



**UNSW** | Arts and  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES | Social Sciences

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & LANGUAGES

ARTS1362

PHILOSOPHY:  
THINKING ABOUT REASONING

Semester 2, 2013

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## COURSE STAFF

### Course Coordinator Details:

Name: Dr Anthony Corones  
Room: MB320  
Phone: 9385 2357  
Email: a.corones@unsw.edu.au  
Consultation Times: Monday 2-3 pm; Wednesday 2-3 pm.

### Lecturer Details:

Name: Assoc Prof Peter Slezak  
Room: MB315  
Phone: 9385 2422  
Email: p.slezak@unsw.edu.au  
Consultation Times: Please email or ring to make an appointment

### Tutor Details:

Note: both Anthony Corones and Peter Slezak will be taking the tutorials for this course.

## COURSE DETAILS

### Course Description

Focuses on thinking clearly, reasoning productively and arguing well. These are essential skills in life and work. The course investigates reasoning and argumentative strategies, good reasoning, as well as poorly-formed arguments. Philosophy has a lot to say about these practices, and also about the whole nature of human reason.

### Lectures

Wed 3-5 pm Biomed Theatre D

Students must also enrol in a tutorial.

*Students are expected to attend at least 80% of classes in this course (this includes lectures as well as tutorials). Those who do not meet this requirement may receive an Unsatisfactory Fail (UF) grade even if they have attained more than 50 in the course mark.*

## COURSE AIMS

The course aims to introduce to students knowledge and understanding of the following:

- a number of major philosophical issues including arguments for or against proposed solutions;
- the wide range of application of techniques of philosophical reasoning;
- the place of philosophy, its ideas and techniques, in contemporary debates;
- cogent arguments supported by evidence.

It also aims to assist in the development of the following skills:

- ability to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of arguments on both sides of a philosophical question;
- ability to identify common persuasive stratagems that cannot withstand philosophical scrutiny;

- ability to evaluate the success of standard arguments using a variety of techniques of formal and informal methods of reasoning as appropriate, together with an ability to recognise any relevant fallacies;
- ability to evaluate the relevance and quality of sources of information in relation to particular arguments;
- ability to formulate a coherent argument using a range of argumentative methods and drawing on plausible evidence.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this course students:

1. Will understand the nature of reasoning both theoretical and practical, decision-making and the nature of rationality;
2. Will have familiarity with a range of argumentation strategies (This should enhance students' capacity for analytical and critical thinking);
3. Will understand poor argumentation including basic fallacies in reasoning, unwarranted assumptions and faulty inference;
4. Will be able to engage in independent and reflective learning through assessing and responding to ideas;
5. Would have developed written and oral communication skills through participation in class discussions and working at assignments;
6. Will be able to appreciate and manifest respect for ethical practice and social responsibility through understanding the fundamental role of good reasoning in society.

The graduate attributes this course seeks to help students develop are:

1. Ability to read and interpret texts sensitively and carefully, especially appreciating the importance of intellectual tradition;
2. Ability to evaluate and critically analyse beliefs, ideas and information using a range of techniques of philosophical reasoning;
3. Appreciation of the importance of reasoned enquiry and an ability to apply tools of philosophical analysis to a range of issues including those in contemporary debates;
4. Ability to present coherent and persuasive arguments;
5. Skills of effective communication;
6. Appreciation of, and respect for, diversity;
7. Respect for ethical practice and social responsibility.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING RATIONALE

This course aims both to introduce students to key ideas and strategies in good reasoning, and to equip students with the tools and strategies for application in thinking and writing.

Therefore, you will get the most out of this course if you ensure:

- (a) that you understand the lectures each week;
- (b) that you prepare well for tutorials.

In brief, this course encourages and expects that students are active learners, engaging with the materials and thinking about how they can benefit from the course right through the duration of the course.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

Lectures and Tutorials. This course uses the lecture-and-tutorial teaching mode.

Tutorials. Because this course also aims to help students develop some critical thinking and good reasoning skills, we have developed tutorials to help students practice and exercise their skills. Typically, tutorials provide for more in-depth discussions and therefore we envisage

that these tutorials will give students opportunity to further engage in analysis of selected topics.

**Assessments.** The assessments for this course have been designed to reflect the student learning outcomes of this course and a number of the UNSW graduate attributes. For assessment details, please see the assessment section.

**Participation.** One important way to manifest your critical thinking skills is to *use* them. Therefore, this course emphasises participation. In particular, thoughtful engagement with others in tutorials is an important vehicle for developing such skills.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Weeks	Topics by lecture	Date	Lecturer	Tutorial topics
1	Introduction	Wed 31/7	AC	<b>No tutorials in Week 1</b>
	Reason & argument	Wed 31/7	AC	
2	Deductive reasoning	Wed 7/8	AC	Reason & argument
	Inductive reasoning	Wed 7/8	AC	
3	Fallacious reasoning	Wed 14/8	AC	Deductive & inductive reasoning
	Analogical reasoning	Wed 14/8	AC	
4	Reason & truth in Classical Greek philosophy	Wed 21/8	AC	Fallacious & analogical reasoning
	Reason & truth in Classical Chinese philosophy	Wed 21/8	AC	
5	Reason & wisdom in Classical Greek philosophy	Wed 28/8	AC	Reason & truth in Classical Greek & Chinese philosophy
	Reason & wisdom in Classical Chinese philosophy	Wed 28/8	AC	
6	Hume on reason and the passions	Wed 4/9	AC	Reason & wisdom in Classical Greek & Chinese philosophy
	Hume on reason and the passions	Wed 4/9	AC	
7	Bacon, Descartes & Hume	Wed 11/9	PS	Hume on reason and the passions
	Bacon, Descartes & Hume	Wed 11/9	PS	

8	Reasoning & rationality in science	Wed 18/9	PS	Bacon, Descartes & Hume
	Reasoning & rationality in science	Wed 18/9	PS	
9	Rationality & alien cultures	Wed 25/9	PS	Reasoning & rationality in science
	Rationality & alien cultures	Wed 25/9	PS	
10	Individual judgment	Wed 9/9	PS	Rationality & alien cultures
	Individual judgment	Wed 9/9	PS	
11	Social choice	Wed 16/10	PS	Individual judgment
	Social choice	Wed 16/10	PS	
12	Risk & rational reasoning	Wed 23/10	PS	Social choice
	<b>CLASS TEST (4pm, in the lecture theatre)</b>	Wed 23/10		
13	No lectures in Week 13			Risk & rational reasoning

## COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Student evaluative feedback on this course is welcomed and is gathered periodically, using among other means UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.

## TEXTS

The tutorial readings will be available on Moodle. There is no textbook for the course.

Students seeking further resources can also obtain assistance from the UNSW Library. The library has a good number of books on Critical Thinking, Formal and Informal Reasoning. One starting point for assistance is the Philosophy subject guide: <http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/content.php?pid=28808&sid=210422> Further, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu>) is good general resource for topics in philosophy.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Time on task (hrs)	Learning outcomes assessed	Graduate attributes assessed	Due date
Critical analysis	500 words	15%	12.5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	Thu 22 Aug
Tutorial journal 1	1,500 words: that is, about 300 words for each tutorial topic for weeks 2-6	20%	15	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Thu 5 Sep
Tutorial journal 2	1,500 words: that is, about 300 words for each tutorial topic for weeks 7-11	20%	15	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Thu 17 Oct
Class test	Short answer	20%	15	1, 2, 4, 5,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Wed 23 Oct
Essay	1,200 words	25%	24	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Thu 31 Oct

### Critical analysis:

The critical analysis exercise involves short formal academic writing, and is a formative assessment. It assesses conceptual understanding of course material, capacity for critical and analytical thinking, and communication skills. Assignments will be returned to students with written feedback.

This exercise involves critical analyses of a short passage. Details will be posted in Moodle. The assessment criteria include: (1) demonstrated understanding of the passage in question; (2) ability to critically review arguments and ideas using the argument tools and strategies discussed in class; and (3) ability to express yourself clearly.

### Tutorial journals:

The tutorial journal exercise involves informal writing (that is, writing that is typically unstructured and does not follow generic academic essay conventions), and is a formative and evaluative assessment. It requires about 300 words in response to each tutorial topic for the weeks covered by each submission (see above). It assesses conceptual understanding of tutorial material, capacity for critical and analytical thinking, and communication skills.

Tutorial journal 1 will be returned to students with written feedback. The assessment criteria include: (1) demonstrated understanding of the tutorial material; (2) ability to critically review arguments and ideas using the argument tools and strategies discussed in class; and (3) ability to express yourself clearly in informal writing.

### Class test:

This exercise is designed to test your comprehension of a variety of topics covered in lectures through the semester. Details will be posted in Moodle. It is a summative and formative assessment.

### Essay:

The essay involves extended formal writing and research on set topics (topic details to be posted in Moodle). It is formative and summative assessment. The assessment criteria include: (1) clarity and coherence of argument supported by evidence; (2) capacity for originality and independent research; (3) familiarity with, and understanding of, relevant literature; (4) clarity and logic of writing in English; (5) demonstrated analytic and critical capacity; (6) methodological self-awareness; and (7) rectitude in matters of bibliography, citation, and quotation.

### **Assignment Submission**

- The cut off time for all assignment submissions in the School is **4pm** of the stated due date.
- 2 assignment copies must be submitted for every assessment task - 1 paper copy and 1 electronic copy.
- All hard/paper copy assessments should be posted into the Assignment Drop Boxes outside the front counter of the School of Humanities and Languages on level 2, Morven Brown Building by 4pm on the due date.
- A completed cover sheet must be securely attached to assignments. The School is not responsible for any missing pages from poorly bound or stapled assignments.
- In addition, a soft copy must be sent through **Moodle** on Turnitin by 4pm on the due date.

### **Assignment Collection**

Assignments should be collected from your lecturer/tutor and must be collected by the owner/author of the assignment. A Stamped Self Addressed Envelope must be provided on submission if students require their assignment to be posted back to their home address.

### **Assignment Extensions**

A student may apply to the Lecturer/Tutor for an extension to the submission date of an assignment. Requests for extension must be made via myUNSW before the submission due date, and must demonstrate exceptional circumstances, which warrant the granting of an extension. If medical grounds preclude submission of assignment by due date, contact should be made with subject coordinator as soon as possible. A medical certificate will be required for late submission and must be appropriate for the extension period.

To apply for an extension please log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration

### **ATTENDANCE**

To successfully complete this unit you are required to attend minimum 80% of classes. If this requirement is not met you will fail the unit. The Lecturer/Tutor will keep attendance records.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

Students seeking information on plagiarism should visit the following web site:

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html>

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others.

Any OHS concerns should be raised with your immediate supervisor, the School's OHS representative, or the Head of School. The OHS guidelines are available at:

[http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/ohs\\_policies/index.html](http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/ohs_policies/index.html)

## STUDENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to, or at the commencement of the course. Alternatively, the Student Equity and Diversity Unit can be contacted on 9385 4734. Further information is available at:

<http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au>

## GRIEVANCES

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should in the first instance attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors. If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

## OTHER STUDENT INFORMATION

myUNSW is the single online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing & current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au>

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>