

LSC # 23
 Action Approved
12-6-90

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- Professor Dan Boone Phone 2310
 Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when? _____)
 Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
 Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENTAL COURSE

- Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Statement concerning departmental responsibility
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) D. Boone
 Department Chairperson Joel Black (11-30-90)
 College Dean Michael Joyce
 Director of Liberal Studies Charles [unclear]

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.

II. Copy of the course syllabus.

III. Samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students.

Provide 12 copies to the Liberal Studies Committee.
 Please number all pages.

I. Distinctive Characteristics of the Course:

The course is a critical thinking/informal logic course. As such, the emphasis is on gaining various logical skills of argument analysis and evaluation. I have identified the following course goals:

1. Get students to learn to apply critical thinking/informal logic techniques to real arguments.
2. Get students to transfer these skills outside the class into life-long critical thinking abilities.
 - a. Develop confidence in their own ability to think critically.
 - b. Learn to value the reasoning process as a better way to deal with problems and issues.
 - c. Accept basic values which underlie critical thinking in the social dimension: fair-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual courage, and intellectual perseverance.

II. Kinds of Writing Assignments to be used in the Course:

I propose to use the following types of writing assignments. Each assignment will be used only once in the semester. Indicated page lengths are all typed, double-spaced.

1. Argument Revision: Students will be given in class an argumentative passage which is unclear, rambling, and poorly expressed. They will attempt to recover an argument structure which is formally valid and which expresses the best interpretation of the intended reasoning of the author. In the process, they will need to supply necessary descriptive and value assumptions. Then, they will write a draft based on the interpreted argument structure which more effectively expresses the intended reasoning. This draft and interpreted argument structure will be graded using a checklist of criteria (see attached). Students will then be expected to rewrite and rework the interpretation and draft to produce a finished product, also to be graded by the same checklist, except that writing mechanics will count. Polishing of the finished product will be done both in small groups and in student-teacher conferences. This assignment is intended to get students to recover a plausible and charitable interpretation of the logical reasoning underlying a poorly-expressed or logically incoherent sample of writing. It will have a secondary effect of enabling them to apply this skill to their own writing. Both the draft and finished product will be 1-2 pages, and will count for 10% of the course grade.

2. Informal Fallacy Identifications: Students will be given passages in class containing informal fallacies and asked to

write about fallacies they identify in the passages. They must explain and justify why the passage commits the identified fallacies. These papers will be graded using a checklist (see attached). The students will then discuss their efforts in small groups, acting as "coaches" for each other, and will rewrite using the same checklist criteria including writing mechanics. This assignment is aimed at getting the students to identify informal fallacies and to provide clear, detailed written justification for their analyses. Both the draft and final product will be 3-5 pages, and will count for 15% of the course grade.

3. Statistical Argument Analysis: Students will be given passages involving statistical reasoning in class and asked to write about any statistical errors they identify. These will be handed in to be graded using the same process as outlined above for informal fallacies. The aim of the assignment is different, of course, in that the skill is the identification of errors in statistical reasoning. The number of pages and percentage of course grade is also the same as 2. above.

4. Written Responses to Videos: Students in small groups in class will be presented a video of an argument/reasoning context. They will be asked to take notes during the viewing and then in groups will prepare an argument summary and evaluation report. They will be expected to apply the skills addressed in 1-3 above. This will result in a group-grade on the draft based on a checklist (see attached). A rewrite will also be required. The goal of this assignment is to sharpen critical thinking skills in television viewing. One prominent author in the critical thinking field, Lenore Langsdorf, has written about the deleterious effects of watching television on critical thought processes. Thus, this is an important exercise for students. Both draft and rewrite will be 1-2 pages, and will count for 10% of the course grade.

5. Letter: Students will be provided a list of examples of argumentative letters they might write--letters to the editor, to student government, to the IUP administration, to legislators, to industry complaining about a product, etc.--and will select the kind of letter, gather any necessary information, and write the letter out of class. These will be graded on a 0-1-2 points basis as extra credit for another assignment. When returned to them, they will work in groups to polish the letters and debate the merits of actually sending the letter. The purpose of this assignment is to have students become more aware of social issues on which they might have some small impact, and to improve their ability to logically organize and express their thoughts about such an issue. Any length above a half-page minimum is acceptable, and the assignment counts as extra credit.

6. Freewrite About Critical Thinking: At the beginning and at the end of the semester, students will be asked to do a freewrite about their own attitudes and feelings about the importance and

uses of critical thinking/critical writing in their lives. This will be strongly guided by a series of prompting questions from the instructor (see attached). It will be collected but ungraded except for "done/not done well enough--rewrite to pass the course". Any length is acceptable (though recommendations on time spent will be made).

7. Issue Response: Students will be presented readings about a controversial issue with authors taking both or several sides of the issue. They will be asked to carefully read the material and then do the following in 5--7 pages:

a. Summarize the major arguments. Try to express the arguments in terms of argument patterns if possible. Make clear any implicit descriptive or value assumptions assumed by the authors.

b. Evaluate the arguments in terms of informal fallacies, formal errors, and errors in statistical reasoning. Attempt to generate counterexamples to any general assumptions. Formulate alternatives to the theses (a skill I'm learning about through discussions with Jonathan Adler).

The paper, submitted as a draft, will be graded by a checklist (see attached). After a student-teacher conference, the student will rewrite the short paper in polished form for a second grade using the same checklist, including writing mechanics. The purpose of this assignment is to improve the ability to write an argumentative, critical essay using standard critical thinking skills to evaluate alternative positions on an issue. This assignment will comprise 25% of the course grade.

8. There will also be an objective, computer-graded exam early in the semester which covers some basic informal logic skills, such as argument diagram analysis, argument pattern analysis, and implicit premises-conclusions recognition. This will count for 25% of the course grade.

Total pages of required writing, counting both drafts and final rewrites: 27-44 pages + freewrite exercise pages.

COURSE SYLLABUS

PH 101 General Logic: Methods of Critical Thinking (Writing Intensive)
Dr. Dan Boone
Sutton 450
357-2310

Required Text: Critical Reasoning (3rd ed.), Jerry Cederblom and David W. Paulsen

Course Requirements:

1. One objective examination on argument diagram analysis, argument pattern recognition, and implicit premises and conclusions recognition. 25% of course grade
2. Argument revision exercise. 10% of course grade
3. Informal fallacies exercise. 15% of course grade
4. Statistical errors exercise. 15% of course grade
5. Written responses to videos. 10% of course grade
6. Argumentative letter. Extra-credit
7. Freewrite about critical thinking. Ungraded, but required to pass the course.
8. Issue response. 25% of course grade.

Each of the above assignments can be better understood by looking at the attached grading "checklists". Due dates for assignments will be announced in class. These assignments may be modified if the instructor finds it necessary.

Course Objectives:

The primary goal of the course will be to teach the student certain important skills and attitudes in thinking and writing critically. There will be sufficient practice and work in reasoning skills for the student to acquire a sense of what it means to analyze problems and issues rigorously and rationally. In some ways, the direct benefits of this for the individual student are less important than the ultimate benefits for society. It is essential for maintaining the quality of life in complex modern societies that they have a citizenry capable of reasonable deliberation and critical thought. Efforts will be made to encourage the student to carry the learned skills beyond the classroom into life-long applications to problems, issues, decisions, values, and beliefs.

NAME _____

SECTION _____

ARGUMENT REVISION EXERCISE.....CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

The rating of your argument revision exercise is indicated by the number circled below. This scale is based on a variety of possible student efforts and may not exactly apply to yours. The circled number indicates at least roughly where it falls. Polishing and rewriting of the initial draft should be accomplished after discussions with fellow students and the instructor, which will lead to more specific helpful recommendations. You need to have two extra copies of your paper for these discussions. Both the initial draft and the final product will each be 1--2 pages, and will together count for 10% of the course grade.

1. You have failed completely to find any appropriate patterns of argument underlying the passage.
2. You have found a few or some argument patterns but failed to identify them correctly or accurately.
3. You have more or less correctly identified some of the argument patterns involved, but an insufficient number.
4. You have identified correctly a sufficient number of argument patterns which express a plausible interpretation of the intended reasoning of the author; however, the prose rewrite is a mere repeat of these patterns, simply patching them together.
5. You have identified correctly a sufficient number of argument patterns which express a plausible interpretation of the intended reasoning of the author; moreover, you have done an effective job of rewriting the original passage to reflect this reasoning, with smooth transitions between the logical steps.
6. For the final rewrite: the work is failed because it contains more than an average of 2 departures per page from standard language usage conventions. This includes such areas as: spelling, sentence boundaries (fragments, run-ons), verb forms, pronouns, apostrophes, and sentences which make sense.

NAME _____

SECTION _____

INFORMAL FALLACIES EXERCISE.....CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

The rating of your informal fallacies exercise is indicated by the number circled below. This scale is based on a variety of possible student efforts and may not exactly apply to yours. The circled number indicates at least roughly where it falls. Polishing and rewriting of the initial draft should be accomplished after discussions with fellow students in a small group in class. You will need two extra copies of your work for these discussions. Both the draft and rewrite are each 3--5 pages, and together will count for 15% of the course grade.

1. You have not correctly identified any fallacies in the passages.

2. You have correctly identified a few fallacies, but not a sufficient number, and your justifications/explanations of those few are inadequate.

3. You have correctly identified a few fallacies and have given more or less adequate justifications/explanations of those. However, you need to find more fallacies to adequately justify/explain.

4. You have correctly identified a sufficient number of fallacies, but failed to give adequate justifications/explanations of enough of those.

5. You have correctly identified a sufficient number of fallacies and have provided good justifications and explanations of those. Good work!

6. For the final rewrite: the work is failed because it contains more than an average of 2 departures per page from standard language usage conventions. This includes such areas as: spelling, sentence boundaries (fragments, run-ons), verb forms, pronouns, apostrophes, and sentences which make sense.

NAME _____

SECTION _____

STATISTICAL ERRORS EXERCISE.....CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

The rating of your statistical errors exercise is indicated by the number circled below. This scale is based on a variety of possible student efforts and may not exactly apply to yours. The circled number indicates at least roughly where it falls. Polishing and rewriting of the initial draft should be accomplished after discussions with fellow students in a small group. You should have two extra copies of your work for these discussions. The draft and rewrite will each be 3--5 pages, and together count for 15% of your course grade.

1. You have not correctly identified any errors in statistical reasoning in the passages.
2. You have correctly identified a few statistical errors, but not a sufficient number, and your justifications/explanations of those few are inadequate.
3. You have correctly identified a few statistical errors and have given more or less adequate justifications/explanations of those. However, you need to find more statistical errors to adequately justify/explain.
4. You have correctly identified a sufficient number of statistical errors, but failed to give adequate justifications/explanations of enough of those.
5. You have correctly identified a sufficient number of statistical errors and have provided good justifications and explanations of those. Good work!
6. For the final rewrite: the work is failed because it contains more than an average of 2 departures per page from standard language usage conventions. This includes such areas as: spelling, sentence boundaries (fragments, run-ons), verb forms, pronouns, apostrophes, and sentences which make sense.

NAMES IN GROUP:

SECTION _____

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO VIDEO.....CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

The rating of your written response to a video exercise is indicated by the number circled below. This scale is based on a variety of possible student efforts and may not exactly apply to yours. The circled number indicates at least roughly where it falls. Polishing and rewriting of the initial draft will be accomplished after further discussions within your group. Both the draft and rewrite will be 1-2 pages and will count for 10% of the course grade.

1. You have failed to summarize clearly and accurately the arguments presented in the video.

2. You have given an accurate summary of the arguments presented, but have not given a sufficient number of critical responses to fallacies, statistical errors, and errors in reasoning. Moreover, your explanations and justifications of those errors are inadequate.

3. You have given an accurate summary of the arguments presented, and have given a few critical responses with more or less adequate justifications and explanations of those. However, you need to find more critical responses.

4. You have given an accurate summary of the arguments presented, and have given a sufficient number of critical responses. However, you need to provide more adequate justifications and explanations for some of those.

5. You have given an accurate summary of the arguments presented, have given a sufficient number of critical responses to fallacies, statistical errors, and errors in reasoning, and have provided good justifications and explanations for those. Good work!

6. For the final rewrite: the work is failed because it contains more than an average of 2 departures per page from standard language usage conventions. This includes such areas as: quotation marks, sources cited, spelling, sentence boundaries (fragments, run-ons), verb forms, pronouns, apostrophes, and sentences which make sense.

NAME _____

SECTION _____

POINTS AWARDED (0--2 POSSIBLE) _____

ARGUMENTATIVE LETTER

You are to write an argumentative letter. Examples of such letters include: letters to the editor, a letter to someone in student government, to someone in the IUP administration, to legislators or other officials in local, state, or federal government, to a manufacturer about a consumer issue or problem, or even to a friend or relative. The letter should express arguments on some issue or problem which concerns you. It should be organized, clear, well-written, and the arguments should be well-supported by evidence or the appeal to relevant values. You should be prepared to document any factual claims made in the letter. The instructor will specify the due date for the initial draft of the letter. After points are awarded, the letter will be returned to be rewritten in small groups and to debate the merits of actually sending the letter. You need to make two extra copies of the letter to use in the groups. Any length beyond half-a-page is acceptable, and the points count as extra-credit to increase your score on any other assignment (you decide which assignment and notify the instructor).

NAME _____

SECTION _____

FREWRITE ON CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICAL WRITING

You are required to do a "freewrite" in response to the following questions, once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end of the semester. Due dates will be specified by the instructor. You will not be graded on the assignment beyond "done/not done well enough in response to the questions--rewrite to pass the course". The purpose of this assignment is to help you and the instructor gain a more accurate understanding of your attitudes about critical thinking and critical writing. Please be sincere and frank--anything you say will not be used against you, and your work will be held confidential. You should read the questions and then take approximately 10-30 minutes to write anything you wish. Do not worry about spelling, style, or other mechanics of writing, but do turn in a typed product.

1. How do you feel about discussing problems and issues with others? Do you feel it is hard or easy to stand up for your opinions on things? If you think your opinion will be unpopular, or may provoke ridicule, anger or retribution, how likely are you to keep silent?

2. Do you tend to think other people are wrong most of the time when they disagree with you? Do you try hard to understand someone's point of view when it disagrees with your own? Have you ever gained deeper insight or even changed your mind after discussing a problem or issue with someone?

3. Do you have high or low standards of evidence and reason when discussing opinions, issues, or problems? Do you rely on snap-judgments, first impressions, most readily available facts, or do you push things beyond the surface and look for better evidence and reasons in support of an opinion? How do you expect others to behave in this respect in response to your opinions?

4. How do you feel about spending a lot of time, effort, and energy to think through problems, issues, decisions, and ideas? Is it generally, sometimes, or almost never worth the trouble? Do you think society in general will be better-off or worse-off if people try to put a lot of effort into thinking and discussing issues and problems rather than using other means of resolving their differences?

GRADE: _____ DONE
_____ NOT DONE WELL ENOUGH IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS--
REWRITE TO PASS THE COURSE

NAME _____

SECTION _____

ISSUE RESPONSE EXERCISE.....CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

The rating of your issue response exercise is indicated by the number circled below. This scale is based on a variety of possible student efforts and may not exactly apply to yours. The circled number indicates at least roughly where it falls. Polishing and rewriting of the initial draft will take place after a student-teacher conference. Both the draft and rewrite will be 5--7 pages and will count for 25% of the course grade.

1. You have failed to summarize the arguments clearly and accurately.
2. You have accurately summarized the arguments, but have not made clear any underlying argument patterns, implicit descriptive or value assumptions, errors in reasoning (fallacies, statistical errors, formal errors), generated counter-examples, or formulated alternatives to the theses.
3. You have accurately summarized the arguments, but have made minimal efforts in criticizing the arguments in the ways outlined in 2. above.
4. You have accurately summarized the arguments, and have made fairly good progress in criticizing the arguments in the ways outlined in 2. above.
5. You have accurately summarized the arguments, and have made thorough and substantial progress in criticizing the arguments in the ways outlined in 2. above. Good work!
6. For the final rewrite: the work is failed because it contains more than an average of 2 departures per page ~~from~~ standard language usage conventions. This includes such areas as: quotation marks, sources cited, spelling, sentence boundaries (fragments, run-ons), verb forms, pronouns, apostrophes, and sentences which make sense.