PHIL 110: Critical Thinking & Composition  
Schedule 28886, Section 5

SDSU Spring 2014  
Tuesday/Thursday: 9:30am-10:45am  
Room: SSW-2500

Instructor: Darlene Smoot  
smoot.darlene@gmail.com

Office Hours (AL-430):  
Tuesdays 11:00-12:00  
(619) 594-5232  
**Additional offices hours, by advance appointment only: Tuesday 5:30-6:30

This syllabus is intended to guide us through the semester. However, circumstances can change and so I reserve the right to change the syllabus as needed to ensure that we fulfill the objectives of the course. You will receive full and fair notification regarding any such changes.

General Catalogue Description  
This is a Three Unit GE course, which will fulfill CSU GE requirement:  
I. COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL THINKING: 3. Intermediate Composition and Critical Thinking

Course Description  
From the SDSU General Catalog 2013-2014:

“Prerequisites: Satisfaction of the English Placement Test and Writing Competency requirements and Africana Studies 120 or American Indian Studies 120 or Chicana or Chicano Studies 111B or English 100 or Linguistics 100 or Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 or 101. Proof of completion of prerequisites required: Test scores or verification of exemption; grade reporter copy of transcript.

Course Objectives

- Students will analyze information and identify arguments from various philosophers, journal articles, and/or newspaper articles.
- Students will evaluate various philosophical claims, and the arguments for and against them.
- Students will recognize assumptions, common fallacies, and avoid them in the construction of arguments.
- Students will organize thoughts in an effective manner to maximize clarity of written arguments.
- Students will write critically and effectively.
- Students will provide constructive criticism to peers, thus gaining the ability to self-critique one’s own composition work.
- Students will use proper citation skills in all work.

Assessments

- Students will demonstrate analyzing and identifying skills via handouts, textbook exercises, and written assignments.
- Students will demonstrate thought organization and argumentative skills via outlines and long form essays.
- Students will learn proper citation methods; these will be displayed via in class exercises and essays.

Text

*A Workbook for Arguments: A Complete Course in Critical Thinking*
David R. Morrow & Anthony Weston

Blackboard / BB

Blackboard will be a tool for you as students to communicate with each other. You may find it pertinent to use the discussion board. I encourage you to visit the site often. Throughout the semester, there may be times when supplemental reading and/or assignments need to be distributed; BB will be a resource for this. Additionally, a digital copy of your essays will be submitted through the BlackBoard system.

It is imperative that you make sure that your email address within the system is correct. I will use the email feature on BB to communicate mass information to the entire class. Some email systems block Blackboard mailings as if they are spam; you should remedy this, or get an SDSU email account. To get a SDSU email account, go to [http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/newstudacct.shtml](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/newstudacct.shtml)

Communication: Email & Office Hours

smoot.darlene@gmail.com

If you have questions or concerns that are not addressed within this syllabus, please feel free to email me. Email is the best way to communicate with me outside of class time and office hours. When emailing me, please put “PHIL 110” at the beginning of the subject line; this will aid in my prompt attention. Office hours are a valuable resource, please use them accordingly.
Grades

1. Participation 10%
2. Written Assignments (10) 30%
3. Essay #1 (3-4 pages) 25%
4. Essay #2 (5-6 pages) 35%

Total 100%

Letter grades will be determined based on the following scale:

93-100 = A  
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B 
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+  
73-75 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
60-65 = D

NOTE: Anything below 60% is an “F”

Class Organization

• The reading assignments are assigned on a weekly basis.
• It is expected that you read the material prior to the start of weekly class sessions.
• Class time will focus on the material from the readings and developing skills that are vital to successful completion of this course.
• Bring the assigned text(s) to each class.

Exams & Quizzes

• There is no final exam. Students will turn in their second essay on the final exam day.
• There will be frequent pop-quizzes.
• Points for pop-quizzes will fall under the participation category. Thus, if you are not present, you will lose the points acquired from such quizzes.

Written Assignments

• This is a writing/composition class; expect to write!
• You are encouraged to take notes during lectures to assist you with completion of classwork and homework.
• Grading rubrics will be posted on the Blackboard site.
• There are several written assignments to be completed within the course. These will be a combination of in-class work and homework, and will be assigned based on the progression of the class. These assignments may be as little as one paragraph - up to two full typed pages, handouts and/or group work. You will receive grades for each assignment completed, however only 10 will count towards your overall grade total.
• Classwork: assignments completed in class cannot be made up due to absence. Absence is a forfeiture of points.
• Homework: any homework assigned will be due at the beginning next class period. Late work will not be accepted. However, if you know you will be missing a class, you may email your completed homework assignment to me by the beginning of class on the day that it is due.
• Homework: if you are not present when a homework assignment is announced, you may still complete the assignment for credit.
Essays & Turnitin.com

- Essay #1, 3-4 pages in length: due 3/20
- Essay #2, 5-6 pages in length: due 5/15

- Essay deadlines are firm.
- For each essay, there will be a workshop that is mandatory. You must come to class with two copies of your rough draft. Workshops will count as 5% of your essay grade.
- For the first essay, there will be one workshop on 03/18. For the second essay, the workshop is TBD. The workshop date will be finalized on the essay assignment sheet.
- There will be no late essays accepted without severe penalty. For each day (not class session) an essay is late, the grade will automatically be reduced by 10%. Thus, if an essay is due on Thursday, and you turn it in Saturday, the overall grade would be reduced by 20% (10% for Friday, 10% Saturday).
- Essay topics & rubrics will be distributed via Blackboard several weeks in advance of essay due dates.
- Essays will be submitted two ways:
  1) Turnitin.com
  2) Hardcopy, in at beginning of class on due date.

- Turnitin.com: Students agree that by taking this course all required essays will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

Participation

- Participation points will be based on a variety of factors: pop-quizzes, participation in discussions, and remaining an active presence throughout the class.
- Some information about discussions: Discussions will take place during the class. They will be used to further students’ learning through questions, feedback and interaction with peers. During this time, it is beneficial for students to remain on topic and maintain an encouraging and informational environment for all to participate in.
- How to lose participation points: missing pop-quizzes, creating a disruptive or hostile presence in the learning environment, not observing classroom etiquette, and/or disregarding technology policies (see sections below for further detail).

Attendance

Attendance will be taken daily. Attendance is key to successful completion of this course. However, life happens. The class is structured in such a way that allows for a slight buffer of assignment points. Thus, a small amount of absences shouldn’t cause the overall grade to slip too drastically. With that said, learning is an interactive experience. You should not expect to reach the maximum potential of grade possibility and skills acquired, if you do not put in your own maximum potential of attendance and effort. It is in your best interest to attend class and be there on-time. While present in class, your participation is expected. It is in your best interest to participate in discussions, asks questions and remain an active presence within the classroom.

If you miss a class, for a casual reason, do not email me wondering “What did I miss? Did we do anything important?” or to inquire about any homework. It is your responsibility to get information regarding homework assignments from other students. However, do not take advantage of your peers. Do not be a student who expects secretarial services from others; everyone needs a favor once in a while, but don’t make this a habit.

If you are absent due to a tragic or catastrophic reason (bereavement, hospitalization, etc.) please do not be a stranger, let me know what is happening. I will do my best to work with you during such instances to keep you on a successful path in the class.
Religious Observances / Official SDSU Events

The University Policy File includes the following statement on Absence for Religious Observances: By the end of the second week of classes, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances. Instructors shall reasonably accommodate students who notify them in advance of planned absences for religious observances. California Education Code 89320 states: The Trustees of the California State University shall require that each state university, in administering any test or examination, to permit any student who is eligible to undergo the test or examination to do so, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed. ***You must notify me by the end of the second week of classes if you plan to be absent for religious observance or official SDSU event.

Classroom Etiquette

- When you attend class, you are expected to observe the rudiments of classroom etiquette and manners.
- Do not chat with friends during lectures.
- Do not sleep.
- Observe technology policies (see below).
- Be courteous to others. If you must eat or drink, do so in a silent manner. I do not want to hear you opening your food (example: no noisy chips bags), nor do I want to hear you eating your food. If I hear these types of disruptions, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class.
- Arrive on time! Don’t noisily pack up several minutes before class is over!
- Any entering or exiting of the classroom while class is in session must be done so silently and quickly. Do not allow the door to slam behind you, as this is a distraction for your classmates.

Technology

- Please set your cell phones to silent and put them away. Do not keep your phone on your desk or in your lap. Text messaging is not permitted during class; students caught texting and/or using a cell phone in another manner during class will be asked to leave.
- Laptops are permitted for taking notes during this class. Laptops are only for taking class notes and for actions related to the class. At the first instance in which a student clearly does not demonstrate respect for this class procedure, the particular student loses all rights to use a laptop any further during the semester. Additionally, if laptops are unnecessary during a portion of the class period, I will instruct you to put them away.
- Do not establish a combative relationship with me by testing me on these class policies.

Learning Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473 in Calpulli Center, Suite 3101 (third floor) Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.
Academic Misconduct: Cheating and Plagiarism

Don’t plagiarize! All students are expected to follow the administrative rules and standards of conduct detailed in the San Diego State University catalog. Students are expected to submit only their own work on papers and examinations. While you may discuss the assignments with others in the class, collaboration on the preparation of a paper is not permitted.

It is your responsibility to know and observe all the SDSU rules concerning academic integrity and plagiarism. You should familiarize yourself with SDSU Academic Senate Policy on Plagiarism [http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pfacademics.html](http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pfacademics.html). Here are some highlights:

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Cheating shall be defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by the use of dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to (a) copying, in part or in whole, from another’s test or other examination; (b) discussing answers or ideas relating to the answers on a test or other examination without the permission of the instructor; (c) obtaining copies of a test, an examination, or other course material without the permission of the instructor; (d) using notes, cheat sheets, or other devices considered inappropriate under the prescribed testing condition; (e) collaborating with another or others in work to be presented without the permission of the instructor; (f) falsifying records, laboratory work, or other course data; (g) submitting work previously presented in another course, if contrary to the rules of the course; (h) altering or interfering with the grading procedures; (i) plagiarizing, as defined; and (j) knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above.

2.2 Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; (e) submitting another person’s artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and (f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.

The University may warrant two separate and distinct courses of disciplinary action that may be applied concurrently in response to a violation of this policy: (a) academic sanctions, such as grade modifications; and (b) punitive sanctions, such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. Grade modification is left to the discretion of the instructor and may include (a) a zero or F (or reduction of points) on the assignment, or examination, (b) a reduction in one letter grade (e.g., C to D in the course), or (c) an F in the course. Punitive sanctions are concerned with the student’s records and status on campus and shall be the responsibility of the University President or designated representative. The Coordinator of Judiciary Procedures shall be the President’s representative in matters of student discipline.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, how to credit the work and ideas of others properly, how to evaluate sources for quality and reliability, or any other related issues, please feel free to see me to discuss the matter.

*Note

My job is to help you understand the material and further your abilities as thinkers. However, I need your help. I will expect you to communicate with me if you have questions or are confused by material. So, don’t be shy: speak up in class, come to office hours or email me. I want you to succeed!
Course Schedule

**Week 1:** Syllabus & Intro  
01/23

**Week 2:** Chp 1  
01/28, 01/30

**Week 3:** Chp 2 Generalizations, Appendix 2 Definitions  
02/04, 02/06

**Week 4:** Chp 6 Deductive Arguments, Inductive Arguments  
02/11, 02/13

**Week 5:** Appendix 1 Fallacies  
02/18, 02/20

**Week 6:** Fallacies continued  
02/25, 02/27

**Week 7:** Chp 5 Causal Arguments, Chp 7 Extended Arguments, Outlines  
03/04, 03/06

**Week 8:** Chp 4 Sources, Chp 8 Essays  
03/11, 03/13

**Week 9:** Essay Workshop, Meaning of Life  
03/18, 03/20
ESSAY #1 Due

**Week 10:** Famine Relief  
03/25, 03/27

**Week 11:** Spring Break  
04/01, 04/03

**Week 12:** God  
04/08, 04/10

**Week 13:** Abortion & Euthanasia  
04/15, 04/17

**Week 14:** The Environment  
04/22, 04/24

**Week 15:** Animals  
04/29, 05/01

**Week 16:** Meaninglessness of Life; Death  
05/06, 05/08

**Final:** Thursday May 15th 8:00am-10:00am  
Essay #2 Due