Philosophy 109
Introduction to Formal Reasoning and Decision Making (Online)
Spring semester 2019

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Introduction

Hello! If you are reading this it means you have enrolled for Philosophy 109: Introduction to Formal Reasoning and Decision Making. This is a lower-division, undergraduate course and it is an online course. Being an introductory course, it aims to introduce students to the fundamentals of logical thinking, both deductive and inductive forms, and to the basic principles of decision theory. The course has no prerequisites: it is designed to familiarize students with basic logical principles and techniques that can be applied to real-world quantitative reasoning problems. As such, it does presuppose any significant formal (or mathematical) background on behalf of the student. The idea is to make the material as simple and fundamental as possible.

Disclaimer about the online course

It is my goal to create a learning environment that is both accessible and fosters self-sufficiency and autodidactic skills in this course. However, there are many challenges inherent to taking courses online, and in this case, you will face some additional demands. I will be teaching this course from abroad (I currently reside outside New Jersey), which means that I cannot provide face-to-face meetings on campus or host an introduction workshop to meet you.

Course website

This course uses the Sakai learning platform. For those of you who've not used this platform, it is user-friendly and easy to navigate. All course materials (except for your books) will be made available on Sakai. Likewise, all assignments and exams will be distributed and graded via Sakai. Information about how to access assignments and exams, and how to use Sakai's assessment tools will be included in an introductory email to the class.

All information pertaining to the course curriculum will be available on Sakai starting January 22nd, 2019. Locate the '**RESOURCES**' tab on the home page (on the left-hand side of the page) and search its contents. Here you will find separate folders labeled 'Curriculum', 'Lectures", "Assignments", "Exams", "Additional reading materials", and "Answer keys". The curriculum folder contains a semester plan which lists weekly readings and a tentative assignment / exam schedule.

Textbooks and instructional Materials

A Concise Introduction to Logic (13th edition), by Patrick Hurley
Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory, by Michael Resnik

In addition to the main texts, I will provide instructional materials in the form of:

- Lecture notes
- Supplementary readings
- Web content (the internet is a wonderful place – expect many links to instructional videos)
- Video lectures (if requested)

Availability

I will have weekly "office hours" in which I respond to emails and will make time for video chats via Skype. My Skype user name is james.d.grayot. If you email me outside of my office hours, I ask that you patiently await my response.

- Office hours: MWF 9am – 3pm (EST) (3pm – 9pm CEU)

Grading policy

- Weekly assignments: 10 %.

There will be 10 homework assignments worth 5 points each. You will submit via the course website.

I will set it so that each assignment is "open" by default, meaning you can access each week's assignment anytime up until the deadline, at which point the assignment "expires" and you can no longer submit it. It is up to you to submit your assignment before the expiration time (which is set 11:55 pm on the specified due dates). All assignments can be found in the '**ASSIGNMENTS'** tab, which is where they are to be uploaded. However, you can find duplicates of all assignments in the '**RESOURCES**' tab after they are posted – I provide an answer key for each assignment after the due date. (More information about how to access and submit assignments on Sakai will be made available during the first week.)

The weekly assignments are not graded for accuracy. They are an opportunity for you to apply and test concepts and formal techniques covered in the course readings each week. Many of these assignments will be paired with lecture notes which will help you along the way. It may help to think of the weekly assignments as proxies for class participation. I will collate all received assignments each week and apply that to your "participation" grade, which is worth 10%.

NOTE: While this is an introductory course, it moves along quickly, and one can quickly get behind if they do not understand each new concept or formal technique. I therefore encourage you to contact me if you are not grasping the material or are having difficulty applying the concepts / techniques.

- Exams: 20% each (60% collectively)

There will be 3 exams: two on the logic module and one on the decision theory module. Like the assignments, you will submit the exams through the course website. However, unlike the assignments, the exams are not "open" by default – they will only be accessible during a specified window of time. You will be given 36 hours to complete each exam. This means that you have to plan your time accordingly. (More information about how to access and submit exams on Sakai will be made available prior to the first exam.)

- Final Examination: 30%

The final exam will be cumulative, and will focus on student understanding of central issues and themes from the whole course. You will be required to take this exam *in-person* (with your student ID) at the university with a designated proctor.

Point break down:

Assignments 5pts (x 10) = 50 pts
Exams 100pts (x 3) = 300 pts
Final exam 150pts (x 1) = 150 pts
Total points: 500

Academic integrity and anonymous grading policy

All students are expected to adhere to Rutgers policies concerning academic integrity. Just because this is an online course does not mean that you are held a different standard than in-person courses. If you have any questions about what the standards of academic integrity are, you can visit the **student conduct** page. In short: You may consult your notes and textbook during the exams, but you may not use any other on-line resources and you may not work with other students. All work you submit must be your own

This course employs a blind-grading policy for all exams (not for assignments). This means that exam submissions are anonymous during the grading process. If, for whatever reason, you require me to look over your exam before it is graded (for instance, because you encounter technical issues in Sakai), I will require your permission in the form of a confirmation before disabling the blind-grading system and making the necessary changes.