Instructor: XX  
Classroom: XX  
Meeting time: XX  
Office: XX  
Office hours: XX  
E-mail: XX

Course description. The aim of this course is to sharpen your analytical and critical skills. Much of what passes for reasoning in our society is shoddy at best and dangerous at worst. If you attend to the lessons of the book and lectures, you will emerge with skills that will make you a better citizen, consumer, and, dare I say it, person. Not a more informed citizen/consumer/person, because the course is not about acquiring information, but a more careful and competent thinker. We will explore the nature of argument, examine the language in which reasoning is conducted, study various fallacies (errors in reasoning), discuss definition and analogy, and investigate certain methods of inquiry into causation. We will end with a survey of scientific reasoning. There are no prerequisites for the course, but I assume you are intelligent, intellectually curious, self-motivated, and fluent in English. This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirement in Language, Philosophy & Culture.

Learning outcomes. Students who attend all classes and study properly will: (1) understand the nature of reasoning and argumentation; (2) understand various forms of inductive and deductive inference; (3) be able to identify various fallacies; (4) demonstrate competency in oral and written communication; and (5) work effectively in a collaborative environment.

Core curriculum objectives.

- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication;
- Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities; and
- Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Signature assignments. The following assignments (among others) will be used to assess the student’s level of achievement of the Core Curriculum Objectives:

1. Each student will analyze an argumentative passage to determine which proposition
functions as the conclusion of the argument and which propositions function as the premises. (Critical Thinking Skills)

2. Each student will participate in a group project in which the objective is (a) to take a position on a matter of personal or social responsibility (such as voting or recycling) and support that position with reasons; and (b) write a collaborative essay setting forth the argument. (Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility)

[The remainder of the syllabus will be filled in by the instructor.]