

PHILOSOPHY 101 – LOGIC, REASONING & PERSUASION

DAYS & TIMES: Tuesday/Thursday 4:30 – 5:50

ROOM: Hardenbergh A7

INSTRUCTOR: Jennifer Burgis

EMAIL: jennburgis@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS: Monday 4:30 – 6:00

Tuesday 3:00 – 4:00

Wednesday 4:30 – 6:00

Thursday 3:00 – 4:00

@Barnes & Noble Starbucks, College Ave.

WHY SHOULD I WANT TO TAKE LRP?

Every choice you make depends on reasoning. Good reasoning leads to good choices. Bad reasoning . . . you get the picture. This class will show you bad reasoning in action and provide strategies for how to fix it. At the end of the semester, you will be able to point out all the mistakes your friends are making. They will, of course, appreciate this every time.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

REFLECTION PAPERS – 20%

Reflection papers are no-shorter-than-one-no-longer-than-two page papers that will cover some point that we discussed in class and express your own opinion about it. Don't just recap the facts that we covered – tell me what *you* think! The due dates are indicated on the schedule below. Each paper should deal with something we have done in class following the previous due date. There will be 10 reflections and each one is worth 2 points.

EXAMS – 80%

We will have four exams, each covering the material between the previous exam and the current one. (There is no cumulative final.) I will post study guides prior to each one. If you can answer all the questions on the study guide, you will ace the exam. All exams will be a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer questions (1-3 sentences) and long answer questions (3-5 sentences). Each exam will be worth 20 points.

CLASS PARTICIPATION – 0%

You will not be forced to talk or graded on whether you do or not. However, the more class discussion there is, the more fun the time you spend in here will be. For example, you can debate the existence of the “hot hand” in basketball amongst yourselves, or you can listen to me lecture about it for an hour and twenty minutes. I'll leave it up to you!

That being said, I know that talking in front of your classmates makes some of you uncomfortable. If this is you, please tell me. I want you to enjoy your time in this class – not sit in fear that your name will be called.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY GRADE IS?

The possible number of points you can earn in this class is 100. Your total is your grade. Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard Rutgers scale.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER THINGS I NEED TO KNOW?

GRADED WORK

Please hold on to everything that has a grade on it. Sakai is a mysterious entity that has been known to randomly and inexplicably eat people's grades. At the end of the semester, please check to make sure everything is in order.

ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

I don't take attendance, but I will notice if you're not here! I will also notice if you come to class late – as will everyone around you who is attempting to listen to my brilliant and fascinating words. Please be considerate.

CELL PHONES/ LAPTOPS

I am not going to make the futile attempt to institute a device-free classroom policy. Common sense works well here. I understand that a vitally important text or two will come in during class. You are not a phone ninja. Attempts to surreptitiously check your phone without being seen are more time-consuming and distracting (and hilarious to watch from up here) than just doing it normally. However, spending an extended amount of time on your phone will ensure your becoming a vital part of whatever discussion we are having.

As for laptops, my only request is that if you are using this class period as your YouTube or Netflix time, you sit in the back. If someone around you is not honoring this request and is distracting you with the sneezing baby panda, please let me know and I will discreetly ask this person to relocate.

CHEATING

Do not do it. Consequences are severe and will be upsetting to you, your parents, and me.

WHAT DO I DO IF I'M HAVING TROUBLE?

Come and talk to me! I once had a student describe my office hours as “lit,” and I think that’s fair. I have them in the Starbucks at the B&N, so if you come by, I’ll treat you to the beverage of your choice. Or you can email me, but there’s no beverage that comes with that.

WHO ARE YOU?

Excellent question. Academic stuff first: As an undergrad, I double-majored in both philosophy and English. I received my Master’s degree from the University of Houston and I am *thisclose* to getting my PhD from the University of Miami (The U!). My dissertation is on the inclusion of non-human animals in a contractualist system of morality and is just as exciting as it sounds. My specialty is moral philosophy but I can converse competently in almost any area other than Eastern philosophy and political philosophy.

The fun stuff: You may know or have taken classes from Ben Burgis – that’s my husband. We have a miniature schnauzer named Lucy and a black cat named Shabazz whom we acquired while living in South Korea. Thus, they are known as “the Koreans.” If all of you are ok with it, Lucy will come to class on occasion. She’s delightful – you can ask Priyanca! I love the Astros, reading young adult series, and the card game Fluxx. Book recommendations and Fluxx challenges are always welcome.



WHAT IS OUR SCHEDULE?

Introduction

Tues 9-4

Arguments/Fallacies

Thurs 9-6

Tues 9-11

Thurs 9-13*

Tues 9-18

Thurs 9-20

Tues 9-25*

Exam One

Thurs 9-27

The Misperception & Misinterpretation of Random Data/The Misinterpretation of Incomplete & Unrepresentative Data/Motivational Determinants of Belief

Tues 10-2

Thurs 10-4*

Tues 10-9

Thurs 10-11*

Tues 10-16

Thurs 10-18*

Tues 10-23

Thurs 10-25*

Exam Two

Tues 10-30

Wording, Framing, Ordering & Pseudo-Opinions/Automatic Pilot, Implicit Associations & Sensation Transference

Thurs 11-1

Tues 11-6*

Thurs 11-8

Tues 11-13*

Exam Three

Thurs 11-15

Poor Reasoning & Injustice

Tues 11-20

Tues 11-27

Thurs 11-29*

Tues 12-4

Thurs 12-6*

Exam Four

Tues 12-11

*A reflection paper is due by midnight.

The material for this class has been taken from:

Unfair: The New Science of Criminal Injustice by Adam Benforado

American Public Opinion by Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin

How We Know What Isn't So by Thomas Gilovich

Blink by Malcolm Gladwell

The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell

The Psychology of Judgment and Decision Making by Scott Plous

How to Think About Weird Things by Theodore Schick Jr. and Lewis Vaughn

Crimes Against Logic by Jamie Whyte

The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion by John R. Zaller

Past student reflection papers and class discussion