiator Posts (5 @ 100 points each):	400 points (lowest dropped)
Response Post Assignments (5 @ 10 pts each):	40 points (lowest dropped)
Logic Exercises (5 @ 20 pts each):	100 points
Reading Quizzes (19 @ 5 pts each):	95 points
Attendance:	50 points

Term Paper:	100 points
TOTAL:	785 points

Assessment:

Discussion Board Assignment: You'll make a minimum of six contributions to each discussion board: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6 total posts (minimum). These posts must be spread out over three days, for example 1 initiator post on Friday, 3 response posts on Saturday, and 2 response posts on Sunday. In other words, you'll be posting on three separate days.

INITIATOR POSTS: You'll write one initiator post per discussion board. An initiator post is one that starts a thread based on the discussion prompt on the discussion board. A good post will offer a clear point of view and support it with material from the weekly readings. The *Logical Reasoning* textbook (Dowden) should be cited multiple times in the post and not just following direct quotes.

If you only use course material to quote from, quotation marks and parenthetical citations are enough, for example: "yada, yada" (Dowden, 5). If students use even one outside source – like the excellent [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) – a reference list for *all* sources must be included at the end of the post and must follow Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). See [here](#) for CMS examples, and see how proper citations affect the grade in the rubric below. I expect multiple references in your post to course readings.

The post must be at least 300 words. There's no maximum word count, but keep in mind that grades are not based on quantity of words but on demonstrated comprehension of the reading material and critical thinking. The grading rubric below shows exactly what is expected.

Initiator posts are due by the posted due date on the discussion board.

You must post first in order to view other posts. The edit function will be disabled. If you want to edit after posting, you may reply in the thread with corrections or request that I delete the post. There must be a very good reason for deletion. For grading purposes, I consider your first post to be the initiator post even if it is blank or incomplete.

Late initiator posts can be turned in for a lower grade before the board locks. A late penalty of half a letter grade per day applies in each case unless accompanied by a valid excuse (e.g. a doctor's note that indicates a serious illness). *Connectivity issues are not valid excuses for late work unless they are the university's fault. Don't wait until the last minute to post.*

DISCUSSION BOARD RUBRIC (INITIATOR POSTS)	
0-25 points	Point of view is clear and well-defended.
0-25 points	Multiple connections made to the textbook: <i>Logical Reasoning</i>

0-25 points	Conveys respect for other points of view even if it takes a contrary position
0-25 points	Grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style.

RESPONSE POSTS: In addition to the initiator post, you'll write at least five response posts per board (for a total of 6 contributions: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6). A response post is one that replies to a classmate's post and continues the conversation. One that ends the conversation or just says "I agree" in so many words does not qualify as a response. Good posts carry on the conversation in an interesting and relevant way and draw other students into the discussion. The minimum requirements for receiving credit for a response post are the following:

1. The post is 50 words.
2. The post is relevant to the thread.
3. The last sentence is a question.

Posts under 50 words don't count toward the required number of response posts. If you happen to post a few that are under 50 words, just make sure to post a few extra posts that are 50 words.

If more than one of your posts don't end in a question, a deduction of **1 point** will be applied to the response post grade.

The penalty for not spacing out your posts over three days will be applied to the response post grade as a **3 point** deduction.

Response posts are due when the board closes.

Late response posts will not be accepted. Once the board locks, there are no further opportunities to complete the assignment, so it's advisable to post early to avoid unforeseen events such as last-minute technical problems. Encountering technical issues is not a valid excuse for late work, unless the issues are the university's fault.

The discussion board is the focus of this class, the main learning tool (notice the percentage of the grade). I will be active on the boards and hope to be involved in some rich conversations. Be sure to return regularly to the threads to reply to questions and comments, especially in your own thread. Learn how to search for posts, including mine, by using the search function on the board. When I reply to a post, I often take a contrary position as devil's advocate. My response to your posts should be interpreted as "constructive" and an opportunity to strengthen your

argument. It doesn't mean that I don't like you or that I have a different viewpoint or political stance than you. In fact, it is nearly impossible to figure out my personal beliefs from my posts. If I express a point of view, I do so for teaching purposes, to help you think more carefully about your own position and to extend the conversation. By the way, it is possible to get an A in this class and disagree with my personal beliefs. In fact, it happens quite regularly.

Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized posts may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs for additional consequences. In short, do your own work, and be careful to give credit to the original author when you quote or paraphrase.

Term Paper: The purpose of this argumentative essay is to allow you to demonstrate how much you've learned in the course. In other words, the essay should utilize relevant ideas from the entire semester with the goal of constructing the strongest possible argument in support of a point of view. You'll be defending or critiquing a conspiracy theory, such as 9/11, Area 51, flat earth theory, JFK assassination, moon landing hoax, vaccines, Sandy Hook, and Covid-19. If you have a different conspiracy theory in mind to write about, please get approval from me. Since this paper is about demonstrating what you've learned in the class, I'm not primarily interested in the scientific or historical evidence you could produce for your point of view. I'm interested in your ability to apply logical reasoning and concepts from the textbooks. Outside sources are permissible, and they may be necessary to explain your conspiracy theory, but this isn't a research paper. It's about using the ideas you've learned in the class. In other words, it's possible to get a grade of 100%, citing only Dowden, Nolt, Greene, and me as sources. **If you don't cite class material, the best possible grade on the paper is an 75%** (see rubric below). The paper must use proper citations and include a reference list that conforms to the Chicago Manual of Style. See [here](#). Use either footnotes or the author-date system and include a reference list or bibliography on the last page.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- 1500-2000 words (not including citations and bibliography)
- Double-spaced
- No cover page
- Name and title at the top center of first page
- Page numbers on the bottom right of each page
- Standard twelve-point font (e.g. Times New Roman)
- One inch margins
- .docx, pdf., or .rtf file formats only
- The introduction should be no more than half a page.
- The conclusion should be no more than half a page and only review the main points.
- No inflammatory or disrespectful language

The paper should be a standard five paragraph argumentative essay (no more and no less than five paragraphs), which means an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The thesis statement requirement: *the last sentence* of the introduction should be the *complete thesis statement* that clearly states your point of view. The topic sentence requirement: the first sentence of each body

paragraph should act as a topic sentence and state the philosophical idea being analyzed. The paper should be organized in the following way:

<u>First paragraph</u> : background and introductory material, any terms that need to be defined, and thesis statement (e.g. the Earth is not flat)
<u>Second paragraph</u> : first counterargument (e.g. NASA is not a reliable source) and your rebuttal (e.g. NASA is a reliable source) and support
<u>Third paragraph</u> : second counterargument (e.g. flight paths in the southern hemisphere make no sense on a round Earth model) and your rebuttal (e.g. the flight paths do make sense on a round Earth model) and support
<u>Fourth paragraph</u> : third counterargument (e.g. the simplest explanation is that space exploration is one big hoax) and your rebuttal (e.g. the simplest explanation is that space exploration is not a hoax) and support
<u>Fifth paragraph</u> : conclusion, review of main points

TERM PAPER RUBRIC (100 POINTS)	
0-25 points	Organization and structure: the paper meets the thesis statement and topic sentence requirements in the instructions and is a five-paragraph essay organized in the counterargument/rebuttal way described above.
0-25 points	Argument: the paper is an argumentative essay and contains a strong argument.
0-25 points	Connections: multiple, relevant connections are made to course material from the entire semester.
0-25 points	Grammar and style: grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style.

Additional points will be deducted for late papers and papers that don't satisfy the "basic requirements" above. Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized papers may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences.

As the rubric shows, you're not graded for your political or religious stance but whether you demonstrate good comprehension, critical thinking, and argumentation, as well as whether you have followed the basic instructions.

If you receive help from the Writing Center on an early draft and use the information to revise your paper, I will award you five extra credit points in the extra credit column, which amounts to half a letter grade on the paper. In order to receive extra credit, you must opt in to "email instructor" when you visit the Center. If I don't receive an e-mail from the Writing Center, you will not receive credit. The Writing

Center is often busy, so you must plan ahead and make an appointment. No exceptions will be made if you are too late in making your appointment.

Quizzes: The purpose of the readings quizzes is to check your comprehension of the readings in the book: *Conspiracy Theories: Philosophers Connect the Dots*. These quizzes are open-book and timed. They can be found under the Quizzes tab in Canvas.

Attendance: At the start of the semester, each student has fifty points for attendance and one free unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after the first is penalized five points per day against the attendance grade up to fifty points. Excused absences will not count against the fifty points but need to be accompanied with documentation (e.g. a doctor's note). This documentation must be submitted when the student returns to class and no later. After losing fifty points, no further points will be deducted even if there are more absences. Students may not see points deducted in the grade book immediately or even until the end of the semester, so it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of attendance points remaining and make sure that the attendance sheet is accurate on a weekly basis.

Logic Exercises: At the end of modules 2-5, there is at least one logic activity that is based on our work in Schaum's Logic Outline. Instructions for completing these exercises are available in the module.

Course Policies:

Late work policy: Papers must be uploaded to Canvas by the deadline. A penalty of half a letter grade per day up to two letter grades will be assessed for late assignments. This penalty will be waived only under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note). Late discussion board posts are not accepted after the discussion board closes. Late reading quizzes are not accepted without a valid excuse (e.g. a doctor's note).

Communication policy: The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail or in Canvas. Students can expect replies within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. Students who do not receive a reply within this timeframe should attempt to contact the instructor again.

Class conduct policy: The subject matter of this class can make some people hot under the collar. This said, all comments and behavior must be classroom appropriate. What does "classroom appropriate" mean? It does *not* mean that students cannot express unpopular opinions. It means practicing reasoning and logical argumentation. It means being civil and listening with respect. Insults, snide comments, name-calling, cutting someone off, derogatory tones, sarcasm, ridicule, cussing, vulgarity, personal attacks, racial slurs, misogynistic remarks, etc. will not be allowed. If you are unsure about what counts as disrespectful, consult the instructor or the Golden Rule. The instructor will act as the final word on what is or is not classroom appropriate. Violators may be ejected from the class.

Cell phone policy (face-to-face sections): Mobile devices can be used in the classroom if it is related to what is going on in class. If you have an electronic textbook or plan to take notes on your device, please let me know early in the semester. They are permissible as long as they don't distract you or your classmates from the lesson.

Arriving late or leaving early policy (face-to-face sections): Arriving on time can sometimes be challenging, but it is better to be late than never. However, late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive. For this reason, please don't make a habit of it. If it becomes a regular issue, points will be deducted from the attendance grade.

Extra credit policy: Extra credit is available in the class but only on discussion boards and only when they're open. Extra points can be earned by posting extra response posts that satisfy the basic requirements of response posts (see the requirements above). After you've posted the minimum number of qualifying response posts (5), each extra post will receive one point, up to five points max. By the way, five points of extra credit is equivalent to half a letter grade on the term paper.

"It is what it is" final grade policy: Grades are final once the final grade percentage has been calculated in Canvas at the end of the semester. No changes will be made unless the instructor has made a mistake. Grades are not bumped up unless the student is within .5% of the next letter grade. For example, an 89.5% is an A. An 89.4% is a B. No extra credit opportunities will be given during the last week of class. The conditions for an "incomplete" are stated in the university handbook: "(a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due." The terms and deadline for satisfying an "incomplete" will be set by the instructor.

Plagiarism policy: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is taking credit for material that is not your own whether it is copied from a classmate, textbook, or online source. Plagiarism is cheating, and cheating is the way of the Dark Side. If that isn't enough of a deterrent itself, plagiarizing will result in an F on the assignment and a possible F in the course. It could also mean suspension from the school. So, students should be sure to use proper citations and do their own work. If students are not sure whether something constitutes plagiarism, they should contact the instructor to ask about it before submitting the assignment. The penalty will apply whether the act of plagiarism is intentional or not.

[UT TYLER HONOR CODE](#)

I embrace honor and integrity.

Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.