

# Luther College Course Syllabus: PHIL 150-L01/L02

Luther College is a federated college at the University of Regina. Grounded in the liberal arts tradition, Luther College is committed to personalized education in a community of scholars who value excellent teaching and engaged learning. Luther courses are student-centred and open to students from all faculties and federated colleges at the University of Regina.

<b>Course Number:</b>	<b>PHIL 150-L01/L02 (CRN 32043/32044)</b>
<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Critical Thinking</b>
<b>Term/Year:</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>
<b>Times and Locations:</b>	<b>Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30 am - 12:45 pm, Luther College Room 100</b>
<b>Pre-Requisites:</b>	<b>None for this course.</b>
<b>Instructor Name and Title:</b>	<b>Dr. Roger Petry</b>
<b>Office Location:</b>	<b>Luther College, Room 112</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b><a href="mailto:roger.petry@uregina.ca">roger.petry@uregina.ca</a></b> <b>(put "phil 150" in subject line of e-mail)</b>
<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>306-585-5295</b>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>Tuesdays 12:45 to 2:00 pm Wednesdays 12:45 to 2:00 pm or by appointment</b>

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations should discuss these with the course instructor, and contact the Coordinator of the Centre for Student Accessibility at 306.585.4631.

---

## **Course Description:**

*Critical Thinking is an introduction to the systematic study of reasoning. It teaches the theory and practice of good reasoning, allowing students to identify arguments in everyday speech and writing and to understand what makes a good argument. Students will also learn to identify and avoid the most common mistakes in reasoning. The course provides students with reasoning skills that are useful in whatever disciplines and careers they may pursue (such as law, journalism, or business). More generally, Critical Thinking empowers students to formulate and express their own ideas and arguments well, building their capacity to act as citizens and as full participating members of communities to which they belong.*

## **Pre-Law & Pre-Journalism Bundle:**

Section PHIL 150-L02 of this course is part of the Pre-Law/Pre-Journalism bundle at Luther College, a grouping of courses that help students focus on particular thematic areas while meeting their requirements for Law and Journalism. Critical thinking is central to both of these professions. During this course attempts will be made to integrate examples, exercises, terminology, and methods from critical thinking that apply to a study of law and/or journalism, and the activities and responsibilities of citizenship that undergird and make sense of the activities of both professions.

## **Instructor's Bio:**

See: <https://www.luthercollege.edu/university/academics/faculty-profiles/roger-petry>

## **Learning Objectives and/or Outcomes:**

*Students in Critical Thinking will achieve the following learning objectives:*

- *To understand what is meant by critical thinking, why it is valuable, and obstacles to effective critical thinking*
- *To understand the components of an argument and to identify components of arguments situated in everyday discourse and technical writing*
- *To identify specific kinds of arguments, how to evaluate such arguments, and how to construct good arguments of that type*
- *To identify informal and formal errors in reasoning (i.e., fallacies), to understand why they are fallacies, and how to avoid them*

*Students will acquire this knowledge and develop these skills through in-class discussion of specific problems, regular practice assignments taken up in class, and exams.*

## **Meta-skills and/or Capabilities:**

*In addition to important contributions to one's personal development and life fulfillment, philosophy develops skills and abilities readily transferred to other academic disciplines, one's chosen profession or field of work, and community responsibilities. In this course specific capabilities you will develop include:*

- **Independent thinking:** students will develop intellectual habits preventing the passive acceptance of beliefs in various life settings (as students, employers/employees, and citizens) and how to guard against faulty methods of persuasion employed against the unwary
- **Critical thinking, creative reasoning, and self-awareness:** students will learn how to apply the tools of critical thinking in examining and formulating their own beliefs
- **Attention to detail:** students will learn how to watch for important details in formal writing and everyday discourse that point to specific types of arguments and areas where supposed evidence is either deficient or absent
- **Organizing and communicating one's ideas:** by combining diverse reasoning patterns students will be empowered to organize and integrate their own thinking and clearly communicate their ideas to diverse audiences
- **Successful transitioning to professional employment:** the skills developed within critical thinking provide proven success on professional exams (for example, the GRE, GMAT, & LSAT) and for admission to medical school (see "why study philosophy" at <https://sites.google.com/site/whystudyphilosophy/>); this course also provides specific capabilities and skills related to journalism and law
- **Development as a Global Citizen:** The ability to provide good arguments is an important part of mobilizing communities to engage in important courses of action that are likely to succeed and are sustainable as well as providing a basis for constructive resolution of conflict across traditional barriers

## **Required Text:**

An exercise book has been specifically prepared for this course that is available at the University of Regina bookstore in the philosophy textbook section. The price is \$16.00. The exercises have been adapted from Cathal Woods' *An Introduction to Reasoning* (2016). Adapted excerpts from the main textbook will be made available on UR Courses (see below).

## **Electronic Resources:**

The UR Courses site (<http://www.uregina.ca/urcourses/>) (go to: "Login to URCourses")) will be continually updated with lecture slides, textbook excerpts, study guides, announcements, etc.

## **Class Schedule**

Since assignments will be taken up during class, students will need to bring their exercise books to each class. Exercises should be completed for the date assigned. The following is a list of dates indicating important test dates, the final exam, and other significant dates.

Thursday, Sept. 8	First Day of Class
Tuesday, Sept. 27	<u>Test #1</u>
Tuesday, Oct. 18	<u>Test #2</u>
Thursday, Oct. 20	Guest lecture by Luther College Librarian
Thursday, Nov. 10	<u>Test #3</u>
Tuesday, Dec. 6	Review for final/Last Day of Class
Tuesday, Dec. 20	Final Exam (2:00 p.m.)

Topics to be covered include:

### **Real-World Reasoning**

- Identifying, Classifying & Analyzing Arguments
- Evaluating Everyday Arguments
- Diagramming Arguments

### **Deductive Reasoning: Propositional & Categorical Reasoning**

- Valid & Invalid Arguments
- Logically Structured Propositions
- Necessary & Sufficient Conditions
- Conditional, Disjunctive, & Hypothetical Syllogisms and Dilemmas
- Employing Logical Symbols and Evaluation Using the Truth Table Method
- Categorical Logic and Evaluation Using the Venn Diagram Method

### **Inductive Reasoning**

- Strong and Weak Arguments
- Explanation-Building
- Experimental Methods and Induction
- Causal Reasoning
- Inference To The Best Explanation
- Arguments by Analogy

## Evaluation Components and Due Dates

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Attendance/participation/assignments	10%	Conducted during regular class time
Test #1	20%	Tuesday, Sept. 27
Test #2	20%	Tuesday, Oct. 18
Test #3	20%	Thursday, Nov. 10
Final Exam	30%	Tues., Dec. 20 (2:00 pm)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

## Professional Conduct & Policies

### Academic Honesty:

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct undermine academic integrity and are punishable as outlined in [\*\*§5.14.2\*\*](#) of the 2016-17 University of Regina Calendar.

### Late Submission Policy:

Tests on dates other than those scheduled will only be allowed for legitimate absences (e.g. illness) accompanied by documented evidence explaining the absence (e.g., doctor's note, etc.). All students must write the final exam.

### Attendance Policy:

As part of a community of scholars, students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be present on exam dates. Students will find the UR Courses website useful in keeping up with the course in the event of illness. Completion of assignments and regular attendance is important for student success in this course. **Students who are persistently tardy or absent or who neglect academic work may be subject to disciplinary action and may be excluded from the final examinations ([§5.3](#) of the 2016-17 Calendar).**

### Use of Electronic Devices:

Students may use laptops/tablets during class for notetaking and other activities related to an examination of topics under discussion. Other uses should be of an exceptional nature and should not distract fellow students. Electronic devices cannot be used during examinations except where special permission has been granted by the instructor to meet a special needs accommodation. Evidence of possible use of an electronic device during an exam will be subject to appropriate penalties for cheating (see "Academic Honesty" above).

### Other Policies:

A list of **Luther Course Announcements** that inform students of important dates applicable to all courses along with a **Luther Safety Guide** on how to respond in cases of emergency while in the College is posted on URCourses.