PHIL105/G Course Overview

PHIL105 is an introduction to the construction and analysis of arguments. The aim is to help students develop the ability to evaluate other people's reasoning, as well as the ability to construct good arguments of their own. We will use examples from many sources, including editorials and letters to the editor, advertisements and political debates. A variety of kinds of argument will be considered, along with the various ways in which they can go wrong. The course deals with logic informally - there is very little use of symbols and no mathematical logic. The assessment is via two tests and a final examination. The first test is worth 25%, the second is worth 35%, and the final examination is worth 40%.

The Team

Contact the PHIL105/G Team at philosophy105@gmail.com

Course director:

Jonathan McKeown-Green
Room 207-201

Course lecturer:

Carl Webber
Room 207-205

Graduate Teaching Assistants:

(TBA)

A mastery of both written and spoken English is essential to obtaining a satisfactory passing grade for this course.

How to do well in Phil105/G

Follow these ten instructions and things should go well for you. Good luck!

1. Attend all classes.

Classes are held for Stream 1 on *Mondays at 10am and Wednesdays at 11am* in *260-098,* and for Stream 2 on *Mondays and Wednesdays at 1pm* in *260-098.* Material from the slide shows displayed during classes will also be posted on CECIL by the end of day for each class. (To find out about CECIL, see 9 below.)

2. Attend all tutorials.

In tutorials, you will be able to take part in informal discussions and look over the exercises for each class. All students should have signed up for a tutorial stream when they enrolled for the course via *Student Learning Online.* If you have not signed up for a tutorial then your enrolment is not complete.

3. Read the class readings.

For each class you attend there are corresponding class readings. You can access the class readings by going to the 'Knowledge Map' in CECIL. (These are available in .doc and .pdf formats.)

4. Work through the class exercises.

You can access the class exercises by going to the 'Knowledge Map' in CECIL. These exercises will be discussed at length in tutorials. We reckon that the more exercises you complete successfully, the better

your chances are for a decent final grade.

5. Try the Practice Tests and Exams.

As each assessment task draws near we will publish on CECIL practice tests and practice exams. They will be the same format as the actual test and exam that you will be required to complete for this course. (For assessment details, see 10 below.)

6. Ensure that you check your UOA student email address ***regularly****.*

This is important, since we will sometimes need to send important announcements to the whole class.

7. Attend the PHIL105 Field Trip to the North Head Tunnels In Devonport.

As part of our discussion of arguments, we consider one case study in some detail. The North Head tunnel complex was built in the late 19th century as part of Auckland's fortifications. It is now in the hands of the Department of Conservation. A number of interesting stories are told about the tunnels and we will explore these stories in class. You have an opportunity to explore the tunnels themselves and this may help you to engage with the discussion. The trip is not compulsory — we cannot force you to come. But it is highly recommended and it's a good chance to get to know the rest of the class.

Meet at summit on *Sunday 22 September 1:30-3:00pm*

8. Consult CECIL Regularly.

Cecil is a web-based online learning management system that can be used to access course-related information. This information includes class readings, class slides; class exercises, any special announcements, extra practice tests and assignments, as well as marks for assessment. In particular, you should familiarise yourself with the Knowledge Map on CECIL, since this gives you quick access to the resources associated with each class.

Accessing Cecil

- Cecil is accessed at: http://cecil@aucklandd.ac.nz/login.aspx

- Login by typing your NetID (which should be the same as your UPI) and NetAccount Password in the fields provided.

- Once the Cecil Student Interface has been displayed, select Phil105 from the All Courses field list. On the left hand side of the screen, choose a suitable option from the course displayed.

Changing your CECIL preferences

- Click on the "Personal Settings" (bottom left of the window).
- Make sure that the email address you check most regularly appears in the box next to: "Your Email Address in Cecil".
- It may also be useful to set your start page as "Knowledge Map" for this course.

Student Support for CECIL

- IC Help (Kate Edger Information Commons)
  Phone extension 82333
  Note: If phoning from outside the UOA, students should phone
  (09) 303-5959 to access IC Help.

- Online help is available from the CECIL web site: (http://cecil.auckland.ac.nz/help/cwi7student/cecil_7_student_help.htm)
- Cecil Service Desk operates from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm. To contact the Service Desk, phone (09) 373-7599 ext. 85100

9. Complete the Assessment Requirements.

There are two tests and a final examination.

- The first test will be held on ***Friday 16 August 6-8pm***. You will have one and a half hours to complete it. You must report to your assigned room by 6pm on the day of the test. Details about the test location will be announced closer to the test.
- The second test will be held at on ***Friday 27 September 6-8pm***. You will again have one and a half hours to complete it. You must report to your assigned room by 6pm on the day of the test. Details about the test location will be announced closer to the test.
- The final examination will be two hours. The final examination is worth 40% of the final mark.

Students must pass the final examination to qualify to pass this course.

Problems with Completing Assessment

If you cannot make one of the test times you will need to email the lecturer well before the test date to inform them so that an alternate test time can be arranged. Work-related commitments are not usually a good excuse as you should have organised with your employer to be free during test times. That's why we announce them well in advance. Please do not approach the tutors with concerns about the test times.

If you are ill prior to or during any test, you will need to visit Student Health (one week after the test at the latest) and set up an appointment with them so that you can get a green SA46 form (Application for Aegrotat/Compassionate Consideration).

10. Contact any of the PHIL105 Team if you have any questions.

Email philosophy105@gmail.com for any queries regarding content or administrivia. Make sure to include your full name and student ID in the subject line of any correspondence.

PHIL105/G Class Schedule

Monday 22 July
Class 1: Illusions in reasoning
Systematic errors in reasoning as a sort of illusion; illusions in theoretical reasoning; illusions in practical reasoning; descriptive versus normative rationality; why we should care about illusions in reasoning; our aim for this course; how logic might help us to avoid illusions in theoretical reasoning.

Wednesday 24 July
Class 2: A proposition for you: logic begins
Propositions; sentences versus propositions; some important relations that can hold among propositions (inconsistency and entailment).

Monday 29 July
Class 3: For argument's sake: introducing the argument
Strong suggestion (one more relation that can hold among propositions); introducing arguments as relations among propositions; conclusions; premises; standard form of arguments; evaluation of arguments: what makes an argument good?

Wednesday 31 July
Class 4: Arguments in the wild: detecting and extracting arguments from their contexts
Argument evaluation in more detail: logical evaluation (validity, strength); material evaluation (premise plausibility). Recovering hidden facts about the components of arguments (suppressed premises; suppressed conclusions; disguised premises and conclusions).

Monday 5 August
Class 5: Arguments within arguments: complex arguments
Recovering hidden facts about arguments, continued (standards of proof: deductive versus non-deductive arguments). Argument analysis (what is an argument made of?); arrow diagrams as an alternative to standard forms that is especially useful for analysing complex arguments; arguments in series.

Wednesday 7 August
Class 6: Arguments within arguments: complex arguments (continued)
Various kinds of complex arguments: arguments in series reviewed; independent arguments in parallel; codependent arguments in parallel; words that indicate complex arguments; building complex arguments from simple ones; analysing complex arguments into simple ones.

Monday 12 August
Class 7: The story so far: putting it together: detection, analysis and evaluation of arguments
Argument detection revisited; argument analysis revisited; argument evaluation revisited; a simple argument as a case study (an argument for the conclusion that Creationism should not be taught in schools); a complex argument as a case study (an argument for the conclusion that battery farming is wrong).

Wednesday 14 August
Class 8: A time of great revision
Practice exercises with the same structure as those in the upcoming test.

Thursday 15 August 5-7pm (LibB28)
Revision tutorial – test 1

Friday 16 August 6-8 (T.B.A.)
Test 1 (25% of final mark)

Monday 19 August
Class 9: The Critical Thinker's tool-kit
Supplementing our logical tools with some other tools: Argument detection, analysis and evaluation revisited yet again; starting with a blank slate; assigning the burden of proof; the principle of charity (an aid to argument analysis); irreverence (an aid to argument evaluation); generating counterexamples (another aid to evaluation).

Wednesday 21 August
Class 10: Fallacies and heuristics
Illusions in reasoning again: Bad arguments (arguments that fail logically or materially); failure of relevance (a special case of logical failure); fallacies (bad arguments that are likely to be persuasive); examples of fallacies (the Monty Hall Problem and the base rate fallacy); psychological speculations about persuasiveness (wishful thinking, availability biases, and more).

Monday 26 August
Class 11: May the Source be with you: genetic arguments
Distinguishing message from messenger: a question of relevance: Evaluating genetic arguments (in particular, deciding when to regard appeals to the source of information as irrelevant): ad hominem arguments; inverse ad hominem arguments; appeals to authority (a special case of the inverse ad hominem); appeals to popularity and to tradition (special cases of the appeal to authority).

Wednesday 28 August
Class 12: Red and other herrings: fallacies of relevance and beyond
Arguments whose premises are all irrelevant to their conclusions: red herring fallacies (irrelevant source reviewed, irrelevant outcome, irrelevant topic); arguments with redundant premises; fallacies of suppressed evidence; arguments that are bad because of ambiguity (lexical or structural) or because of vagueness.

Mid Semester Break

Monday 16 September
Class 13: The things people say: Testimony — Where it comes from and where it gets you
Appeals to authority reviewed; when is eye witness testimony reliable?; when is hearsay reliable?; inferences to the best explanation; the "Just So" fallacy.

Wednesday 18 September
Class 14: Conspiracies and the evidence
The "Just So" Fallacy reviewed; conspiracy theories; Straw man arguments; the "fallacy" fallacy; appeals to ignorance; question-begging arguments; complex questions.

Sunday 22 September 1:30-3:00pm
North Head field trip

Monday 23 September
Class 15: Tunnel visions: North Head — The case study
The history of the Occupation of North Head. Good and bad arguments that appear as part of this history.

Wednesday 25 September
Class 16: Do I need to know this? – Revision
Reviewing our strategy for diagnosing flaws in arguments, in the form of practice exercises with the same structure as the upcoming test.

Thursday 26 5-7pm (LibB28)
Revision tutorial – test 2

Friday 27 September 6-8pm (T.B.A.)
Test 2 (35% of final mark)

Monday 30 September
Class 17: The Good, the bad and the persuasive — Constructing arguments for our own conclusions
What we want from an argument (reviewed); making good arguments persuasive; a method for constructing good arguments.

Wednesday 2 October
Class 18: It's like this: arguments by analogy
Analogies; illustrative analogies versus arguments by analogy; deductive versus non-deductive arguments by analogy; what makes an argument by analogy good?; bad arguments by analogy (implausible principle; faulty analogy); the fallacy of analogical literalism; the fallacy of illustrative analogical argument.

Monday 7 October
Class 19: A formal affair, forms of propositions and arguments that depend on them
Singular propositions; generalisations (universal, existential, statistical); negations; disjunctions; conjunctions; negations of disjunctions and conjunctions; evaluating types of argument whose evaluation depends on details of their structures (false and other dilemmas, Golden Mean arguments).

Wednesday 9 October
Class 20: A Touch of Class: arguments involving generalisations
Categorical arguments: Universal and existential generalisations and their negations revisited; arguments involving such propositions (categorical arguments); evaluating categorical arguments for validity (the Venn diagram test).

Monday 14 October
Class 21: Conditions Apply: arguments involving conditional propositions
The Wason selection test (a psychological experiment); necessary versus sufficient conditions; conditional propositions; biconditionals; famous valid argument types involving conditional propositions (*modus ponens, modus tollens, hypothetical syllogisms*); evaluating slippery slopes arguments; famous invalid argument forms (the fallacy of affirming the consequent; the fallacy of denying the antecedent).

Wednesday 16 October
Class 22: Lost causes: causation and correlation
Causal arguments: Different concepts of causation; equivocation on causal words; testing causal claims (Mill's method of Difference; randomised trials; "before and after" trials); causation versus mere correlation; the fallacy of questionable cause.

Monday 21 October
Class 23: Figure painting and figure skating: Statistical reasoning
Arguments involving numbers are hard to evaluate; arguments involving claims about populations; sampling; empty statistical claims; arguments involving insufficient statistical evidence.

Wednesday 23 October
Class 24: Conclusions: rational and other life styles
Working through a practice examination with the same structure as the actual upcoming one.

Thursday 24 October 5-7pm (LibB28)
Revision tutorial – final examination