

Logic and Legal Reasoning [University]

Class Information

Philosophy [Number] – [Semester]
[Days] – [Time]
[Building Name] – [Room Number]

Contact Information & Office Hours

Jennifer Gleason
[Email]
[Office]
[Office Hours]

Required Texts

The Five Types of Legal Argument by Wilson Huhn. ISBN: 9781611635881

Other articles and readings will be assigned throughout the semester. These readings will be made available online.

About This Class

This course aims to equip students with the basic tools of philosophical logic and critical thinking, especially as they apply to the assessment of legal reasoning. Through examination of various courtroom scenarios and actual court cases, students will learn to assess and evaluate the strength and validity of the legal reasoning presented in each scenario or case. This will enable students to evaluate standards of evidence, to evaluate testimony and weigh both its accuracy and its relevance, to give a fair hearing to both sides, and to distinguish sound from erroneous arguments so as ultimately to reach a just and reasonable conclusion. While the courtroom provides the overall framework of discussion, students will also be taught to apply these critical thinking skills to various arguments and issues that arise in our daily lives.

General Education Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

[Course classification and university goals and expected learning outcomes]

[Description of how course meets these university goals and learning outcomes]

Grade Components

1. **Midterm Examination** (20% of final grade)

The midterm examination will be in class covering primarily conceptual material and applications. The midterm will be held on **[Date]** during our regularly scheduled class period in our regularly scheduled classroom.

Make-up exams will be permitted **ONLY** in the case of prior arrangements due to unavoidable conflicts (e.g. travel to a professional conference, family emergency, etc.) or sudden and serious illness.

2. **Final Examination** (25% of final grade)

Like the midterm examination, the final examination will be in class covering primarily conceptual material and applications. The final will be on **[Date]** at **[Time]** in our regularly scheduled classroom. More details will be provided in class.

Again, make-up exams will be permitted **ONLY** in the case of prior arrangements due to unavoidable conflicts (e.g. travel to a professional conference, family emergency, etc.) or sudden and serious illness.

3. **Homework Assignments** (50% of final grade: 10% each)

There are five homework assignments in this course, each worth 10% of the final grade. Assignments will be announced in class and online and will be turned in during class.

4. **Participation** (5% of final grade)

Legal reasoning requires active participation and engagement. As such, students are expected to attend class and contribute to class discussions. Students that fail to come to class will lose points accordingly. In addition, students that do not participate in the course will likely find that they struggle to do well on both the examinations and homework assignments.

Default Schedule

The following is a “default” schedule for the course. Specific topics and dates-of-coverage are subject to change, depending on how class progresses. Examination dates are firm. Readings will be posted online.

Key

Critical Thinking (book found online on our course page) = CT

The Five Types of Legal Argument by Wilson Huhn = TFToLA

Date	Topic	Readings/LogiCola	Additional
1 M	Intro to Course	No Reading Assigned	
1 W	Understanding Arguments	CT: Chapter One	
1 F	Argument Evaluation	CT: Chapter Two	

2 M	Argument Evaluation	No Reading Assigned	
2 W	Interpreting Arguments	CT: Chapter Three	
2 F	Interpreting Arguments	No Reading Assigned	
3 M	Advanced Argument Evaluation	CT: Chapter Four	
3 W	Intro to Logic	CT: Chapter Five	
3 F	Logical Connectives	LogiCola: C (EM & ET)	Homework 1 Due
4 M	Evaluating Logical Expressions	LogiCola: D (TE & FE)	
4 W	Truth Evaluations	LogiCola: D (TM & TH) LogiCola: D (UE, UM, & UH)	
4 F	Truth Table Tests	LogiCola: D (AE & AM)	
5 M	Truth Table Tests	LogiCola: D (AE & AM)	
5 W	Harder Translations	LogiCola: C (HM & HT)	
5 F	Truth Table Tests	LogiCola D (AM & AH)	
6 M	Truth Table Tests	LogiCola: D (AM & AH)	
6 W	Fallacies	Review LogiCola Problems	
6 F	Fallacies	Review LogiCola Problems	Homework 2 Due
7 M	Fallacies	Review LogiCola Problems	
7 W	Fallacies	LogiCola R	
7 F	Logic and Arguments	Review LogiCola Problems	
8 M	Midterm Examination	Nothing Assigned	
8 W	Constructing Arguments	TFToLA: Chapter Nine	
8 F	Constructing Arguments	TFToLA: Chapter Ten	
9 M	Text	TFToLA: Chapter Three	
9 W	Text	TFToLA: Chapter Eleven	
9 F	Text	No Reading Assigned	Homework 3 Due
10 M	Intent	TFToLA: Chapter Four	
10 W	Intent	TFToLA: Chapter Twelve	
10 F	Intent	No Reading Assigned	
11 M	Precedent	TFToLA: Chapter Five	
11 W	Precedent	TFToLA: Chapter Thirteen	
11 F	Precedent	No Reading Assigned	Homework 4 Due
12 M	Tradition	TFToLA: Chapter Six	
12 W	Tradition	TFToLA: Chapter Fourteen	
12 F	Tradition	No Reading Assigned	
13 M	Policy	TFToLA: Chapter Seven	
13 W	Policy	TFToLA: Chapter Fifteen	
13 F	Policy	No Reading Assigned	
14 M	Cross-Type Attacks	TFToLA: Chapter Sixteen	
14 W	Applications to Specific Cases	TFToLA: Chapter Twenty-Five	
14 F	Applications to Specific Cases	No Reading Assigned	Homework 5 Due

15 M	Applications to Specific Cases	Select a Case	Additional
15 W	Applications to Specific Cases	No Reading Assigned	
15 F	Applications to Specific Cases	No Reading Assigned	
16 M	Applications to Specific Cases	Select a Case	
16 W	Applications to Specific Cases	No Reading Assigned	
16 F	Applications to Specific Cases	No Reading Assigned	
	Final Examination	No Reading Assigned	

Information About Reading and LogiCola Assignments

Reading Assignments

Reading assignments are to be completed in advance of the listing. The reading for [1 Wednesday] is *Critical Thinking*: Chapter One “Basic Argument Structure.” You need to come to class on [1 Wednesday] having already read that chapter.

LogiCola

LogiCola is a computer program created by Harry J. Gensler. You can download this program for free at <http://www.harryhiker.com/lc/>. If you have a Mac computer, you will need to download an app called Wine that will enable you to download LogiCola. A detailed explanation for how to get LogiCola working on your Mac can be found at <http://www.harryhiker.com/lc/mac.htm>. If you need help getting it on your Mac, please talk to me.

LogiCola Assignments

LogiCola assignments listed on this document are recommendations for practice problems that are based on the information learned that day in class. Each listing can be utilized from the day listed and onward for additional practice. The first LogiCola assignment for [3 Friday] is LogiCola C (EM & ET). This means you can start doing LogiCola C (EM & ET) after class on [3 Friday] and any day after that for practice as needed.

A Quick Note on How to Read LogiCola Assignments: When I list a LogiCola assignment, I first list the exercise set followed by any additional modifications you need to make to get the appropriate type of exercise. To do all of this, you’ll open LogiCola and under File, you’ll select the top option: “Load New Exercise Set.” This will bring you to the Exercise Set Menu. You’ll select the exercise set that corresponds with the letter I have listed. Once you have selected the correct exercise set, under File, you’ll modify the exercise in light of the additional letters I’ve given you. For example, your first LogiCola assignment is LogiCola C (EM & ET). C is the exercise set and EM and ET are the additional modifications you need to make to the exercise. Under file, you will load LogiCola exercise set C, and then under file you will select E and then select M. That is LogiCola C (EM). When you feel confident with that, under file, select E and then select T. This is LogiCola C (ET).

Class Policies

Excused Absences

Absences can be excused *with appropriate documentation* in some circumstances, which might include serious personal physical or mental illness, serious illness of a dependent, academic or professional travel, presentations, or interviews, funerals or death in immediate family, and emergency situations such as traffic accidents. Additionally, please see the “In Case of Emergency” Policy below.

In Case of Emergency

You have a right to privacy and are never under any obligation to divulge personal information to me. In case of emergency (physical, mental, medical, emotional, familial, etc.), you can email me and say: **“Something important has come up that warrants an excused absence from class today.”** No further details will be required. I trust that you know what warrants an excused absence, and I trust that you will not abuse this policy.

Should some sort of emergency get in the way of a deadline or due date, you can send an email of the following sort: **“I am dealing with something that warrants an extension of [Assignment] as it has prevented me from completing [Assignment] to the best of my abilities.”** Once I have received this email, we will work together to determine the best course of action. I may ask a few questions (i.e. “Do you think that you will be in a better place by X date and able to complete the assignment by then?”) to help determine the best course of action. Again, I trust that you know what warrants an extension of an assignment, and I trust that you will not abuse this policy.

Phone and Computer Use

Phones, computers, and other mobile devices are not permitted *unless* this is the device by which a takes notes or accesses the class readings. Use of phones for non-class purposes will result in an *unexcused absence*.

Packing Up

It has become fairly common among students to begin packing up belongings five or so minutes prior to class officially being over. This is incredibly distracting as it creates both (1) a flurry of motion, and (2) a fair amount of noise. This results in the last few minutes of each class period being wasted, and the loss adds up. To prevent a loss of class time, students are not permitted to pack up their belongings until class is officially over.

Late Work

Work that is submitted late will be accepted but will receive a 10% deduction **for each day that it is late**. Late assignments will not be accepted if the assignment grades have been posted.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the University’s Code of Student Conduct. Any suspected violations will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. [Link to Code of Student Conduct]

Useful information about plagiarism is found here: [Did I Plagiarize?](#)

Diversity

[University] affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Mental Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact [counseling services] for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential.

This course covers a variety of topics that may be triggering to some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, death, catastrophe, or disregard for human life. If needed, please take care of yourself while watching/reading this material (leaving the computer to take a water/bathroom break, debriefing with a friend, contacting [resource], and contacting the instructor if needed). Expectations are that we all will be respectful of our classmates while consuming this media and that we will create a safe space for each other. Failure to show respect to each other may result in dismissal from the class.

Student Resources

College is hard. If everything was going perfectly behind the scenes, then college would still be hard. Unfortunately, for many students, things are not going perfectly behind the scenes. With that in mind, I want you to be aware that the university has numerous resources that can be incredibly useful in helping you navigate [University's] structure and resolve issues you encounter while here at the university. You have a right to privacy, and you are never under any obligation to divulge personal information to me. If you need an in class accommodation (more time on the exam, a note-taker, etc.) then you need to register with [disability services]. Once you have registered with disability services, then they can tell me what needs to be done on your behalf without you having to divulge anything personal to me. You can find [the office of disability services] online at [link] or at [Address], [phone number], and [Email].

I want you all to succeed both in my class and here at the university as students. If there is ever something that comes up that starts to get in the way of your education, health, and/or wellness, please know that the university has many resources that are here to help you in a variety of ways. I have included those resources below:

- Emergency Financial Resources: [link]
- Disability Resources: [link]
- Student Advocacy Resources: [link]
- Mental Health Resources: [link]

If you are experiencing a crisis that is not one of disability, hospitalization, mental health, or finance, I still strongly suggest reaching out to [link] to see what supportive resources they may be able to provide.