



Introduction to Ethical Reasoning

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PHIL 1020-004

T/TH 1230-145 P.M. PLAZA M-108



Course Description: All who live in this world must choose what to do. Yet to live in the world we must live with people. When we make choices involving people we are engaged in ethical reasoning. Ethical debates arise from those situations where there is disagreement about: 1) how we should treat others and 2) the reasons (or arguments) for treating them one way rather than another. In a world where values and personalities can clash, it is of paramount importance that we understand the differences between better and worse *processes* of ethical reasoning — and when we're not reasoning at all.

So, to reason well — which enables us to treat one another fairly — we need to understand how to reason and what can frustrate, obscure, divert, or confuse reasoning. “Propaganda” is a general term describing a variety of ways in which ethical reasoning is short-circuited. This course will seek to define propaganda and identify ways it works; we will also analyze the variety of agents and motives who work to deploy propaganda. (It is not assumed that propaganda is always good or always bad, by the way.) Our overarching goal will be to become more critical of the arguments and information we encounter so we can reason as clearly and ethically as possible.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Ideally, by the end of this course students should gain the following skills:

Familiarization. Gain a good sense of what is at stake in issues of course.

Comprehension. Comprehend the arguments offered by various philosophers.

Critical analysis. Criticize those arguments by pointing out where they lack evidence, make an unreasonable leap, hold a false assumption, etc.

Demonstration of the above through writing.

Verbalization. Summarize and criticize a philosophical position, without notes, using your own words.

Conversation and Debate. Be able to discuss issues in a focused and informed way with others in the class. This will involve listening closely to their points, then responding in a way that moves the discussion ahead.

CORE COURSE AND CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES: This is a Core Course that fulfills a requirement in the Humanities. By the end of a general education course in the Humanities, students should be proficient in the following areas characteristic of critical thinking:

- 1. Textual analysis:** Students analyze texts of a variety of types, distinguishing the various philosophical, historical, and/or literary elements. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.” Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings, and (c) exams.
- 2. Interpretive skills:** Students engage with texts to develop supported meaningful readings. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.” Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
- 3. Context awareness:** Students identify the cultural, historical, and intellectual influences on a text. Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
- 4. Ethical thinking:** Students recognize various ethical situations and ideas, and distinguish viable ethical positions from simple opinions or self-interest. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.” Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: (a) in-class discussion, (b) short writings
- 5. Verbalization.** Be able to summarize a philosophical position, without notes, using your own words. Be able to criticize a position this way. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.” Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: in-class discussion and presentations
- 6. Conversation and Debate.** Be able to discuss issues in a focused and informed way with others in the class. This will involve listening closely to their points, then responding in a way that moves the discussion ahead. These activities are typical of “critical thinking.” Opportunities to show learning in this area will show up in: in-class discussion and occasional group projects.

GT PATHWAYS. This language is standard for all GT Pathways PHIL 1020 courses:

This class fulfills GT PATHWAYS COMPETENCY: CRITICAL THINKING

Details: Critical Thinking: Competency in critical thinking addresses a student's ability to analyze information and ideas from multiple perspectives and articulate an argument or an opinion or a conclusion based on their analysis.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Students should be able to:

1. Explain an Issue (a) Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic.
2. Utilize Context (a) Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position. (b) Identify assumptions. (c) Analyze one's own and others' assumptions.
3. Formulate an Argument (a) Ask a question relevant to the discipline. (b) Synthesize perspectives that answer it. (c) Take a specific position.
4. Incorporate Evidence (a) Interpret/evaluate sources to develop an analysis or synthesis.
5. Understand Implications and Make Conclusions (a) Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented. (b) Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion

TEXTS

REQUIRED Physical Texts: Available at Tivoli Station bookstore and, if you desire, online (see, for example, <http://used.addall.com>). If you buy your book online, make sure (1) that it is the correct edition, and (2) that you have it in time for class.

1. *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion - Second Edition 2nd Edition* by Randal Marlin, Broadview Press; 2nd edition (October 10, 2013) ISBN-10: 1554810914; ISBN-13: 978-1554810918
2. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman; Publisher: Penguin Books; (November 1, 1986); ISBN: 0140094385

REQUIRED Online Texts: Readings and resources will be posted on CANVAS.

1. UCD Canvas site <https://ucdenver.instructure.com> (CANVAS)

NOTE: YOU MUST PRINT OUT ANY REQUIRED ONLINE READING AND BRING IT TO CLASS.

Canvas/Website: There are two online sites related to this course. **Familiarize yourself with them right away.** Both will offer you access to information about the course such as study questions, announcements, grades, extra credit assignments.

1. The first and most important one is our course Canvas site: <https://ucdenver.instructure.com/>. On this page are LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS. Please make sure you enroll right at the beginning of the class.
2. The second site is my home page at <http://www.davidhildebrand.org>. Here there are a variety of general study tips and resources in philosophy.

Time Management and Expectations about Reading/Understanding Material

Time Per Week: Many of us have responsibilities that compete with this class. Though I am sympathetic, these will not excuse poor attendance or late work. **Expect to spend approximately 5 hours per week on this course, out of class.** If short term, non-emergency illnesses or other contingencies create problems with attending class or completing assignments in a timely manner, students must notify me before class time by email or phone message. I will discuss the matter with students during the next class meeting or schedule an appointment at that time if needed. I will only consider an extension if I receive notification prior to the class or deadline except in cases of documented emergency.

PLAZA M-108, Readings: It is expected that you have done the readings before we discuss them. As you read, copy out important points and questions you have onto a separate sheet of paper. (These will help you with your short reflection papers.) You may also want to note problem passages (e.g., with a "?" or "Q.") in your text as you read. These are good points for class discussion. **You should come to each class able to discuss the main issues of the reading and you could be asked during class to present the main points to the class.** If I find people are not prepared, I will start giving quizzes to test basic

understanding. Your well-prepared participation is crucial for a successful class. Please see the tips section of my website.

Very important: please set aside about 10 minutes shortly before class to look back over (skim-review) the readings and whatever you have written for that day.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION:

Max. points possible: 1000

1. **Participation** 140 points
2. **Short writings (8)** 160 points (20 each; 4 due by March 10; rest due by May 5.)
3. **Quizzes** 160 points (4 quizzes, 40 points each) on Feb. 4, Feb. 20, April 2, April 21
4. **Exam 1: Midterm** 240 points (covering material *up to* first exam) on **March 5**.
5. **Exam 2: Final** 300 points (a take-home exam; covering *entire semester*) due **May 12**.

Grades: There are 1000 possible points for this class. I use the plus/minus system. An "A" will be a body of work achieving at or above 930 points; an "A-" will be 900-929 points; a "B+" is 870-899 points, etc. Values for those letters, as well as the policies regarding other grades such as Incomplete, are available in the CU Academic Policies and Regulations section of the handbook. I have set out my standards of what a grade means on my FAQ section of my website.

Attendance: **Attendance is required.** Two *unexcused* absences over the course of the semester are permitted without penalty. An *excusable* absence is a medical illness or emergency that is completely unavoidable. It is the student's responsibility to talk to me about excusable absences ASAP before or after the absence.

Effect on final grade: Each *additional* absence will lower your final course grade 30 points per absence. E.g., a student with 900 points at the end of the course (an A-) who had 3 *unexcused* absences beyond the two allowed (in other words, someone who had missed 5 classes without an excuse) would lower their final course average by 90 points (3 x 30 pts) and wind up with an overall course grade of an 810 (a B-). And so forth.

(1) Participation/Presentation: Course **participation** grades are not automatic. They are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience of the class as a whole in terms of asking pertinent questions, answering questions correctly or, at least, provocatively, making insightful observations, and offering other meaningful expressions of interest in the material that help encourage learning. Shyness is not an excuse—oral participation is part of your evaluation. There will be ample opportunity for active and well prepared participation, which I value. I will measure your participation by a variety of components: informed dialogue, presentation of your short papers in class, participation in any group work, and your performance on any quizzes.

Important: part of this grade will be determined by your **presentation** of your **short writings (see below):** when called upon in class, you must demonstrate that you know what you wrote and why you wrote it; in other words, show clarity of thought, effective communication, and ability to field questions on your paper will all contribute to the participation portion of your grade. (I suggest looking over your short papers briefly before class to prepare.)

(2) SHORT WRITINGS (8 total; 2 must be "SHOW AND TELL") The purpose of these assignments is to help you clarify your understanding of the readings and to help you think critically about the issues. **Follow these instructions carefully, please.**

WHAT to write on short/critical reaction papers:

- Short papers should be: 250-350 word, typewritten reactions or questions about some specific issue which you find compelling in the readings. Your paper must not simply sum up the reading or repeat points made there. (I.e., **no book reports**, please.) **Rather, you must try to raise a question or discuss some original insight.** You may use these papers to demonstrate your application of a concept/idea in the readings to an experience

you have making or experiencing art, but the connection to the reading must be significant (and not a mere "jumping off" point. See the website link "Writing short, critical papers" for further hints about how to write a good paper: http://www.davidhildebrand.org/uploads/3/2/1/2/32124749/hildebrand_how_to_write_a_short_critical_paper.pdf

- The first paragraph should state in 1-2 sentences a summary of what the paper is about.
- Only papers written on a reading or topic that will be discussed in the class immediately coming up are acceptable.
- **SHOW AND TELL PAPERS: 2 OF 8** papers must be "Show and Tell" papers. These will last between 5 and 10 minutes.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR "SHOW AND TELL":**
- **WHAT TO CHOOSE AND WRITE:** Consider the readings for a particular class day. Then, write a short paper about a main theme or point of that reading and connect it with a short example of propaganda. The example can be a short video, a newspaper article, or a short case study. The example may be historical or contemporary but should be identified by the student personally rather than drawn from something already in the readings.
- **HOW TO PRESENT:** The presenter should briefly explain the social context of their example, discuss the main points of connection with the readings for the day. Presenter's remarks should strive to (a) make their point clear and (b) provoke critical class discussion.

WHEN to write short papers:

- You must do 8 critical papers total and you may not hand in more than one paper on the same date. **FOUR papers must be done by the course midpoint, March 19. Students who have not done 4 papers by this point will only be permitted to do 4 more papers.**
- Must be on the topic/reading of given day's class; must be handed in and presentable in class. Y
- You must come to class for a paper to be accepted.

GRADING on short papers

- Grade: This will be a "graded" assignment only in a loose sense; in other words it will be either S-satisfactory (full credit or 20 points) or U-unsatisfactory (half credit or 10 points). A zero (0) will be awarded if nothing (or next to nothing) is turned in or for any papers not in by the midpoint/endpoint deadlines.
- **TWO MAKE-UPS:** If you get a Unsatisfactory on up to two papers, you may revise and resubmit them. The old grade will be dropped in favor of the revised paper's grade.

(3) Quizzes:

- **4 comprehension quizzes given during the semester**
- **Each worth a maximum of 40 points (total will be 160 for all 4)**
- These will be given in class. The point of them is to help give you a "reality check" on how well you're understanding the most important aspects of the readings. These should not be difficult to do well on if you've done the readings and have been asking questions (in class or to me, outside of class). **Missed quizzes** will be given a **zero unless there is a medical reason for the absence**. In that case, a make-up quiz or assignment will be arranged.

(4, 5) Longer Exams: There will be two longer exams required for this class. Both will be take-home exams. They will likely contain a mixture of shorter and longer parts, as well as objective and essay formats. **NO** late exams without prior and absolutely justified permission. You may email me at any time to discuss your progress on ALL papers/ assignments or we can discuss them in office hours. **Only hard/paper copies will be accepted. I will not print out papers for you nor accept electronic copies as a way of meeting the deadline.**

UNIVERSITY DEADLINES AND REGISTRAR POLICIES

For relevant university deadlines and procedures (such as the last day to withdraw from a course) as well as academic support sites, please see these websites: (a) **Student support services:**

https://clas.ucdenver.edu/faculty-staff/sites/default/files/attached-files/student_services_and_calendar.pdf

(b) The actual **calendar of important dates**: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/Documents/AcademicCalendars/AcademicCalendarSpring2020.pdf>

COURSE POLICIES

Plagiarism/ Academic Dishonesty *Plagiarism* is a form of stealing. It occurs when an author uses the words or ideas of others as if they were the author's own original thought. (It may include word-for-word copying, interspersing one's own words with another's, paraphrasing, inventing or counterfeiting sources, submitting another's work as one's own, neglecting quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged.) Plagiarism is often unintentional. It can be avoided by always acknowledging one's debt to others by citing the exact source of a quotation or paraphrase. Since plagiarism is such a serious violation of academic honesty, the PENALTY for it will be an AUTOMATIC F FOR THIS COURSE.

Academic dishonesty is the intentional disregard of course or university rules. This may include (but is not limited to) collaborating with others when rules forbid or using sources/experts not permitted by an assignment. The CU handbook has a more complete description of plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Access, Disability, Communication: The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, phone (303) 315-3510, <http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/disability-resources-services/Pages/disability-resources-services.aspx>

I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter. [DRS requires students to provide current and adequate documentation of their disabilities. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved.

Students called for military duty: If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your school/college Associate Dean or Advising Office immediately.

Course Communication: In addition to announcements made and written handouts distributed in class, I may need to contact you between classes, which I'll do through individual and group email messages. **One of the requirements for this course is that you maintain an email address, check it regularly for messages, be sure it is working, and let me know if you change your email address.** You are responsible for any messages, including assignments and schedule changes, I send you via email. You also may contact me via email, in addition to seeing me during office hours or calling me.

Civility and Technology: Turn off cell phones during class. Text messaging, web surfing, and other electronic distractions may result in expulsion from class and will be counted as an absence and against the class "participation" grade. **Students who are speaking deserve your attention and respect as much as I do. Listen to one another.** Adherence to the Student Conduct Code is expected.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Phone : 303-315-7218

Canvas course site: ucdenver.instructure.com

E-mail: david.hildebrand@ucdenver.edu

Additional website: davidhildebrand.org

Office: Plaza M108

Hours T 11-12 p.m. or by appointment. Phone also an option.

Purpose of office hours: I *strongly* encourage you to participate by dropping by during office hours. We can talk about the class readings and lectures, exams and papers, your progress, or just philosophy in general. Note: If you are a student with a disability, I will make myself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations. Before accommodations will be made, you may be required to provide documentation.

Students with disabilities will be accommodated. Students with disabilities are required to register disabilities with the UCD Disability Services Office, and are responsible for requesting reasonable accommodations at the beginning of the term.

NOTE: ALL COURSE REQUIREMENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

Course Schedule: Readings and Assignments

All readings are required unless noted as “recommended.” All readings will come either (a) from 1 of the 2 books listed for course or (b) ONLINE on Canvas. Look for it by its title. I will attempt to put readings on Canvas in the order we will get to them. **Assignments and due dates in RED.**

Note: This is a rough schedule. Subject to revision. I will let you know in each class if something different is coming up.

Day	Date	Required & Suggested Readings	Theme/Focal Question	Quizzes, Tests or Exams
T	1/21	Introduction: Why is truth important? What is philosophy? What is ethics? What does it mean to really listen? TED TALK VIDEO: “We're building a dystopia just to make people click on ads” by Zeynep Tufekci (Reading sent over break: NYT on Listening)	Introduction to course and to one another. Reading slowly, listening carefully, responding with civility and care in dialogue. This class will be interactive!	
Th	1/23	Critical Thinking, Chapter 1 (ONLINE)	Getting some baselines in place for reasoning	
T	1/28	Critical Thinking 2, (a) Chapter 2 (ONLINE); (b) Lynch, “The Disturbing Power of Information Pollution” (ONLINE)	Getting some baselines in place for reasoning	
Th	1/30	(a) Plato, <i>Apology</i> (ONLINE)	The rhetoric/argument split, reason and ethics connection	
T	2/4	(a) Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> (ONLINE)	Plato/Socrates criticisms of rhetoric	In class quiz #1 on Critical Thinking, chapters 1&2
Th	2/6	(a) Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> (ONLINE)	Plato/Socrates criticisms of rhetoric	
T	2/11	(a) Why Study Propaganda? (PEP ch 1)	Given our understandings of the differences between “argument” and “rhetoric/persuasion” why have a special inquiry into “propaganda”? What are the options for defining “propaganda”?	

Th	2/13	(a) Why Study Propaganda? and (b) History of Propaganda (PEP ch 1, ch 2)	Continued inquiry into the reason for studying propaganda, and getting some historical perspective.	
T	2/18	(a) History of Propaganda (PEP ch 2)	Historical perspective, continued and making connections to our present circumstances.	
Th	2/20	(a) Propaganda Technique (PEP ch 3)	What are the different techniques used by propaganda? How should these be understood and categorized?	In class quiz #2 on PEP, chapters 1&2
T	2/25	(a) Propaganda Technique (PEP ch 3), and (b) Orwell "Politics and the English Language" (ONLINE) Suggested: (c) McElvenny "How the language of 'fake news' echoes 20th-century propaganda" (ONLINE)	Continued inquiry into the methods of propaganda, with a special focus by Orwell on language and politics.	
Th	2/27	(a) Advertising and PR (PEP ch 5);	Advertising is a near-omnipresent form of propaganda What are the specific goals of ads? How do they influence our beliefs and identity?	
T	3/3	(a) Advertising and PR (PEP ch 5); (b) Lippke, "Advertising and the Social Conditions of Autonomy"	Continued inquiry into advertising, with a special focus on whether advertising makes us less able to think critically, over time.	
Th	3/5	FILM IN CLASS: Jhally, <i>Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse</i> (a) Reading: Boorstin, "The Rhetoric of Democracy" (ONLINE)	Advertising has become the main storyteller in our culture. How does that affect our happiness, our social relationships, and the sustainability of our planet? How did advertising in American to become it's main form of "rhetoric" according to Boorstin?	Take home Exam 1 due in class (covers material up to March 3)
T	3/10	(a) Jhally, "Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse" (ONLINE); (b) review the Boorstin article	We'll discuss the film watched in last class, plus the articles by Jhally and Boorstin.	Mid-point for 1st short papers
Th	3/12	(a) "The Growth of Sinclair," "ProPublica PR Industry Fills Vacuum," (ONLINE) (b) "Rejuvenating American Journalism" (ONLINE) (c) POSSIBLE IN-CLASS OR EXTRA-CREDIT: FILM, "Toxic Sludge is Good for You"	"Public Relations" also has a history and an influence. How does PR affect what we think is true?	
T	3/17	(a) Ethics of Propaganda (PEP ch 4)	What are some main ways or theories of distinguishing "right" from "wrong"? How we use these ethical theories to decide about the morality of different forms and uses of propaganda?	

Th	3/19	(a) FILM: “Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women”	Having considered advertising and ethical theories, watch the film and try to formulate an argument regarding whether or not advertising’s images of women are ethically problematic.	
T	3/24	SPRING BREAK		
Th	3/26	SPRING BREAK		
T	3/31	(a) Ethics of Propaganda (PEP ch 4); suggested: (b) Cunningham, “The Ethics of Propaganda”	Continued inquiry into the ethics of different forms and uses of propaganda.	
Th	4/2	(a) Freedom of Expression (PEP ch 6)	Perhaps propaganda is just part of “free expression” and deserves to be left alone. What do we mean by “free expression,” and what are the reasons for or against it?	In class quiz #3 on Advertising /PR films and PEP, chapter 4
T	4/7	(a) Special Climate Discussion: IN CLASS FILM: “Do the Math: Bill McKibben & the Fight Over Climate Change”	How does propaganda play into public discussions of climate change and environmental sustainability? Do various interests use propaganda? How? To what overall effect?	
Th	4/9	TBD		
T	4/14	Freedom of Expression: (a) (PEP ch 6), (b) Thaler and Sunstein, “Libertarian Paternalism” (ONLINE); (c) Lynch, “The Outrage Factory” (ONLINE);	Continued inquiry into free expression; we’ll also consider the way we are “nudged” or “incentivized” by government, commercial, and technological forces. Are these ways of nudging or encouraging our behavior <i>acceptable</i> ? Do they impinge upon our “free expression”? How would we decide?	
Th	4/16	The Larger Context: For-Profit Media and Propaganda. (a) Chomsky, “The Propaganda Model.” (ONLINE) FILM IN CLASS: “Noam Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent revisited The Listening Post” at Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf-tQYcZGM4&v1=en	We consider Noam Chomsky’s and Edward Herman’s influential “propaganda model” which claims that what we hear and see are shaped by larger economic forces. These create conditions in which it is very hard to get outside of certain parameters of what is “reasonable” or even “possible.”	
T	4/21	The Larger Context: Media as Entertainment; (a) Postman, “Media as Epistemology” Chapter 2 of <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>	Neil Postman argues that something fundamental about the conditions of our thinking shifted from the 19th to the 20th centuries — from a print-based information system to one which was televisual, above all. These changed how we think about things, how we reason.	In class quiz #4 on PEP, ch. 4, Sunstein, Lynch, & Chomsky

Th	4/23	The Larger Context: Media as Entertainment;(a) Postman, “The Typographic Mind” Chapter 4 of <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>	Postman offers more details about how the shift from telegraphy to radio to TV changed the dominating forms of information, and what that portends for how we reason.	
T	4/28	The Larger Context: Media as Entertainment; Postman, “The Peek A Boo World” Chapter 5 of <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>	Postman argues that the culmination of these media shifts has been an information space filled with distractions and entertainments. This has implications for how we problem-solve, collectively.	
Th	4/30	The Larger Context: Media as Entertainment(a) Postman, “The Age of Show Business” Chapter 6 of <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>	Postman describes the large-scale shift, where a culture gets used to the entertaining distractions of their media and come to intellectually <i>see</i> everything as measured by those standards.	
T	5/5	The Larger Context: News and “Objectivity”; “Now...This,” (a) Chapter 7 of <i>Amusing Ourselves to Death</i> (b) “Free Media? An Interview With Robert McChesney” (ONLINE); (c) Rosen, “The View from Nowhere Questions and Answers” (ONLINE), and (d) “Is ABC the most anti-war network? Ridiculous, says Peter Jennings” (ONLINE)	Given the rise of entertainment as a dominant “frame” for most of culture, how can we know, reliably, what’s going on? Is the news distracted, objective, or biased? What can we make of all the claims to “fair and balanced” information? What lies behind these claims to objectivity by the news media?	
Th	5/7	WRAP UP; take home exam on material from whole course handed out in class.		Take home exam handed out in class.
T	5/12	No sit down final. Rather: take home exam due by 12 NOON in Hildebrand Mailbox, Philosophy Department		Take Home DUE