

Logic, Reasoning, and Persuasion - Fall 2019

Prof: Olivia Odoffin; Section 04: MTh3 in WAL 203

Office Hours: TBA, or by appointment

§1. Course Description

Reasoning is everywhere. Textbooks, news articles, blog posts, tweets, and conversations with friends and family all contain what is most central to reasoning: arguments. The content of these arguments varies — some are about ethics and politics, others about biology or sociology, still others about music and film. Given this variety, you might wonder: what exactly is an argument, and how do you know if an argument is a *good* one? In this course, you will learn tools for identifying, evaluating, and constructing your own good arguments. Some of these tools include: learning the different *kinds* of arguments, identifying fallacies, and evaluating sources for credibility.

§2. In this course, you will learn...¹

- ...how to identify an argument, including: the various forms of argument and their components.
- ...what makes an argument *good*, based on its larger context and whether it includes fallacies.
- ... what makes a source credible, particularly online sources.
- ... how to conduct your own inquiry on a topic of interest.

§3. Required Text

- ❑ Sharon Bailin & Mark Battersby - *Reason in the Balance*

**can be purchased either online or in the bookstore*

On average, you are responsible for reading a chapter a week. Please come to class prepared; each chapter should be read before Monday's class (e.g. have Chapter 1 read by 9/10).

§4. Grade Calculation

- ❑ Assignments (5) and Quizzes (3): 50 points each
- ❑ Attendance & Participation: 100 points for attendance, 100 points for participation
- ❑ Take Home Midterm: 200 points
- ❑ Final Paper: 200 points

**Total points: 1000*

§5. Assignments & Quizzes

On average, you will have just *one* of either an assignment or quiz due each week. Each assignment will consist of a couple of exercises located at the end of the chapter. The content of the assignment will vary. In order to receive full credit, all assignments must be turned in on Canvas. We will go over your assignments during the next class.

¹ **This course satisfies the following core-curriculum requirement: Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production. [AHo]*

The quizzes are in-class and will be taken on Canvas. They have two functions: first, they are for you to keep track of your own progress. Second, they are for me to discover what to focus on in class. The quizzes graded for completion; a completed quiz, *taken in class*, receives a full 50 points.

§6. Attendance & Participation

We will be covering a decent amount of material. You may be interested in a topic that we are unable to cover in class — if so, post it on the discussion forum! The discussion forum serves as an “overflow” from classroom discussion. Genuine participation on the forum counts towards classroom participation. If you are particularly shy, then this might be a good option for you.

Both in-class participation and participation on the discussion forum count toward your score. Attendance is mandatory; you will lose 20 points for each missed class. Coming to class late is disruptive to your classmates, so please be on time. Recurrent, substantial lateness will tank your attendance score.

§7. Midterm & Final Paper

Your midterm is a take-home midterm, located on Canvas. It is open book. You will have to analyse dialogues, including identifying argument types and fallacies. Both the midterm and the final are worth 200 points. For the final paper, you will be constructing your own inquiry, based on one of the Chapters in Section IV: Inquiry in Specific Areas. *You can choose your own issue*. If we cover an issue in the course that you find interesting, it might make a good final paper. The final paper is 5 pages.

Overall grades will be determined in accordance with standard Rutgers policy, as follows:

- ❖ A = 90 - 100 %
- ❖ B+ = 85 - 89 %
- ❖ B = 80 - 84 %
- ❖ C+ = 75 - 79 %
- ❖ C = 70 - 74 %
- ❖ D = 60 - 69 %
- ❖ F = 0 - 59 %

§8. Campus Policies and Resources

- Plagiarism: You are expected to know and adhere to all standards of academic honesty. To familiarize yourself with official Rutgers’ policy on academic integrity, [visit here](#). To test your knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism, [visit here](#).
- Accommodations: It is your responsibility to contact the Rutgers’ [Office of Disability Services](#) if you require accommodations. I will do my best to work with both you and ODS.
- Emergencies: If you have a serious emergency that might interfere with your ability to complete the course, please contact either the [Dean of Students](#) or [CAPS](#), as appropriate.

Date	Material	Assignment
First Day - 9/5	Introduction	
Week 1 (9/10 & 9/13)	Chapter 1: The Nature and Value of Inquiry	
Week 2 (9/16 & 9/19)	Chapter 2: Introducing Guidelines for Inquiry	<u><i>Assignment Due</i></u>
Week 3 (9/23 & 9/26)	Chapter 3: Argument Types and Structures	<u><i>In-class Quiz</i></u>
Weeks 4 - 5 (9/30 - 10/7)	Chapter 4: Probative Arguments & Fallacies	<u><i>Assignment Due</i></u>
Weeks 5 - 6 (10/10 - 10/17)	Chapter 5: Key Argument Types	<u><i>In-class Quiz</i></u>
Week 7 (10/21 & 10/24)	Chapter 6: Credible Sources and Appeals to Experts	MIDTERM
Week 8 (10/28 - 10/31)	Chapter 7: Identifying the Issue	
Week 9 (11/4 & 11/7)	Chapter 8: Understanding the Case: Reasons and Context	<u><i>Assignment Due</i></u>
Week 10 (11/11 & 11/14)	Chapter 9: Evaluating the Arguments	<u><i>In-class Quiz</i></u>
Week 11 (11/18 & 11/21)	Chapter 10: Making a Judgment and Making a Case	
Week 12 (11/25 & 11/26)	Your choice - Read one chapter in Section IV: Inquiry in Specific Areas	<u><i>Assignment Due</i></u>
11/28	Thanksgiving — NO CLASS	
Week 13 (12/2 & 12/5)	Refine Paper Topic	<u><i>Assignment Due</i></u>
Last Day - 12/9	Wrap Up	
12/17: FINAL PAPER DUE		