

PHIL 11009: Critical Thinking

Spring 2025, Section: 001 (CRN: 16077)

TR 2:15-3:30PM Classroom: Bowman 224

Professor: Dr. Daniel E. Palmer

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Office Hours: 9:30-11:00 AM and 3:30-4:30 PM TR and by appointment (virtual appointments available)

Course Information

Catalog Course Description: Critical thinking is essential to every aspect of life, whether reading a news report or editorial, examining a contract or other legal document, or entering into a debate. This course teaches the strategies of “cognitive self-defense” that allow students to see past false claims and avoid being deceived by misleading rhetorical strategies. The course also examines the role of argument in reasoning, including types of arguments and the ways in which mistakes in reasoning can lead us astray. Examples from everyday life illustrate the sorts of complex reasoning that are a crucial part of practical decision-making.

Course Learning Outcomes:

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

- Understand and identify common obstacles to critical thinking
- Evaluate different sources of information
- Identify common fallacies in reasoning
- Understand the nature and structure of arguments
- Distinguish between deductive and inductive arguments
- Evaluate arguments for deductive validity or inductive strength
- Understand and evaluate common forms of explanation

Kent Core: This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core Humanities requirement. The Kent Core as a whole is intended to broaden intellectual perspectives, foster ethical and humanitarian values, and prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Requirements

Required Textbooks: 1. Vaughn, Lewis. *The Power of Critical Thinking, 8th ed.* (Oxford University Press, 2025), ISBN: 9780197768204.

Assignments:

Graded course assignments consist of several quizzes, various homework and in-class assignments, and three exams (two to be taken during the course of the semester and a final exam to be taken during the official university final exam period). Information concerning the percentages that each assignment counts towards a student's grades can be found below (along with the grading scale used in this class). Tentative dates for the exams and quizzes can be found in the course schedule included with this syllabus.

Assignment Distribution and Grading Scale:

Method of Assessment	Number of Assessments	Total Points
Quizzes	7 (Top 5 Count) – 20 Points Each	100 Points
Homework and In-Class Assignments	7 (Top 5 Count) – 20 Points Each	100 Points
Exams	3 In-Class Exams – 100 Points Each	300 Points
	Total Possible Points	500 Points

Grading Scale:

Percentage of Earned Points	Earned Points	Grade
93% -100%	463-500	A
90%-92%	450-463	A-
88%-89%	438-449	B+
83%-87%	413-437	B
80%-82%	400-412	B-
78%-79%	388-399	C+
73%-77%	363-387	C
70%-72%	350-362	C-
68%-69%	339-349	D+
60%-67%	300-338	D
Under 60%	299 and under	F

University Policies, Procedures, and Resources

University Use of Electronic Email: A university-assigned student e-mail account is the official university means of communication with all students at Kent State University. Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their university-assigned e-mail account. If a student chooses to forward information in their university e-mail account, he or she is responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other e-mail account. To stay current with university information, students are expected to check their official university e-mail account and other electronic communications on a frequent and consistent basis. Recognizing that some communications may be time-critical, the university recommends that electronic communications be checked minimally twice a week.

Students with Disabilities: Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible educational experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Contact Information:

Location: University Library, Suite 100
Email: sas@kent.edu
Phone: 330-672-3391; VP 330-968-0490
Web: www.kent.edu/sas

Request for Religious Accommodation: The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per semester, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds (ombuds@kent.edu).

Diversity Statement: Kent State University is committed to the creation and maintenance of equitable and inclusive learning spaces. This course is a learning environment where all will be treated with respect and dignity, and where all individuals will have an equitable opportunity to succeed. The diversity that each student brings to this course is viewed as a strength and a benefit. Dimensions of diversity and their intersections include but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, national origin, primary language, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, mental and physical abilities, socio-economic status, family/caregiver status, and veteran status.

Basic Needs Support & Mental Well-being

Kent State University is committed to supporting the overall well-being of our students. This support may take the form of assisting students with basic needs such as food and housing. We recognize that the absence of secure housing and access to food makes it difficult for students to achieve their best in and out of the classroom. If you, or someone you know, are unable to afford groceries or lack a safe, secure, and reliable place to live, please visit the CARES Center basic needs resource website: <https://www.kent.edu/carescenter/basic-needs-resources>.

Mental health challenges may also make it difficult for students to reach their full potential. KSU's mental health and wellness resource page provides information on education and awareness, mental health services, and advocacy intervention. To learn more, please visit Kent State's mental health resources and support website at <https://www.kent.edu/mentalhealth>.

Kent Campus Academic Support Statement

Kent State recognizes many students face challenges and we are committed to supporting your academic journey when you need help. Whether you are struggling in a course, need help writing a paper or actively working to achieve your goals, use the resources below to start building your support system:

Where can I get help from another student who earned a good grade in this class?

Tutoring (www.kent.edu/asc/tutoring)

Where can I go if I need assistance with how to study and meet my academic goals?

Academic Coaching (www.kent.edu/coaching)

Who can review my writing and help me properly cite my work?

Writing Commons (www.kent.edu/writingcommons)

Where should I go when I don't know where to go?

Academic Advising (www.kent.edu/university-advising)

TRIO Student Support Services (www.kent.edu/studentsupportservices)

There may be additional resources, just ask!

Course Enrollment and Withdrawal: The official registration deadline for this course is 01/19/2025. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in

FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline. The course withdrawal deadline is 03/30/25.

Statement on Academic Presence Verification: In compliance with federal regulations, the University is required to report that enrolled students have participated in at least one academically related activity. If no academic activity is submitted by the end of the fourth week of the semester (for a full-term course) then a grade of NF (Never attended F) will be assigned. The NF mark will count as an F in computing grade point averages. Students who have received an NF mark will lose their access to the course. To avoid an NF mark, students must participate in at least one academic activity as soon as possible and no later than the end of the fourth week.

Academic Honesty: University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at <http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism> and/or ask your instructor.

Academic Complaint Policy: The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 4-02.3 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental chairperson.

Notice of My Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights: Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to handouts, quizzes, examinations, etc.) by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that the student may not distribute, publish, or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor.

*****Please Note:** The syllabus and course schedule may be subject to change. Changes will be communicated in class and via email. It is the responsibility of students to check email messages and pay attention to in-course announcements to stay current in the course.

Class Schedule: Critical Thinking, Spring 2025

(all chapter and page numbers refer to Vaughn, *The Power of Critical Thinking, 8th ed.*)

Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to revision during the course of the semester*

Tuesday	January 14	Introduction to Class
Thursday	January 16	Chapter 1, pp. 3-29
Tuesday	January 21	Chapter 2, pp. 30-47
Thursday	January 23	Chapter 2, pp. 30-47: Quiz #1
Tuesday	January 28	Chapter 4, pp. 117-129
Thursday	January 30	Chapter 4, pp. 130-145
Tuesday	February 04	Chapter 3, pp. 64- 83: Quiz #2
Thursday	February 06	Chapter 3, pp. 84-113
Tuesday	February 11	Chapter 3, pp. 84-113
Thursday	February 13	Exam #1
Tuesday	February 18	Chapter 7, pp. 206-224
Thursday	February 20	Chapter 7, pp. 225-246: Quiz #43
Tuesday	February 25	Chapter 8, pp. 249-260
Thursday	February 27	Chapter 8, pp. 261-274
Tuesday	March 04	Chapter 8, pp. 261-274: Quiz #4
Thursday	March 06	Chapter 10, pp. 321-337
Tuesday	March 11	Spring Break, No Class
Thursday	March 13	Spring Break, No Class
Tuesday	March 18	Chapter 10, pp. 338-345
Thursday	March 20	Chapter 10, pp. 338-345
Tuesday	March 25	Chapter 10, pp. 346-370: Quiz #5
Thursday	March 27	Chapter 10, pp. 346-370
Tuesday	April 01	Exam #2
Thursday	April 03	Probability and Statistics, Handout Provided
Tuesday	April 08	Probability and Statistics, Handout Provided
Thursday	April 10	Probability and Statistics, Handout Provided: Quiz #6
Tuesday	April 15	Chapter 11, pp. 373-402
Thursday	April 17	Chapter 11, pp. 402-419
Tuesday	April 22	Chapter 11, pp. 402-419: Quiz #7
Thursday	April 24	Chapter 12, pp. 420-451
Tuesday	April 29	Chapter 12, pp. 452-478
Thursday	May 01	Chapter 12, pp. 452-478
Wednesday	May 07	Final Exam (12:45 - 3 p.m.)