

Course Syllabus

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Brief Description:

Phil 200 is a first course in critical thinking. In this case, critical thinking is introduced through formal logic. We will spend some time introducing the basic notions of logical validity and soundness. Then we will (a) introduce a simple formal language. (b) Learn to evaluate validity and truth for arguments and expressions the formal language. (c) Translate between ordinary arguments and ones in the formal language. And (d) evaluate validity by means of proofs and derivations in the formal language. This material is foundational to disciplines as diverse as philosophy, mathematics and computer science. It is essential for those who will investigate theoretical underpinnings in such areas; it will be illuminating for those who would undertake further course work or reading in these and related disciplines.

Course Expectations:

This is a “basic skills” course with no prerequisites. No logical or reasoning background is assumed. At the same time, it is a challenging (and interesting!) way to satisfy the critical reasoning requirement. In contrast to other courses in the GE critical reasoning category, Phil 200 positions students to consider further courses in logic and is a prerequisite to the logic courses, Phil 300, 306 and 308, that immediately follow it in the Philosophy logic sequence.

Your professor is obligated to be clear, be responsive to questions, provide helpful feedback on work, and so forth. Students cannot expect to succeed without regular class attendance, class participation, appearance at office hours, and especially faithful, on-time completion of assignments! The latter is, of course, directly connected to the grade. We need also to respect one another by observing basic rules of course etiquette: Apart from special arrangements, arrive on time, do not leave early, or come and go during class. If you are in the room, be engaged in class activities (not surfing the web, playing nintendo, text messaging, reading for other classes, or the like). Apart from special arrangement, phones should remain *off* during class; if one rings, do not answer; as this is difficult to remember, if your phone rings during class, the “penalty” is to bring cookies for all at the next class meeting.

Texts:

The text for this course is a manuscript by prof Roy, *Sentential Logic*, excerpted from the longer *Symbolic Logic: An Accessible Introduction to Serious Mathematical Logic*. It is available in the bookstore, and at Print Center (in the little mall at Little Mountain on Kendall about a mile east of University) in versions useful depending on whether you will take further courses in logic. There is also an online version at <http://philosophy.csusb.edu/~troy/int-ml.htm> Though the electronic copies have value, everyone will need a bound hardcopy of their own. Related texts including, Forbes *Modern Logic*, and Bergmann, Moor and Nelson, *The Logic Book*, are available as a supplement in the Logic lab.

Grading:

Grading is based on homework (20%), midterm tests (40%), and a final exam (40%). There is also some opportunity to obtain extra credit.

(a) Homework will be regularly assigned in class and due at the beginning of the following period. About ten assignments will be collected randomly over the term, and marked on a 2-point scale according to the following criteria: 2 homework is complete; 1 at least half complete; 0 less than half complete. There is no makeup for this component of the grade apart from compelling, continuing, and documented reasons. Thus the homework component of the grade samples regular effort and attendance.

(b) There will be a midterm test every two or three weeks. Except for an essay component drawn from “explain to Hannah” exercises at the end of each chapter and done before, these are short closed book examinations with questions drawn entirely from homework. The lowest exam score will be dropped. For compelling, continuing and documented reasons, credit for a one of these exams may be shifted from the final.

(c) The final is a comprehensive exam of material covered during the course. It will be given during the regular exam period (01: W 12/9, 8:00; 02: W 12/9, 12:00).

(d) Extra credit assignments will be regularly assigned along with homework. Assignments are designed to go with corresponding homework, but will be accepted up to the next exam. *Clearly indicate assignment numbers!* A student who completes every extra credit problem may increase the total grade by 5%. Most extra credit will be associated with the logic lab. For extra credit, it will be sufficient to turn in a print of the page(s) showing that the work has been done (e.g., the last LL screen, or the LW “grades” print).

Notes:

In general, numbers convert to grades as follows: a score greater than or equal to 90% is an ‘A’, a score greater than or equal to 80% but less than 90% is a ‘B’, etc. You are guaranteed to receive *at least* the grade earned according to this scheme. However, in computing final grades the instructor reserves the right to lower this scale (e.g., > 89%, ‘A’ etc.); this does not happen ordinarily.

You may choose any method for getting homework done (short of xeroxing or printing out the work of another student). In this class, there is nothing unethical if you work together with other students, or even if you copy from the board when problems are worked in class (but not all problems will be worked in class). NOTE: Unless you have successfully worked problems of the sort assigned in homework, you may be sure that you will not pass the exams. It is your instructor's belief that you need to work *at least* the exercises assigned in homework — successfully and independently — to master the material. (i) It is best to seriously attempt homework before it is due; you will then be able to identify confusions and to evaluate success when problems are discussed in class. (ii) If you are confused, it is important that you get to the point where you have (on your own) successfully worked a significant number of problems of the sort assigned in homework; in this regard, the logic lab may be of great value.

With this said, all work on exams, including essay portions, is to be your own. Academic honesty is always essential. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F for the course, and standard University discipline. Because the issue is so important, be *sure* you know what plagiarism is! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to talk things over with me. See also the very nice discussion, "What is Plagiarism" from my website <http://philosophy.csusb.edu/~troy/courses.htm> and also the policy document at <http://academic-affairs.csusb.edu/personnel/fam/fam820.htm>

In some cases, the homework may be sufficient for you to master the material. In some cases homework and some or all extra credit problems may necessary. But sometimes you may find it necessary to attempt even more than this. Do not stay away from the lab because there is no official credit to be gained!

Order of Instruction:

I.	Introduction to argument evaluation	SL, Ch 1
II.	Formal Languages	SL, Ch 2
III.	Semantics	SL, Ch 4
IV.	Translation	SL, Ch 5
V.	Derivations	SL, Ch 6

Details:

Please note that W 11/30 (the Monday after Thanksgiving) is a State Budget Closure day. Also M 12/7 (the Monday of Finals week) will be a Faculty Furlough day. There are no adds after the census date. Role is required to be taken at the end of the 6th week and recorded for financial aid purposes; if you will be absent on that day, please make prior arrangements with the instructor. If you are in need of an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in this class, please let me know ASAP and also contact Services to Students with Disabilities at UH-183, (909) 537-5238. As a matter of principle, everyone should receive messages from their CSUSB e-mail. An easy way to do this is to set it up to forward to your regular address.