

**Department:** Philosophy

**Course No:** 102

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Philosophy and Logic

**Contact:** Donald Baxter

**Content Area:** CA1-Arts and Humanities

**Catalog Copy:** 102. Philosophy and Logic. Either semester. Three credits. No student may receive more than 6 credits for PHIL 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 1xx.

Techniques for evaluating inductive and deductive arguments; applications to specific arguments about philosophical topics, for example the mind-body problem or free will vs. determinism.

**Course Information:** a. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the study of logic, and provide them with some logical techniques, analytical methods, and critical attitudes which will improve their skills at critical thinking. The objective is to improve the abilities of students to understand, evaluate, assess, and produce reasoned arguments in whatever branch of inquiry the student pursues.

b. The large lecture format version of the course has been taught as a "self-paced" or "Keller plan" course since the spring of 2000, when Prof. Clark received a "Significant Impact Grant" from the Institute for Teaching and Learning to make the conversion. The course material is divided into six units, and students can take multiple tests on each unit (different questions, same format) until they get the grade they want on that unit. They then go on to the next unit. The weekly section meetings are used as testing sessions. On average students now take roughly 12 tests during the semester, or about one per week. The text book has practice problem sets (with answers) for all the different kinds of test questions asked.

c. The six units of the existing self-paced class are: Basic notions of logic, Assessing validity, Criticizing definitions, Analyzing arguments, Inductive reasoning, and Informal fallacies. The unit on assessing validity is the only one which uses any techniques from symbolic logic (specifically truth tables); the others all employ examples and arguments from ordinary sources such as editorials, opinion pieces, Crossfire, etc. We tend to focus on arguments about controversial topics such as abortion, animal rights, affirmative action, and others that are in the news.

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed:** The study of logic is a classic and well-proven method whereby students can learn to become more articulate, to acquire intellectual breadth and versatility, and to acquire critical judgement. (These are the first three of the seven basic purposes of UConn General Education.) Explicit study of the structure of argument, the nature of definitions, and the possibilities of fallacy is an excellent foundation for acquiring critical judgment and for improving the ability of students to

articulate such judgment. Furthermore, logic steps back from the particular factual propositions at hand in any particular intellectual discipline, to examine the modes of inference, deduction, induction, and problem solving that are common to all of them. In this way the study of logic helps students to acquire intellectual breadth and versatility, and it gives them some understanding of the processes whereby they can continue to acquire and use knowledge. The latter is! purpose seven of the seven basic purposes. So, in short, we believe logic to be a foundational discipline that contributes to four out of seven of the seven basic purposes listed for General Education at the University of Connecticut.

**CA1 Criteria:** Logic is a form of critical inquiry which arguably satisfies the first three (out of five) specific criteria for an Arts and Humanities course. First, it engages students in an investigation and critical analysis of human experience, where the experience in question is that of arguing with another person about some topic of mutual concern. We believe this experience is critically important for all citizens in a democracy. Logic puts that experience under an analytical microscope, providing students with tools of critical analysis that will enable them to acquit themselves better in such an arena. Second, logic is an inquiry in philosophical theory, since the terminology and techniques for analyzing arguments and inferences were developed by philosophers from Aristotle onwards. Third, an argument--a set of claims put forth with an inference to a conclusion--is a vitally important form of symbolic representation for any democratic culture, or for any intellectual discipline. The formal methods and techniques of symbolic logic provide an essential insight into the structure of such things.

**Role of Grad Students:** Graduate student assistants are used only in the large lecture format version of the course; one assistant typically handles the section meetings for two different sections of the course (50 minutes each), has office hours, and does the grading for students in those two sections. Graduate assistants are supervised by the professor in charge.

**Supplemental Information:** A full description of the self-paced logic project (with a current syllabus, study guides, course evaluations, etc) can be found at <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~py102vc/selfpace.htm>