

PHIL 103 Reason and Argument Summer Term 1 2018, Online

Course dates: May 21 – June 19
Professor Nora Mills Boyd
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Course description

Both in philosophy and in everyday life, we are often called on to give reasons for the claims that we make and we expect others to do the same. Ideally, this giving and taking of reasons happens through genuine dialog where each party stands to learn from the exchange. Sometimes however, reasoning and argumentation go awry and devolve into misunderstanding or dogmatic posturing. In this course we will practice essential skills for carefully identifying, crafting, and responding to arguments as well as explore ways to avoid pitfalls in reasoning and bad habits in argumentation. Students will have the opportunity to reason about topics that are matters of live controversy in the political climate of the United States today, and to practice listening to and respectfully responding to their peers with their own well-reasoned arguments.

Required texts:

Morrow, David R and Anthony Weston. 2016. *A Workbook for Arguments: A Complete Course in Critical Thinking Second Edition*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Incorporated.
McIntyre, Lee. 2018. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Note about the course

This course will be conducted entirely online, mostly through features on Blackboard. Although we will not meet face-to-face, we will use this platform to our advantage to build a respectful community of inquirers in the short time that we have together. I care about your learning experience in this course, and I want you to get the most out of it, so please contact me when you have questions or concerns. Pay close attention to the announcements on Blackboard—that will be an important channel of communication for us. I will be available for virtual office hours (contactable by phone, Hangouts, and Skype) by appointment. You will have opportunities to interact remotely with your classmates in this course. Please extend to them the kindness and consideration that you would in a traditional classroom setting.

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Distinguish well-supported arguments from mere rhetoric
- Evaluate how well an argument supports its purported conclusion
- Articulate your own reasoning and compose compelling arguments
- Respectfully and constructively respond to other people's arguments

Rubrics and assignment instructions are distributed through Blackboard

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the readings, schedule, and assignments, but I promise I will only do so in ways that maintain and equal or reduced workload for you

Grade breakdown

Discussion board posts	10%
Homework exercises	34%
Editorial	10%
Podcast project	36%
Exit essay	10%

Description of assessments

Discussion board posts 10%

You will be asked to submit 3 short posts through the Discussion Board feature on Blackboard. These posts will be **due by 10pm** at the latest on the day that they are assigned but I encourage you to submit them during the day so that your peers can read and respond to them. You are encouraged to read and respond to posts made by others students, and to make non-required posts.

Homework exercises 34%

There will be several homework exercises that you will submit through the Assignments feature on Blackboard as pdfs. Like the posts, these will be due at will be **due by 10pm** at the latest on the day that they are assigned but may be submitted earlier.

Editorial 10%

You will have the opportunity to write a newspaper editorial-style essay, to be submitted through Turnitin on Blackboard. For your editorial you may choose to defend a position in one of the debates that we will read about in Week 2: needle exchanges, police violence, gun control, Black Lives Matter, or the US criminal justice system. You may also choose a different topic, subject to my approval. You will receive substantive constructive feedback from me on your argument and writing, which is intended to be useful to you for future assignments (and beyond). **Due June 2 at 10pm.**

Podcast project 36%

The major project for this course will be a podcast. Please consult the rubric, instructions, and examples on Blackboard for detailed guidelines and expectations about this project. In your podcast you will make an argument defending a claim of your choosing. Since this project will take research, planning, deep thought, and editing, and since this course is *very short*, I will ask you to begin thinking about what claim you would like to try to argue for at the very beginning of the class. You will submit a proposal through the Assignments feature of Blackboard as a pdf, which will include an annotated bibliography. In addition to making an audio recording of your own argument, I will ask you to listen to the argument of one of your peers, and carefully compose a thoughtful and respectful response that you then record and submit also. We will use the private link feature on SoundCloud to share podcasts amongst ourselves.

Thesis proposal	6%	Due May 26 at 10pm
Argument	20%	Due June 9 at 10pm
Response	10%	Due June 14 at 10pm

Exit essay 10%

In the hopes of bringing what we learn in this course to bear on our lives outside of the course, we will read Lee McIntyre's 2018 book *Post-Truth*. I have assigned it in the content for the final week, but it would probably be wise to start reading earlier. The final assignment for this course will be a short essay in response to a prompt that will ask you to make connections between what we have learned, the current public intellectual climate in the United States, and your own role in it now and in the future. You will submit this essay through the Assignments feature of Blackboard as a pdf. **Due Jun 19 at 10pm.**

Please consult blackboard for detailed course schedules and links to course media!

Key Dates

Assignments

Task	EST	Due By
Discussion Board Post (Murray at Middlebury)	3 ½ hrs	Tue, 05/22 @ 10 PM
Read peer's posts	2 hrs	Wed, 05/23 @ 10 PM
Homework Exercises 1.1 numbers 2, 3, and 5 only 1.2 numbers 4, 6, and 8 only 1.4 numbers 3, 6, and 10 only 1.7 numbers 3, 6, and 8 only	4 hrs	Fri, 05/25 @ 10 PM
Podcast thesis proposal	2 hrs	Sat, 05/26 @ 10 PM
Review feedback on assignments	30 min	Sun, 05/27 @ 10 PM
Discussion Board Post (Gun Debate)	3.5 hrs	Tue, 05/29 @ 10 PM
Read peer's posts	2 hrs	Wed, 05/30 @ 10 PM
Homework Exercise 2.2 numbers 1, 4, and 9 only 2.3 numbers 2, 3, and 10 only 2.6 number 6 only	2 hrs	Fri, 06/01 @ 10 PM
Editorial assignment	5 hrs	Sat, 06/02 @ 10 PM
Review feedback on assignments	30 min	Sun, 06/03 @ 10 PM

Homework Exercise 6.1 numbers 2, 3, and 8 only 6.4 numbers 2, 9, and 10 only	2 hrs	Tue, 06/05 @ 10 PM
Complete these assignments on your podcast topic Homework Exercises 7.2 7.4 7.6 7.8 7.10	5 hrs	Wed, 06/06 @ 10 PM
Discussion Board Post (Oxford Union Debates)	3.5 hrs	Thu, 06/07 @ 10 PM
Read peer's posts	2 hrs	Fri, 06/08 @ 10 PM
Podcast assignment	18 hrs	Sat, 06/09 @ 10 PM
Homework Exercise 10.1 part 1 10.2 part 1 10.3 part 2 10.4 part 2	1 hr	Wed, 06/13 @ 10 PM
Podcast response	4 ½ hrs	Thu, 06/14 @ 10 PM
Listen to peer's response to your own podcast	15 min	Tue, 06/19 @ 10 PM
Exit essay	7 hrs	Tue, 06/19 @ 10 PM

Course Calendar

Reading & Lectures

Assignments

Mon 21	Tue 22	Wed 23	Thu 24	Fri 25	Sat 26	Sun 27
Read Course Syllabus	Read Midbeat editorial	Review Peer's discussion board posts	Read Chapter 1	Podcast Research Begin researching	Podcast Research Continue researching	Watch The Argument Clinic

<p>Read The Dying Art of Disagreement</p>	<p>Discussion Board (DB) Post Topic: Murray at Middlebury. Your post should be between 300-500 words.</p>	<p>for Murray at Middlebury</p> <p>Read Arguments (optional)</p>	<p>Exercise 1.1 (#s 2, 3, 5), 1.2 (#s 4, 6, 8), and 1.4 (#s 3, 6, 10)</p>	<p>topics for your podcast presentation. Use this research to craft your thesis proposal.</p> <p>Exercise 1.7 (#s 3, 6, 8)</p>	<p>topics for your podcast presentation. Use this research to craft your thesis proposal.</p> <p>Podcast Submit your thesis proposal via Blackboard</p>	<p>Review Assignment feedback</p>
EST: 1.5 hrs	EST: 4 hrs	EST: 2 hrs	EST: 3 hrs	EST: 4 hrs	EST: 5 hrs	EST: 45 min

Mon 28	Tue 29	Wed 30	Thu 31	Fri 01	Sat 02	Sun 03
<p>Read How Needle Exchange Programs Fight the AIDS Epidemic</p> <p>Read Needle Exchange Programs Help HIV But Move Too Slowly, CDC Says</p>	<p>Read The fallout of police violence is killing black women like Erica Garner</p> <p>Read As gun debate roils on, teachers in this Texas school are already armed</p> <p>Read The Importance of Black Lives Matter</p> <p>Discussion Board (DB) Post Topic: Gun Debate. Your post should be between 300-500 words.</p>	<p>Review Peer's discussion board posts for Gun Debate</p> <p>Read How to Fix the Criminal Justice System</p> <p>Editorial Research Begin researching topics for your editorial assignment</p>	<p>Read Chapter 2 (pp. 38-65)</p> <p>Exercise 2.2 (#s 1, 4, 9) and 2.3 (#s 2, 3, 10)</p>	<p>Exercise 2.6 (#6)</p> <p>Editorial Draft your editorial assignment. Your final assignment should be between 900-1000 words.</p>	<p>Editorial Finalize your editorial assignment and submit via Blackboard no later than 06/02 @ 10PM.</p>	<p>Read The Huddled Masses And The Myth of America</p> <p>Read Is Migration a Basic Human Right?</p> <p>Review Feedback on assignments</p> <p>Review Instructions for making a podcast</p>

EST: 2 hrs	EST: 6.5 hrs	EST: 6 hrs	EST: 4.5 hrs	EST: 3.5 hrs	EST: 2 hrs	EST: 4 hrs
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Mon 04	Tue 05	Wed 06	Thu 07	Fri 08	Sat 09	Sun 10
<p>Read Trump Is Making America Great Again</p> <p>Podcast Research Continue researching your podcast topic</p>	<p>Podcast Research Continue researching your podcast topic</p> <p>Read Chapter 6 (pp. 126-130)</p> <p>Exercise 6.1 (#s 2, 3, 8) and 6.4 (#s 2, 9, 10)</p>	<p>Read Chapter 7 (pp. 159-185)</p> <p>Exercise 7.2, 7.4, 7.6, and 7. 10. Complete these exercise based on your podcast topic</p>	<p>Read Islam is a Peaceful Religion</p> <p>Read The US Prison System</p> <p>Discussion Board Post Topic: Oxford Union Debates.</p> <p>Podcast Continue working on your final podcast project.</p>	<p>Review Peer's discussion board posts for Oxford Union Debate</p> <p>Podcast Continue working on your final podcast project.</p>	<p>Podcast Finalize your podcast. Be sure to submit no later than Sat, 06/09 @ 10PM</p>	<p>Read Fake News: The Facts</p>
EST: 8 hrs	EST: 6.5 hrs	EST: 7.5 hrs	EST: 8 hrs	EST: 8 hrs	EST: 8 hrs	EST: 2 hrs

Mon 11	Tue 12	Wed 13	Thu 14	Fri 15	Sat 16	Sun 17
<p>Listen Review peer's podcasts</p> <p>Podcast Response Plan response to</p>	<p>Read Yes/No/Okay, But (pp. 55-67)</p> <p>Podcast Response Begin research for your response to peer's podcast</p>	<p>Read Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments</p> <p>Watch PBS Digital Studios</p>	<p>Podcast Response Finalize your podcast response. Your podcast response should be about 2-3 minutes long. Upload to SoundCloud and share link with professor no later</p>	<p>Read Post-Truth, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp 1-34)</p>	<p>Read Post-Truth, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp 35-88)</p> <p>Discussion Board Response Last day to post a response no</p>	<p>Read Post-Truth, Chapters 5 and 6 (pp 89-150)</p>

peer's podcast	Podcast Response Draft your response. Your podcast response should be about 2-3 minutes long.	video Five Fallacies Read Appendix I (pp. 227-248) Exercise 10.1, part 1 Exercise 10.2, part 1 Exercise 10.3, part 2 Exercise 10.4, part 2	than 06/14 @ 10PM.		later than 06/16 @ 10 PM.	
EST: 2 hrs	EST: 6 hrs	EST: 4.5 hrs	EST: 2 hrs	EST: 3.5 hrs	EST: 5.5 hrs	EST: 6 hrs

Mon 18	Tue 19
Read Post-Truth, Chapter 7 (pp 151-172) Exit Essay Draft exit essay. Plan on 750-1000 words total.	Review Listen to peer's response to your podcast Exit Essay Finalize exit essay. Submit to Blackboard no later than 06/19 @ 10 PM.
EST: 4 hrs	EST: 5.4 hrs

Academic integrity

In this course, students and the instructor will respect Siena College's policies on academic integrity, which can be found at:

<https://community.siena.edu/academic-affairs/resources/academic-integrity/>.

It is the student's responsibility to understand and refrain from cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes a failure of academic integrity, ask me ASAP.

Accommodation and special needs

I am committed to working with students with disabilities and special needs to make sure everyone gets the most out of the course and is assessed fairly. Students with disabilities or special needs should contact the Office of Accessibility at the beginning of the semester so proper accommodations can be made. More information about the Office of Accessibility can be found at:

<https://community.siena.edu/student-life/departments/office-of-accessibility/>.