

Introduction to Critical Reasoning

Phil 110

Instructor Mr. Douglas F. Olena

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9 - 9:50 a.m.



Critical Reasoning

- ◆ Text: Becoming A Critical Thinker – Sherry Diestler
- ◆ Text: The Trial and Death of Socrates – Plato

Foundations of Arguments

- ◆ Structure of arguments
 - ◆ The Issue
 - ◆ The Conclusion
 - ◆ The Reasons

Values and Ethics

- ◆ Value Assumptions and Conflicts
- ◆ Ethics: an important dimension of values
- ◆ Ideal values versus real values
- ◆ Ethics in argumentation
- ◆ Ethical decision making

Reality Assumptions

- ◆ Detecting reality assumptions
- ◆ The need to examine assumptions
- ◆ Deductive reasoning
- ◆ Truth in deductive arguments
- ◆ The uses of deductive reasoning
- ◆ The premise of contention

Inductive Arguments: Statistical and Causal Generalizations

- ◆ Inductive reasoning
- ◆ Statistical evidence and its use
- ◆ How research is done
- ◆ Using surveys as evidence
- ◆ Statistical generalizations
- ◆ Reporting of statistical studies

Inductive Arguments:

Statistical and Causal Generalizations

- ◆ Causal generalizations
- ◆ Hume's condition for cause and effect
- ◆ Technical causation
- ◆ Mill's analysis of cause and effect
- ◆ Using difference and similarity to determine cause

Inductive Generalizations: Controlled Studies and Analogies

- ◆ Research design
- ◆ Criteria for evaluating research findings
- ◆ Controversy in research findings
- ◆ Use of authority: expert testimony
- ◆ Problems with expert testimony
- ◆ Reasoning by analogy

Reasoning Errors

- ◆ Inadequate reasons as fallacies
- ◆ Fallacies that mislead
- ◆ What's my fallacy?

The Power of Language

- ◆ Denotation and connotation
- ◆ The power of connotation
- ◆ Reification: when words take on more power than reality
- ◆ Meanings are in people
- ◆ Vagueness and ambiguity in language
- ◆ Doublespeak, including weasel words

Suggestion in Media

- ◆ Suggestion in daily life
- ◆ Televised suggestion
- ◆ Suggestion in print media
- ◆ The power of media to shape information
- ◆ Subliminal persuasion

Fair-mindedness

- ◆ How we defend our egos
- ◆ Conformity and ways to overcome it
- ◆ Areas where we have trouble being rational
- ◆ Actively listening: developing empathy
- ◆ The art of listening well
- ◆ Precautions about active listening

Persuasive Speaking

- ◆ Being an advocate of ideas:
communicating publicly
- ◆ The best ways to deal with fear of public speaking
- ◆ Audience analysis
- ◆ Three elements of a persuasive argument: ethos, logos, pathos