**CSU Sacramento**

**Philosophy 4: Critical Thinking**

**Fall 2009**

**Section 6: MW 1:30-2:45**

**Instructor**: David Freelove

**Office**: 3032 Mendocino

**Office Hours**: Wednesday, 3:00-4:00; Friday, 9:00-9:50

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**Catalog Description**: Study of the basic skills of good reasoning needed for the intelligent and responsible conduct of life. Topics include: argument structure and identification, validity and strength of arguments, common fallacies of reasoning, use and abuse of language in reasoning, principles of fair play in argumentation. 3 units

Satisfies General Education Area A3: Critical Thinking

The knowledge and skills to be studied in this course include:

- Logical analysis and the identification and construction of arguments.

- Understanding logical relations, in particular the relations between premises and conclusions.

- Recognizing the more common forms of formal and informal fallacies.

- Evaluating the relevance, validity, and strength of arguments.

- Understanding the logical structure of deductive and inductive arguments.

- Awareness of the abuses of language, including connotation, ambiguity, and definition.

- Recognizing arguments in a variety of contexts, including other disciplines as well as in public affairs.

- Improve ‘information competence’: the ability to find out what one needs to know in order to have a responsible position on an issue.

- Acquiring an immunity to propaganda.

- Developing not only the capacity but the disposition to use good reasoning in a variety of contexts.

- Developing a sense of fairness and respect for opposing positions.

**Learning Objectives**: At the end of the course the student should have the ability to:

- Locate the argument in a passage.

- Detect errors of reasoning and explain how the reasoning is in error.

- Engage in cogent and respectful discussion.

- Analyze specific arguments for consistency and credibility.

- Apply good reasoning to issues in professional and personal contexts.

- Evaluate evidence and and make appropriate inferences from that evidence.

- Determine what evidence is necessary and know how to find that evidence, if possible.

- Construct and defend arguments in support of or in opposition to particular propositions.

**Required Materials**:

*--Reason and Argument*, by Richard Feldman. Second Edition.

--CPS RF response pad, or "clicker".

Instructions for registering your clicker:

The box your clicker comes in identifies the website [www.einstruction.com](http://www.einstruction.com/)  where you will register it.  You will need a credit card and a class key corresponding to the section in which you are enrolled.  The class key for section six is: I54274N345.

**Assignments**

Your grade in this course will be based on your answers to daily quizzes, homework, a midterm, and a final.

Quizzes

Beginning the 2nd week of classes you will be given a 5 point quiz every class period. Your best 20 quizzes will count toward your final grade. The quizzes will concern the reading, lecture and additional material posted on the instructor's website.  Quiz questions will be administered throughout the class period, at any time, and you will answer them using CPS RF response pads.

Homework

Five homework assignments are required.

Exams

The midterm and final will be based on the readings, lectures and supplemental materials. Both exams will be administered in class. The final, while focused on reading and lecture material from the second half of the course, will require knowledge of the material covered in the first half of the course.

**Grading**. The “course grade” is the grade sent to the registrar and recorded in your transcripts. The course grade is determined according to the following formula.

Grading formula for the course grade: (g.p.v. for class quizzes x .50) + (g.p.v. for homework x .10) + (g.p.v. for midterm exam x .20) + (g.p.v. for final exam x .20) + = course g.p.v.

Letter grades will be given for daily quizzes, homework, and both exams. A "g.p.v." is the numerical value associated with letter grades according to the following scale.

A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1, D- =.7, F = 0.

So, for example, while there are 100 points possible for the class quizzes, I will decide at the end of the semester what point ranges receive what grades. I.e., the grading will almost certainly be "curved". If you received 75 points on your best 20 quizzes and I decide that a student who scored from 68 to 75 points should receive a C, then the g.p.v. for a C, i.e., 2.0, will be entered into the course grade formula above in determining your course grade. The same holds for the homework and the exams.

The course g.p.v. is then converted into a letter grade according to the following scale.

4.0-3.85=A, 3.849-3.5=A-, 3.49-3.15=B+, 3.149-2.85=B, 2.849-2.5=B-, 2.49-2.15=C+, 2.149-1.85=C, 1.849-1.5=C-, 1.49-1.15=D+, 1.149-.85=D, .849-.5=D-, .49-0=F.

**Classroom participation.** Neither attendance nor classroom participation is graded. However, active, skillful, and courteous participation throughout the semester will boost your course grade by at least one grade. By "one grade" I mean the difference between, for example, a C+ and B-, or between a B- and B. If your classroom participation is active and especially skillful, I'll consider boosting your course grade by more than one grade.

C**itizenship grade.** While the course grading formula does not include a citizenship

component, I will add one for any individual showing poor citizenship in class. The grade will automatically be an F. How this will affect your course grade depends on whether I make the citizenship component .1, .5, 1, 5, 10, or 25 percent of the course grade. The weight of the citizenship grade will depend on the extent and severity of the breach of good citizenship.

**Make-up policy**: A homework assignment must be turned in on the announced due date. No email submissions. Do not drop the homework off in my department mail box. Since, you will be given at least five to seven days to complete a homework assignment, I will not accept late homework. You cannot make up a quiz. Only in rare circumstances will I allow a student to make up homework, quizzes, or a missed exam, and these will almost always involve a very serious personal or family emergency. If you know you are going to have to miss class under such circumstances, you must notify me in advance by email or in person, if at all possible.

**Disabilities**: If you have a disability that requires special homework, reading, exam, or classroom needs, please notify me at the beginning of the course in person or by email.

**Academic Dishonesty:** There are primarily three opportunities for cheating in this course. i. Copying the work of other students. ii. Using notes or crib sheets while taking an exam, whether they are written on paper, on shoes, on clothing, on pencils, or anything. iii. Looking at the exams of other students while taking an exam. Any case of cheating will result in a failing grade for that exam or assignment, and the student will be reported to the Judicial Affairs Officer. Studying with other students for exams will not be regarded as cheating. Do your own homework.

The following is only a rough guide to the topics of the course and the time at which they will be covered.

Week 1. Introduction to the course. Introduction to the key concepts of the course.

Week 2. Truth and rationality.

Week 3. Well-formed arguments.

Week 4. Well-formed arguments.

Week 5. Strong arguments: deductive and inductive strength.

Week 6. Reconstructing arguments.

Week 7. Reconstructing arguments.

Week 8. Evaluating arguments.

Week 9. Statistical arguments and predictions.

Week 10. Statistical arguments and predictions.

Week 11. Causal arguments.

Week 12 Causal arguments.

Week 13 Moral or ethical arguments.