

Critical Thinking

Code:	
Term:	Spring
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	Slovak/Eng.
Instructor:	James Griffith
Form of study:	lecture+seminar

Prerequisites

Introduction to Philosophy

Course Objectives

As a discipline, critical thinking can be approached from different directions, but the focus here will follow Trudy Govier in coming to grips with what constitutes good and bad arguments, mainly according to the category of cogency (i.e., rational acceptability). In this way, critical thinking can be understood as both an introduction to and as broader than formal logic: an introduction because many of the rules of argument with which we will deal are also dealt with in formal logic, broader because cogency is a more general category than logical soundness. Because critical thinking has this broader aspect to it, it is applicable in more direct fashion to aspects of speech and thought that are sometimes excluded from logic's scope, especially politico-rhetorical and legal speech and thought. We will thus critically analyze politico-rhetorical and legal texts for their cogency to determine whether the arguments presented therein can be considered good ones.

Contents

We will supplement the lessons and exercises from Trudy Govier's *A Practical Study of Argument* with editorials from the New York Times and the Brown v. Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court opinion.

Themes and Readings involved

Obligatory Readings

Primary Sources

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (U.S. Supreme Court).

Govier, Trudy, *A Practical Study of Argument*, 7 ed. (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014), ISBN: 978-1-133-93464-6.

The New York Times

Secondary Sources

Supplementary Readings and Sources

Evaluation Criteria

30%: The *Final Examination* will be on Wednesday, May 30, at 10:30 a.m.

25%: A *Midterm Examination* will be on Monday, April 9, at 1:00 p.m.

20%: The *Exercise Sets* found in each chapter will form the backbone of your understanding of how to analyze and construct argument structures.

10%: *Standardizations and assessments* of newspaper editorials and the Brown v. Board of Education opinion will be handed in each week for the first half of the term. The focus of these will depend on the focus of the relevant chapter in Govier.

10%: *Class participation* is encouraged and expected. Attendance does not qualify as participation.

5%: *Attendance* is mandatory. Lateness of more than 10 minutes qualifies as an absence.

Course Evaluation (%)

A – excellent:	100-93%,
B – very good:	92-84%,
C – good:	83-74%,
D – satisfactory:	73-63%,
E – sufficient:	62-51%,
Fx – fail:	50-0%.

Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 lessons.