

Reason, Logic, and the Idols of Thought

Phil 8
at Monday & Wednesday 1pm - 4:30pm
in Baskin Engineering, Room 372
University of California, Santa Cruz
Summer 2018
Department of Philosophy



Instructor

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Course Description

This course is about thinking and reasoning, about how human beings form judgments and make decisions, and what each of us can learn from philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science about how to reason more critically and effectively. Students will learn to employ the most relevant concepts of social, inductive, probabilistic, and statistical reasoning; will practice distilling and critically assessing the barrage of reasons and rhetoric they encounter every day—on campus, in the media, online, etc.; and will subject their own thinking and processes of reasoning to more rigorous standards.

Required Texts

There are three required texts for the course.

- (i) *Why We Argue (and how we should)* by Scott F. Aikin and Robert B. Talisse
- (ii) *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman
- (iii) *Mistakes were Made (but Not by Me)* by Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson

All other readings will be made available as PDFs on the course Canvas site. You may also find the following free ebooks helpful when writing your forum posts:

- (iv) *Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper*. Pryor, Jim. 2016.
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>
- (v) *A Rulebook for Arguments*. Weston, Anthony. Hackett Publishing Co.(Indianapolis) 2000.

Course Requirements

Midterm Exam (15% of final grade) and Final Exam (25% of final grade)

The midterm exam and the final exam will both be take-home exams. You will have about two hours to complete the exam (more details will be given the week before the exams). Exam questions will include quantitative problems on probability and statistics, questions about philosophical concepts, and short essay questions.

Forum Contributions (30% of final grade)

You must contribute a *thoughtful, original* post to the discussion forum on Canvas every week. Each discussion forum is centered around a prompt or topic. You must write a 400 word post in response to that prompt or topic. Discussion forum posts are graded on a 100 point scale. You must include citations for any outside material you use.

I will be using your discussion forum posts in lecture each week. Please make sure they are well written and well thought out so that you can impress your instructors and colleagues.

Reading Quizzes (20% of final grade)

At the beginning of each class there will be a multiple choice quiz based on the readings assigned for that class. The quizzes are very easy, and are designed to make sure students have read the material. Only the seven highest reading quiz grades will count towards the final grade (the two lowest scores will be dropped). There are no make-ups on the reading quizzes.

Participation (10% of final grade)

Your in-class participation will make up 10% of your final grade. Please make sure to participate in discussion and group projects.

Course Policies

Late assignments and make-up tests are not allowed, except for documented emergencies/ illness, DRC accommodations, or conflicts with religious observance. Please notify the instructor in advance of your need for an exception to course deadlines and attendance requirements.

Please direct any questions you may have regarding assignments, evaluative feedback, or administrative concerns to the instructor. Note regarding all email correspondence: Please be kind and considerate. Because substantive philosophical questions about readings, arguments, or ideas often require back and forth discussion, they are best answered in person—during office hours, or class discussion. When sending an email include “PHIL 11” in the subject line.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course! If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me after class or during my office hours, preferably within the first week of the session. The sooner you let me know your situation, the sooner I can assist you. Contact DRC at 831- 459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. For more information please visit UCSC's Disability Resource Center homepage: <http://drc.ucsc.edu/index.shtml> .

You are responsible for being familiar with UCSC's policies on academic honesty (http://www1.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/index.html). Remember that I forbid the use of outside sources in your midterm paper and final paper.