

PHIL 1504: Language & Logic

CRNs: 16656 through 16661

Lectures: MW 1:25pm-2:15pm (NCB 260)

Friday recitations occur at various times/places; check your schedule.

Instructor: Ted Parent, PhD	<u>GTAs</u>
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Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:30pm, and by appointment.

Note: Your GTA will provide you with an additional syllabus for the recitation sections.

Logic is the study of methods and principles used to evaluate reasoning, as expressed in a language. In this course, we will introduce some of the ways that logicians evaluate reasoning, and learn to apply them with respect to our own thinking and writing.

Reading Materials: ALL readings are available online; I recommend you bookmark the course website, which is at <http://tparent.net/Phil1504.html> On the schedule below, the reading for the week is listed within [square brackets]

Course Assignments:

- (1) There will be four quizzes (check the schedule below). Each quiz is worth 15% of your final grade. If you are absent for a quiz, you will have only ONE opportunity for a make-up. Any further missed quizzes will receive an F.
- (2) Homework is due on selected days (see below) at the START of class. The homeworks are collectively 15% of your final grade. **No late homeworks accepted** unless there is *hard evidence* of a legitimate emergency.
- (3) An essay on Plato's *Crito* is due at the end of the term (5 pages max). Further instruction will be provided later. The essay is worth 15% of the final grade.
- (4) Participation is worth 10% of your final grade.

Note: I *insist* that students show courtesy and respect to each other and to the GTAs. I will require you to *withdraw from the course* if you fail to comply.

NO LAPTOPS! Logic requires lots of concentration, and laptops create too much distraction. (A single laptop on the web will distract most everyone sitting around you.) Relatedly, please **do not be late** and remember to **turn off your cell phone**.

Despite the remarks in boldface, if you have special needs due to a disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.), accommodations can be made. But in that case, please contact me about this as soon as possible.

Many students find logic to be especially difficult. I thus recommend getting an *early start* on the homeworks, and getting a *logic buddy* as well. However, logic buddies must not simply divvy up the homework exercises between them and share answers. Rather, I recommend completing all exercises individually, and then getting together to *compare*

your work. When discrepancies arise, you can then figure out the right answer together, which is often *highly* effective in learning logic. **But note:** No collaboration is allowed for the take-home portion of the second quiz.

The grading scale for the course is as follows (raw scores will be rounded):

Percentage	Letter Grade	G.P.A. scale
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.75
88-89	B+	3.5
83-87	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.75
78-79	C+	2.5

73-77	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.75
68-69	D+	1.5
63-67	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.75
59 and below	F	0.0

The office of Academic Integrity has asked that all syllabi include the following statement:

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states: **“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”**

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code. For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit: www.honorsystem.vt.edu.

We heartily endorse this statement. Thank you.

Tentative Schedule

WEEK ONE

Jan. 18 Intro Session Why care about this class? [Pessimism about Arguments handout] *Optional:* Ruth Chang video on “hard choices:”

WEEK TWO

Jan. 23, 25 Arguments Five Types of Arguments. [5 Argument Types handout]

WEEK THREE

Jan 30; Feb. 1 Argument types (cont’)

WEEK FOUR

Feb 6 Argument types (cont’)

Feb 8 First HW assignment due (in lecture)

Feb 10 First Quiz (in your recitation section)

WEEK FIVE

Feb. 13, 15 Informal Fallacies [Informal Fallacies handout]

WEEK SIX

Feb. 20, 22 Informal Fallacies (cont')

WEEK SEVEN

Feb. 27 Cognitive Biases and Ideal Inquiry. [Cog Biases handout; Huemer, "Why People are Irrational about Politics."]

Mar. 1 Second HW assignment due (in lecture)

Mar. 3 Second Quiz take-home portion due, and Second Quiz in-class portion (both in your recitation section).

WEEK EIGHT

Mar. 6, 8 NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE

Mar. 13, 15 Translating English and SL [Bergmann et al., ch. 2 (excerpt)]

WEEK TEN

Mar. 20, 22 Translating (cont')

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar. 27, 29 Truth-Tables [Bergmann et. al., ch. 3 (excerpts)]

Mar. 31 Third HW assignment due (in your recitation section)

WEEK TWELVE

Apr. 3 Third Quiz (in lecture)

Apr. 5 Deductive Argument Forms [Howard-Snyder et al., ch. 1 (excerpts); Famous Forms handout]

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Apr. 10, 12 Formal Fallacies [Formal Fallacies handout]

Apr. 14 Fourth HW assignment due (in your recitation section)

WEEK FOURTEEN

Apr. 17 Fourth Quiz (in lecture)

Apr. 19 Applying It to Your Writing [Plato, "Crito"] *Optional*: Argument Reconstruction handout

WEEK FIFTEEN

Apr 24 , 26 Dialectic: Objections & Replies [MLK, "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail (excerpt);" Writing Advice handout] *Optional*: Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Subjectivism (excerpt)"

WEEK SIXTEEN

May 1, 3 Dialectic (cont')

Essay due on May 9th at 5:25pm in the lecture room. Early submissions appreciated—
inquire with your GTA.