

Dr. Frank Fair, AB4 Room 402, 936-294-1509, email:psy_fkf@shsu.edu
Office Hours: MTWThF 10:00-10:50 and other times by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES--This course is a three semester-credit-hour course that is designed to improve students' abilities to think critically, and the course objectives are

- (1) To acquaint each student with some basic concepts used in the analysis and evaluation of deductive and inductive reasoning,
- (2) to give each student practice in analyzing such reasoning, and
- (3) to help the student recognize common fallacies.

TEXTS: Lewis Vaughn *The Power of Critical Thinking* 2nd edition
Thomas Gilovich *How We Know What Isn't So*
Also some material will be on electronic reserve at the Library

BLACKBOARD: The syllabus and many other relevant course documents will be posted on Blackboard. Go to the SHSU homepage, click on Blackboard, type in your SHSU username and password, and then a menu of courses should appear. Click on PHL 262 and then click on whatever location is appropriate for the documents you are seeking.

TESTS: There will be three quizzes worth 50 points each, two major exams worth 100 points each, and a comprehensive final exam worth 200 points--an overall total of 550 points. Homework and extra credit opportunities also contribute to the overall point total. To determine your final average, simply divide your point total by 5.5. All tests are announced in advance, and there will be time for review before each of them. I use the grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, and below 60 = F.

HOMEWORK:

- (1) Regular daily assignments: since this is meant to be a practical course, there will be regular homework assignments which are NOT optional. Each assignment done acceptably ADDS one point to your point total. One point will be SUBTRACTED for every assignment not done acceptably. "Acceptably" means that EVERY PROBLEM IS ATTEMPTED, and the assignment is turned in ON TIME--no excuses accepted.
- (2) There are three larger writing assignments due on dates specified in the syllabus. These assignments will be worth up to 10 points apiece on your final, comprehensive exam for a possible total of 30 points.

EXTRA CREDIT (Note: These are due on or before Wednesday, August 6 and are open only to those who have attempted more than 50 % of the homework and missed no more than 2 classes.)

- (1) Check it out on the Snopes website at <http://www.snopes.com/>. Find two "urban legends," one of which you are surprised to find out is true and the other of which you are surprised to find out is false. Describe the two "legends" and explain what led to your surprise in each case. Up to 8 points.
- (2) The "Fallacy Hunt": Find "classroom usable" examples of the fallacies we will be discussing, but no more than one advertisement. The fallacies must be properly referenced, and you must analyze the argument and explain specifically how it goes wrong. There is a limit of 3 items that can receive up to 5 points for each item. Turn in the examples with your analyses.

ABSENCES: In accordance with University regulations, I take roll every period. I make no use of the absence record in determining grades. NOTE: If you find you are unable attend class, YOU MUST DROP THE COURSE; otherwise you will receive an F.

MAKE-UPS: I **hate** to give make-ups. If one is necessary, it is likely to be longer and harder than the regular test. You must have a good reason for missing a test; having another test the same day, for example, does not count as a good reason. If you do miss a test, see me as soon as possible. Your excuse must be written out and appropriately documented. ANY EXCUSE THAT DOES NOT WITHSTAND VERIFICATION WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THAT EXAM. If you do have a valid excuse, then we should make the arrangements for you to take a make-up AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Q-DROPS: A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (12th class day for fall/spring; 4th class day for summer) but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of 'F' as published in the Academic Calendar. **Students will be allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University.** Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of five Q-drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class. This limit took effect with the start of the fall 2004 semester. Any drops accumulated prior to the fall 2004 semester will not be included in the five Q-drop limit, nor will Q-drops from other universities.

STANDARD POLICIES: Each of these standard policies is stated in full on the Blackboard website for this course under "Course Documents." I have extracted from the full statement a key element as a reminder of the policy in its entirety, but the student must download the posting on Blackboard to have the full policy statement. Here are the five standard policy matters:

(1) NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. There will be no retroactive accommodations. (2) ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. (3) CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. (4) VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not he/she will be allowed to remain. (5) ABSENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS: A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE	PHL 262W.02	Critical Thinking	Summer II 2008	8:00-9:50
July	CID #8436		AB4 205	

[NOTE THAT CLASSES MEET ON SOME FRIDAYS DURING THE SUMMER II TERM.]

Unit I. Logic: Reasoning as a Structured Process

Tue 8 Hour 1: Recognizing argument structure. Do Handout Ex. Set No. 1 problems in class.

Hour 2: Look at Handouts Nos. 2 and 3 to introduce deductive reasoning.

Wed 9 Hour 1: Vaughn *Power of Critical Thinking* (PCT) Chap. 1 pp. 3-20 and Gilovich Chap. 1

Hour 2: Assignment #1: Chap. 1 Ex. 1.3 (pp. 22-23) and Ex. 1.7 (pp. 26-27) NOTE: do the unstarred items only in both exercise sets.

Thu 10 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 3 pp. 67-94

Hour 2: Assignment #2: Unstarred only in both Ex. 3.2 pp. 78-79 and Ex. 3.4 pp. 85-86

Fri 11 Hour 1: Assignment #3: Unstarred only in both Ex 3.5 and Ex. 3.6 pp. 93-94

Hour 2: Read a handout on the logic of hypothesis testing

Mon 14 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 6 pp. 211-230 Assignment #4: Ex. 6.2 pp. 223-224 and also write out the truth tables for the tilde \sim , the wedge \vee , and ampersand $\&$, and the arrow \rightarrow

Last 30 minutes: FIRST QUIZ--50 points. BRING A SCANTRON

Tue 15 Hour 1: PCT Chap 7 pp. 245-254 and a handout on the Square of Opposition

Hour 2: **Review for First Unit Exam.**

Wed 16 Hour 1: **FIRST UNIT EXAM--100 points. NO SCANTRON NEEDED**

Hour 2: Read a Handout on Sampling and Generalizing

Unit II. Inductive Reasoning, The Quality of the Evidence, and Evaluating Explanations

Thu 17 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 8 pp. 278-302. Assignment #5: Ex. 8.1 and 8.2 pp. 291-293 and 8.7 pp. 304-305 #2, #3, and #4 only

Hour 2: Read a handout on Comparative Experimentation

Fri 18 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 8 pp. 305-321 and Assignment #6 Ex. 8.8 pp. 321-324 NOTE: #1 to #15 only

Hour 2: PCT Chap. 4 pp. 136-148 and Gilovich Chap. 2 and Chap. 3

Mon 21 Hour 1: **FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE—the FactCheck.org assignment**
 Hour 2: Chap. 9 pp. 335-356 Assignment #7: Ex. 9.2 p. 344 and 9.5 pp. 346-347

Tue 22 PCT Chap. 9 pp. 357-363 Assignment #8: Ex. 9.7 p. 364 and Ex. 9.8 #3 and #5 p. 374
Last 30 minutes: SECOND QUIZ--50 points

Wed 23 Hour 1: PCT Chap 10 pp. 382-409 Assignment #9: Ex. 10.5 and Ex. 10.6 pp. 407-409
 Hour 2: Gilovich Chap. 4 and Chap. 5

Thu 24 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 10 pp. 409-430 Assignment #10: Ex.10.10
 Hour 2: **Review for Second Unit Exam.**

NOTE: ON FRIDAY JULY 25 CLASSES DO NOT MEET.

Mon 28 Hour 1: **SECOND UNIT EXAM--100 points. NO SCANTRON NEEDED**
 Hour 2: Gilovich Chap. 6 and Chap. 7

Unit III Analyzing Common Fallacies

Tue 29 Hour 1: PCT Chap. 3 pp. 95-101 on diagramming and a handout on Probability and Premises and do Assignment #11: Ex. 3.9 #3, #4, #5, #8, and #15
 Hour 2: A handout on Bayes' Theorem

Wed 30 Hour 1: **SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE—the Skeptical Inquirer assignment**
 Hour 2: PCT Chap. 5 pp. 173-195 and a handout on Fallacies

Thu 31 Hour 1: Assignment #12: Ex. 5.2 #1 to #15 pp. 196-197 and Ex. 5.3 #1 to #5 p.198
 Hour 2: Gilovich Chaps. 8 and Chap. 10

NOTE: ON FRIDAY AUGUST 1 CLASSES DO NOT MEET.

August

Mon 04 Hour 1: Assignment #13: (Do Handout No. 24 Fallacy analysis problems #1-#12)
Last 30 minutes of class--THIRD QUIZ—50 points

Tue 05 Hour 1: Assignment #14: (Do remaining Handout No. 24 fallacy analysis items.)
 Hour 2: Begin review for the Final Exam

Wed 06 Hour 1: **THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE--How Much Should You Trust These Experts?**
 Hour 2: Review for Final Exam

Thu 07 **FINAL EXAM—170 points—COMPREHENSIVE plus 30 points for the three writing assignments for a total of 200. Roughly 85 points for Units I & II and 85 points for Unit III. BRING A SCANTRON.**

Saturday 9 Commencement

Tuesday 11 Grades due in the Registrar's office by 9:00 am.

DEADLY FAULTS OF GRAMMAR, SPELLING, AND USAGE

The purpose of this list of deadly faults is to help you rid your writing of faults that people will judge you severely for having committed. In several cases I suggest mnemonics--use them if they help, create your own they don't.

1. Apostrophes--please do not write "it's" unless you mean "it is." You would not write "hi's" or "her's," so do not write "it's" when you mean "its." But **do** use the apostrophe to show possession as in "the first doctor's opinion."
2. The Latin phrase "et cetera" is abbreviated as "**etc.**"—**Not as** "ect." which does not pronounce correctly.
3. Proper spelling of "receive" and its relatives is helped if you remember "i before e except after c"
4. Surely it is not **too** much to expect that you remember that there are two o's in **too**.
5. In speech "could have" and "should have" are contracted to "could 've" and "should 've." Only the ignorant write the non-English "could of" and "should of."
6. How about trying to get straight "except" and "accept"? Perhaps mnemonics will help: "Everyone except Edward elected Elvira empress" vs. "Anthony accepted adversity admirably."
7. In the same vein, "The **E**instein **e**ffect **e**nded **e**verything" vs. "**A**nteaters **a**ffect **a**nts **a**dversely." If it helps, try to remember that "**e**ffect" is usually a noun, and "**a**ffect" is almost always a verb.
8. Notice the "try to" in the preceding sentence. Delete the nonsense phrase "to try and" from your speech and writing repertoire.
9. If you mean "they are" when writing a contraction, then write "they're." Then all you have to do is to keep straight the possessive pronoun "their" and the pointer word "there."
10. How about remembering "If you **lie**, I won't **believe** you"?
11. Do not use "criterion" and "criteria" unless you can remember that you can have only **one** **criterion**, but **criteria** are **many**. In other words, "criterion" is singular, while "criteria" is plural.
12. When you "**recite**" a poem you are "**citing**" it again. That is not the same as locating the building **site** where you first caught **sight** of the poem inscribed over a doorway.
13. Does it occur to you that if you omit one of the two R's in "occurred" you would wind up with something that rhymes with "cured"? And if there are two R's in "occurred," then how many should there be in "occurrence"?
14. Subject and verb should agree in number, so please do not say "he don't" or "they doesn't."