

# Philosophy 1900G: Logical and Critical Reasoning (Technology Delivered)

Fall 2017

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## Office Hours:

On-line: Monday 4:30-6:30 PM (Central Time) and by appointment

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## 1. Introduction (Format; Textbook; Course Schedule).

**1A. Format.** This course will provide an introductory survey of techniques for evaluating arguments and reasoning. It will cover largely the same material as in my traditionally taught (on-campus) sections of PHI 1900, but is presented in a technology-delivered format, entirely through the internet.

Since there is no fixed class time for a technology delivered course, you are free to work on the material when it is most convenient. But with this convenience comes an added responsibility: you must **make sure, on your own, that you keep up** with the work. In courses of this sort it is especially

easy to put off work, and quickly fall behind as a result. Since the assignments are scheduled, with time limits on completion (see below), the course does provide boundaries. But I stress at the outset that **if you are not a self-motivated person, capable of holding yourself to a schedule, then this is NOT the course for you.**

The main problem students have had with my online courses has been **falling behind** in doing the readings and course work. Once a student is well behind in the readings, it is hard to catch up. **Falling behind is NOT a legitimate excuse** for missing (or doing poorly on) assignments.

The course will be run *entirely* on the web, through EIU's **D2L** online system. The home page for D2L at EIU is:

<https://www.eiu.edu/d2l/>

**1B. Textbook.** The '**textbook**' for the course will consist entirely of sections of my Logic textbook. **You do not need to get any books from EIU's Textbook Rental Service.** (The material is from Chapters One, Two, and Three of the book.) These readings are available in the **Logic Book** section of this course (inside the Content Browser, on the course home page)

**All** the readings will be available from the beginning of the semester. The readings will be in Adobe Acrobat file format. To view these files you will need the **Acrobat Reader**, which can be downloaded free here:

[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

**1C. Course Schedule.** Specific reading assignments, as well as homework assignments and further class information, are listed in the **Calendar** for the class. A complete schedule for the assignments and readings is available in the Calendar from the beginning of the semester.

**NOTE:** failing to notice that a reading or assignment is due is **NOT** an acceptable excuse for missing that reading or assignment.

Even though the schedule and readings are all established and available from the outset, **you must still log in at least three different days each**

**week.** (This is to ensure that a student not fall behind, by putting off logging in for many days running.)

## 2. Topics.

The course will divide into two parts. *Part One* will study **Informal Logic**, setting out the basic concepts of Logic in an entirely non-technical manner, and applying these concepts to simple ordinary-language examples.

Those basic concepts will be sharpened and refined in *Part Two* (occupying most of the semester), where we study two forms of introductory-level **Formal Logic**. In this part of the course we develop techniques for evaluating arguments which are too complex for a purely informal approach.

## 3. Class Proceedings (Mail; Office Hours; Announcements).

**3A. Mail:** You can email me at any time, using the **Mail** function of D2L. In practice, I have found that email is the most-used means of one-on-one communication in my online classes.

**Note:** any email sent to your D2L mail account will *not* show up in your ordinary EIU email account – only in your special D2L “Inbox”. You need to be logged in to D2L to get your D2L email. My email address for D2L is:

bbeakley@online.eiu.edu

**3B. Office Hours and Chat:** As listed at the top of this syllabus, I will be logged in on Monday afternoons from 4:30 to 6:30 PM (other times by appointment) using the **Chat** function. This operates just like ordinary chat room software (though it is restricted to students logged in to this course). When you enter the Chat program during my office hours, you will see my name listed (as already being present). You just type text into the text box and hit “Enter” to start talking.

Students' question are usually best answered through the class **email** system. (I check my email every day.) But I am available in office hours if you want to speak to me "live".

**3C. Announcements:** D2L also offers a **News** function. I will use this when sending a message to everyone in the class. (It appears on the course's home page in the upper left.)

#### **4. Assignments (Steps in Completing Assignments; Quizzes; Time Limits; Exams).**

Your grade will be based on a series of quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam. Assignments will be found in the *Assessments* section of the course.

**4A. Completing Assignments.** I give specific instructions on how to do quizzes and homeworks in a separate reading. I also hold an optional (non-required) practice assignment the first week of class, before beginning graded quizzes, in order to ensure that everyone knows how to use the Assessments tool in the course.

**Briefly:** submitting an answer to an assignment involves **two** steps (once the answer is typed in): **(1) clicking "Save"** for that answer, and then **(2) clicking "Submit"** to finish the assignment. (Exams will have about 8 to 10 questions; by contrast, each quiz will have only one question.) You can click "Save" as many times as you like (within the time limit); so if you want to make a change to a "Saved" answer, you can (within the time limit) make the change and click "Save" again. **It is a good idea to "Save" your answer(s) often.**

**NOTE: You are NOT allowed to work with someone on any quiz or exam.**

**4B. Quizzes.** Each **quiz** will be worth **6** points. There will be **7** quizzes, for a total of 42 points.

As with all assignments, their dates are stated in the **Calendar**, from the beginning of the semester. **All assignment dates are fixed from the beginning of the semester, and will not be changed.**

Quizzes are typically available for **three days**. You can take the quiz at any time within that period.

**Quizzes for Fall 2017 are scheduled for the following dates:**

- **Quiz 1: 12AM Friday 9/1 through 8PM Sunday 9/3**
- **Quiz 2: 12AM Friday 9/15 through 8PM Sunday 9/17**
- **Quiz 3: 12AM Friday 9/29 through 8PM Sunday 10/1**
- **Quiz 4: 12AM Thursday 10/12 through 8PM Sunday 10/15**
- **Quiz 5: 12AM Friday 10/27 through 8PM Sunday 10/29**
- **Quiz 6: 12AM Friday 11/10 through 8PM Sunday 11/12**
- **Quiz 7: 12AM Friday 12/1 through 8PM Sunday 12/3**

**4C. Time Limits.** Each quiz will have a **time limit of 25 minutes**, within which it must be completed.

(Note: submission of an assignment is not instantaneous – it will take some seconds for the “Finish” command to travel along your internet connection, and through EIU’s computing system, which can be slower depending on the number of people using it. In practice it’s a good idea to finish assignments at least 30 seconds before the time limit.)

You will need to finish the quiz within one session – that is, once the quiz is begun, it cannot be ‘paused’. That means: if you close your web browser window or lose your internet connection without submitting the assignment, the clock will keep running, until I open it for grading. (When I see that a student has taken 48 hours and some-odd minutes on an assignment, it's because the student quit the online course system without clicking "Submit".)

Answers to quizzes and exams must be submitted in the **Assessments** section. **Answers CANNOT be emailed to me.**

**4D. Exams.** The **midterm** and **final exams** are worth **40** points each. Each exam will be made available for several days in the **Assessments** section of the course. Each exam will have a **two hour and thirty minute** time limit. Since an exam contains several problems, each is “Saved” separately. (Again: you are encouraged to “Save” your answers often in an exam.)

**Exams for Fall 2017 are scheduled for the following dates:**

- **Midterm Exam: 12AM Thursday 10/19 through 8PM Sunday 10/22**
- **Final Exam: 12AM Friday 12/8 through 8PM Thursday 12/12**

The **total** for the class is: **122** points.

**Last day to withdraw from the course: Friday November 3 2017**

**5. Practice Problems (Not Collected, Not Graded).** In addition to the graded assignment, I will also regularly assign **practice problems**, to provide practice in the material prior to your taking quizzes or exams. These problems will **not be collected or graded**. They are just like the practice problems, with answers provided, that you would find in a "teach yourself" book such as a Schaum's guide.

But it is still important that you do all the practice problems before you read the answers. Since Logic – like music, sports, or martial arts – involves learning *skills*, regular practice is necessary to learn the material. And because the course is cumulative – later material builds on earlier material – you will not be able to move on successfully to later sections if you have not mastered the previous ones.

To repeat: the **practice problems** are for **practice**, and are **NOT collected or graded**.

**6. Videos.** I am in the process of adding video discussions of practice problems (to supplement the written discussions in the Practice Problem section). These are in the **Videos** section of the **Content Browser**, organized by chapter.

## **7. Assignment Make-Up Policies (Excused Make-Up Assignments; Unacceptable Excuses; Free Makeup Quiz; Non-Excused Make-up Midterm Exam; Technical Issues).**

**7A. Excused Make-Up Assignments:** Ordinary issues of missing quizzes should not pose the same problem in an online course that they do in an ordinary course, since you are not required to leave your home, and the course should provide enough time flexibility (several days per assignment) to let you pick the best time to complete the work.

For that reason, a student will need to be very sick indeed, for an **extended** period of time, in order to excuse missing assignments. In such a case, the student would need to provide me with sufficient **documentation** (from a doctor, hospital, or other medical center) that the illness was acute and prolonged.

Barring such severe illness, there should be no reason why a quiz or exam is missed. (“**Personal**” or “**family**” **problems**, while real, do not qualify for an excused make-up assignment, as it would be extremely difficult to provide me **official** documentation – from a doctor, clinic, etc. – of that problem. A note from someone in your family will not constitute **official** documentation.)

Documentation covers only a **make-up** of an assignment, **NOT A RE-TAKE**. A make-up is for an assignment that was missed (never taken). A re-take would be for an assignment that was taken (but where the student was not happy with the grade). **There are no re-takes in this course** (excused or otherwise).

**7B. Unacceptable Excuses (Some Familiar Varieties).** Again I stress: simply **falling behind**, or **failing to notice** that an assignment was scheduled, is **NOT an acceptable excuse** for missing an assignment, and will not qualify for a make-up assignment.

Likewise, **not noticing** the due date for an assignment is **NOT an acceptable excuse** for missing an assignment, and will not qualify as an excuse for a make-up assignment.

Nor will allegations of failed internet connections excuse a student from any assignments; **it is each student's responsibility to secure adequate internet access.**

(That includes **ROTC** activity off-campus: unless the student can provide evidence that their military superior **forbids** them from accessing the internet, being off-campus is no obstacle to on-line class activity, and will not constitute an excuse to make up an assignment.)

Finally, needing a certain grade to make/ stay on a team or group, or to reach a certain GPA, is **not** grounds for an excused makeup assignment.

**7C. Free Make-Up Quiz:** I do allow each student **ONE free make-up quiz** per semester. It is a **make-up** for a **missed** assignment (**not a re-take** of a quiz the student took. I count an assignment as "missed" if the student received a "0" on it. That includes quizzes where a blank answer was turned in.) It is a "free" make-up because **no excuse is required.**

I hold free make-ups twice in the semester: once in the middle of the semester (around the midterm), and once in the last week of class. If you missed Quiz 1, 2, 3, or 4, you can take the First Free Make-Up Quiz; if you missed Quizzes 5, 6, or 7 you can take the Second Free Make-up Quiz.

**You get ONE free makeup quiz –the first or the second – NOT BOTH.**

The free make-up times are set in advance in the calendar, and I will send an email reminding eligible students shortly before each make-up is offered.

(**Note:** the free make-up may deal with any topic covered up to that time. So it may not be on the same topic as the original quiz which was missed. For example: even if a student missed a quiz on informal logic, the free make-up may be on formal logic.)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** the free make-up is **only for a quiz -- not for an exam.**



**Free Make-Up Quizzes for Fall 2017 are scheduled for the following dates:**

- **First Make-Up Quiz (Covering Quizzes 1 through 4): 12AM Tuesday 10/17 through 8PM Wednesday 10/18**
- **Second Make-Up Quiz (Covering Quizzes 5, 6, and 7): 12AM Tuesday 12/5 through 8PM Wednesday 12/6**

**7D. Non-Excused Make-Up Midterm Exam.** If a student misses the Midterm Exam, or if I receive a blank exam answer form from a student on the Midterm Exam (as a result of the student's submitting the assignment improperly), one makeup Midterm will be permitted, with a **penalty of 20 points**. Since an exam is worth 40 points, everyone should recognize a missed exam for the **DISASTER** that it is.

**7E. Non-Excused Missed Final Exam.** Since all free makeup assignments must be completed before the end of the semester, **there are no Free Makeups for the Final Exam** -- not even one with a point penalty. If you miss the final exam without a documented medical emergency, it is officially **the end of the world.**)

**7F. Working with Others during Assignments.** No student is allowed to work with others during the taking of any assignment (quiz or exam). Doing so will result in that student receiving a failing grade for the course.

**7G. Early Grading Requests.** I will **not** honor requests to have a student's Midterm or Final Exam graded earlier than everyone else's, nor to turn in a student's final grade earlier than everyone else.

**7H. Technical Issues:** In the unlikely event that the online course system encounters a **technical problem** interfering with testing functions, I will of course make accommodations for any missed assignments caused by such problems. But I have not encountered such problems so far. If a student reports a problem that prevents completing an assignment, I will check with the computing office at EIU for problems; but here again, if the allegation cannot be documented (particularly if it is only reported by one individual), it will not qualify as an excuse for a missed assignment.

Finally, (once again): since this course is delivered over the internet, **each student is required to ensure reliable access to the internet.** Claiming

that one didn't have internet access **does NOT** count as a legitimate excuse for missing an assignment.

## **8. EIU Documents.**

**8A. Course Description:** PHI 1900 (3-0-3) F, S. A study of the structure and evaluation of arguments, focusing upon: analysis and informal evaluation of everyday arguments; problem-solving strategies; formal tests of validity; conversational contexts of argumentation, and the interaction of contextual principles with principles of validity. H4 906. Credits: 3

**8B. Course Objectives:** Students will learn:

- \* to analyze the structure of arguments (and their constituent sentences)
- \* to evaluate the support evidence provides for claims
- \* to develop and understand Boolean algebra and to use it in order to represent the formal structure of English language sentences and arguments
- \* to understand the extra-logical conversational principles of natural language and how these interact with logical factors in natural language argumentation.

**8C. Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

(**NOTE:** each student is expected to complete all the assignments on his/her own. **No student is permitted to take a quiz or exam with the help of another person**, or otherwise "work with" another person on an assignment.)

**8D. Students With Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**8E. The Student Success Center:** Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall, Room 1302.