

I. Objectives: This course aims to improve the student's power of critical, rational thinking—both defensively, to protect the individual from falling prey to bad but persuasive arguments from others, and offensively, to help the student to collect and to communicate his/her own thoughts. The aim in critical thinking is not to win arguments (at any cost), but rather to attain a better understanding of the topic at hand. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of basic logical and rhetorical features of arguments and arguing by producing diagrams and critiques of sample arguments. There will be a great deal of in-class participation in producing such analyses and critiques.

II. Format: After some lecturing on "basics," we will be examining in class examples of good and bad arguments, both from the text and the world at large. Our examination will include discussion, counter-argument, and noting where more evidence is needed. There will be a comprehensive final exam.

The student should note that THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN CRITICAL THINKING IS TO PRACTICE IT. This means that each student is responsible for APPLYING COURSE MATERIAL TO ARGUMENTS EACH DAY. There are many arguments in the text, and any newspaper or magazine has letters to the editor or editorials, which are good sources of arguments upon which to practice. (See Section 3.4 of the text for a severe warning!)

III. Text: H. Reeder, *Arguing With Care: Dialectic for a Democratic Society*. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 2009. Available at the bookstore.

IV. Tentative Course Calendar:

Week	Reading Assignment	Written Assignment
1	Course Syllabus, Text §§1-12 <i>read carefully — including the Course Syllabus</i>	NOTE: The instructor must be out of town during the first week of classes. Students must study the course syllabus and text carefully and <i>write out</i> any questions to discuss in week 2
2	Course Syllabus, Text §§1-12	Written student questions: at least one per student
3	Course Syllabus, Text §§13-17	
4	Course Syllabus, Text §§18-24	
5	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
6	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	First Hour Exam
7	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
8	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
9	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
10	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	Second Hour Exam
11	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
12	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
13	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	Third Hour Exam
14	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	
15	Course Syllabus, Review entire text	

V. Assignments: There will be three exams in class, and a final exam. The first exam will count 10%, the second will count 20%, the third will count 30%, and the final exam will count 40%. MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL NOT BE GIVEN. Students will be permitted to drop their lowest exam grade. The grade will then be calculated in the following way:

1. lowest numerical grade dropped
2. simple average of remaining grades calculated
3. average grade plugged into the slot of the lowest grade
4. course mark calculated with replaced grade, according to this grade's percentage of the over-all grade

NOTE: There are several tear-out exercises in the textbook. These must be handed in by each student, although they are not to be graded. HOWEVER, if you fail to hand in these assignments, your **final mark** will be **lowered by three points** for each assignment not handed in.

VI. Attendance and Drop Policy: Attendance of EVERY class is a minimum requirement of this course. The work done in class is mostly NOT repeated in the text. Each student is responsible for getting notes and announcements from class that he/she has missed. The instructor cannot drop students from the class. To drop, a student must fill out a drop slip (and then in accordance with university rules).

VII. Americans with Disabilities Act

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act—(ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is a renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide “*reasonable accommodation*” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with **informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing *authorized* documentation through designated administrative channels.**

VIII. Academic Dishonesty

It is the philosophy of the University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

“Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or to the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3.2, Subdivision 3.22)

IX. Aid for Students

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

CLASS STUDY GUIDE

Attending class is essential to this course, as lectures will contain information not in the text, and as the class will work TOGETHER virtually all of the time. This includes the importance of *you* asking questions when you don’t follow something. A lot of learning to think critically involves making mistakes, and having them corrected by someone else (professor or student).

IMPORTANT: IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND CLASS, YOU WILL LIKELY NOT PASS ANY OF THE TESTS.

EXAM PREPARATION

To prepare for all the exams after the first one, I suggest that, in addition to re-reading the entire text and keeping careful lecture notes, you pay close attention to the following:

1. carefully review the fallacies
2. carefully review Sections 10.1-10.11 in the text ; try to analyze and critique the short arguments in Section 10.10 on your own, then check your results by comparing them with Section 10.11 (WARNING: do not read 10.11 before you try to analyze and critique the arguments in 10.10!)
3. carefully review Section 13.1, 13.2, 13.4
4. carefully review Do’s and Don’ts in Ch. 14
5. carefully review Ch. 15
6. analyze and critique the arguments in Ch. 18-20
7. carefully review Ch. 22 and box on p. 58

PLEASE NOTE: We will be analyzing arguments together in class. In each case I will announce which arguments we will be doing in the next class. You are to prepare WRITTEN analyses and critiques at home, which we will then go over in class in small-group discussions. Doing the analyses and critiques on your own is the ONLY way to learn how to do this. Everyone will make many mistakes, from which we will learn how to do it the right way. This part of critical thinking is a PROCESS that you must INTERIORIZE by *doing it*.

IMPORTANT: IF YOU DO NOT DO THE WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS, YOU WILL NOT GET THE FULL BENEFIT OF THE CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS. ALSO, YOU WILL LIKELY NOT PASS ANY OF THE TESTS.