

# General Education Course Proposal

Proposed Course: PHIL 25 Methods of Reasoning Units 3  
Prefix No. Title

Department: Philosophy School: Arts and Humanities

## GE Category (Indicate one category only):

Foundation: A1 \_\_\_; A2 \_\_\_; A3 X; B4 \_\_\_  
Breadth: B1 \_\_\_; B2 \_\_\_; C1 \_\_\_; C2 \_\_\_; D \_\_\_; E \_\_\_  
Integration: B \_\_\_; C \_\_\_; D \_\_\_; International/Multicultural \_\_\_

Existing Course X; Revised Course \_\_\_; New Course \_\_\_

Course Included in Current GE Program X

New courses require the Undergraduate Course Proposal form in addition to this form.

Revised courses require the Undergraduate Course Change Request in addition to this form.

**Proposed catalog description:** Limit course description to 40 words using succinct phrases. Include prerequisites, limitations, lecture/lab hours. Indicate former course number, e.g., (Former Biol 105)

Principles and methods of good reasoning. Typical topics: identification of argument structure, developing skills in deductive and inductive reasoning, assessing observations and testimony reports, language and reasoning, common fallacies.

(Phil. 25 and Phil. 45 cannot both be taken for credit.)

Enrollment limit per section: 35

Expected number of sections per semester – Year 1 10; Year 3 13

## Attachments:

1. A statement presenting the ways in which this course meets the Specifications provided in the appropriate section of the General Education Policy as well as in the Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of General Education Courses.
2. A statement of elements common to all sections of this course, identifying content, objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and an approximate schedule for the course. Required student activities include such things as papers, research projects, homework, laboratory and/or studio performance, recitations, participation, attendance, and exams.
3. A typical syllabus for a particular offering of the course.
4. Any special cost factors associated with this course.

## Approval for Inclusion in General Education

Karen Bee 2/19/98  
Department Chair Date

Kim Morn 2/23/98  
School Curriculum Committee Date

Uda Sia 2/25/98  
School Dean Date

Red Ann 12/15/98  
General Education Subcommittee Date

Brandt Kehoe 12/22/98  
Associate Provost Date

1/14/98

(13 pages)

FEB 27 1998

January 26, 1998  
Department of Philosophy

## Attachment #2: General Syllabus

Proposed course: Phil 25 Methods of Reasoning

Phil 25 Methods of Reasoning  
3 units, no prerequisite

Semester, Year  
Schedule # 12345

**Catalog description:** Principles and methods of good reasoning. Typical topics: identification of argument structure, development of skills in deductive and inductive reasoning, assessment of observations and testimony reports, language and reasoning, common fallacies in reasoning. (No credit if taken after or concurrently with Phil 45.)

**General Education:** This course meets General Education requirements. For students with catalogs 1998-99 or earlier, it meets the requirement for CORE, Critical Thinking. For all other students, it meets the requirement for FOUNDATION, Area A3.

**Instructor:** Name  
**Office:** Instructor's office  
**Office hours:** Instructor's office hours (minimum of five hours per week)  
**Phone/email:** Instructor's office phone/voice mail number; email address  
**Dept. office:** Music Building, Room 102; department hours: M-F, 8:30 - 1200, 1300-1700.  
**Dept. phone:** 278-2621.

**Textbooks:** The following textbooks/software are required/recommended for the course; they can be purchased at \_\_\_\_.

Author/editor. *Title*, publisher.

**Fees:** There are no fees attached to this course.

**Course goals:** At the successful completion of this course, the student should be able to

- (1) identify the premises and conclusion in an argument,
- (2) distinguish whether an inference in a passage is deductive or inductive,
- (3) identify a term or concept in an argument which is not adequately defined,
- (4) distinguish between good and bad arguments and state reasons for the judgment,
- (6) determine the acceptability of the premises of a given argument,
- (7) identify and evaluate simple deductive arguments forms,
- (8) evaluate the strength of inductive arguments,
- (9) identify and explain common fallacies in reasoning,
- (10) formulate and defend a strong, clearly-structured argument.

## Course topics:

- (Topic 1) Types and characteristics of arguments. Approximately 2-4 weeks.  
Topic 1 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) identification of premises and conclusion  
(b) the concept of deductive validity  
(c) distinctions between types of arguments
- (Topic 2) Uses of language and definitions. Approximately 1-2 weeks.  
Topic 2 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) vagueness  
(b) ambiguity  
(c) types and purposes of definitions
- (Topic 3) Assessing claims. Approximately 1-2 weeks.  
Topic 3 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) testimony  
(b) observation
- (Topic 4) Deductive inference. Approximately 3-6 weeks.  
Topic 4 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) conditional statements and arguments  
(b) conjunctions and disjunctions  
(c) class relationships
- (Topic 5) Inductive inference. Approximately 3-6 weeks.  
Topic 5 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) reliable generalizations  
(b) evidence and explanatory hypotheses
- (Topic 6) Common fallacies. Approximately 1-3 weeks.  
Topic 6 includes at least all of the following:  
(a) fallacies of relevance  
(b) fallacies of induction  
(c) fallacies of ambiguity

The order and emphasis in coverage of these topics may vary according to discretion of instructor and in light of specific textbook used.

## Assignments:

1. **Homework/classwork.** Students will prosper in the course only to the extent that they do the homework regularly so as to develop skills. Homework and other exercises will be covered in every class period with students being called on to give their answers. Class size is kept low so that every student will get feedback from the instructor at least once every class period.
2. **Quizzes.** Quizzes/exams test memory and mastery of the material.
3. **Paper(s).** The University General Education policy states that each course in lower division GE must have a 2,000 word writing requirement. Accordingly, each student will be required to complete writing assignments, consistent with the GE Policy, at a minimum of 2,000 words. The paper requires the students to use their knowledge of good definitions, role of language, and principles of good reasoning to state a position and defend it using good arguments. Further details on the structure of the paper assignment will be provided.
4. **Final exam.** Day, date, time, place.

**Course calendar:** Approximate dates for topics to be covered, reading and assignments due.

**Note:** The schedule and procedures for this course indicated in the course calendar are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

**Criteria for evaluating student work:** Each syllabus will state the criteria which will be used in grading (assigning points) and the standards for high quality work.

**Eligibility for a passing grade:** Each syllabus will contain a statement of the necessary conditions for passing the course.

**Eligibility for General Education Credit:** The General Education Policy, General Notes for Area A: "No General Education credit will be given for any Area A course in which the student received less than a "C" grade." The syllabus will indicate precisely how GE credit in this course can be earned.

**Grades:** Each syllabus will contain a grading policy, which apportions points/credit to each assignment. Also, it will contain a grading scale and an explanation of how grades will be assigned.

**General information:**

1. Attendance policy.

2. Missed quizzes, make-up work, late paper policy.

3. **Cheating and plagiarism.** University policy defines "cheating" as "the practice of fraudulent and deceptive acts for the purpose of improving a grade or obtaining course credit. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. It is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only but that it include any and all actions by a student which are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent and deceptive means." University policy defines "plagiarism" as "a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of another by representing the material so used as one's own work." Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Depending upon the seriousness of the action, the student may be penalized by an "F" on the assignment to an "F" in the course and the filing of a Cheating/Plagiarism Report to be placed in the student's permanent academic record.

4. **Students with disabilities.** If you are a disabled student, be sure to identify yourself to the University and the instructor so that reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made. Contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Madden Library Room 1049, 278-2811.

5. Other specific policies for this course.

January, 1998  
Department of Philosophy  
Attachment #3: Typical Syllabus

Proposed course: **Phil 25 Methods of Reasoning**

**Phil 25 Methods of Reasoning**

3 units, no prerequisite

Tuesday-Thursday 1410 - 1525, East Engineering 108

Spring 1998

Schedule # 12345

**Catalog description:** Principles and methods of good reasoning. Typical topics: identification of argument structure, development of skills in deductive and inductive reasoning, assessment of observations and testimony reports, language and reasoning, common fallacies in reasoning. (No credit if taken after or concurrently with Phil 45.)

**General Education:** This course meets General Education requirements. For students with catalogs 1998-99 or earlier, it meets the requirement for CORE, Critical Thinking. For all other students, it meets the requirement for FOUNDATION, Area A3. A grade of C or better is required for G.E. credit.

**Instructor:** Dr. K.R. Bell

**Office:** Music Building, Room 102A

**Office hours:** T-TH 2:30 - 5:00 p.m.; W 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.; and by appointment

**Phone/email:** 278-4939 (with voice mail); email address: karen\_bell@csufresno.edu

**Dept. office:** Music Building, Room 102; department hours: M-F, 8:30 - 1200, 1300-1700.

**Dept. phone:** 278-2621.

**Textbooks:** The following textbook is required and can be purchased at the Kennel Bookstore on campus:

Robert C. Pinto and John A. Blair, *Reasoning: A Practical Guide* (Prentice Hall)

**Fees:** There are no special fees attached to this course.

**Course goals:** At the successful completion of this course, students should be able to

- (1) identify the premises and conclusion in an argument,
- (2) distinguish whether an inference in a passage is deductive or inductive,
- (3) identify a term or concept in an argument which is not adequately defined,
- (4) distinguish between good and bad arguments and state reasons for the judgment,
- (6) determine the acceptability of the premises of a given argument,
- (7) identify and evaluate simple deductive arguments forms,
- (8) evaluate the strength of inductive arguments,
- (9) identify and explain common fallacies in reasoning,

(10) formulate and defend a strong, clearly-structured argument.

**Course topics:**

(Topic 1) Types and characteristics of arguments.	(2 weeks)
(Topic 2) Uses of language and definitions.	(2 weeks)
(Topic 3) Assessing claims.	(2 weeks)
(Topic 4) Deductive inference.	(3.5 weeks)
(Topic 5) Inductive inference.	(5.5 weeks)
(Topic 6) Common fallacies.	(covered within Topics 2, 4, and 5)

**Assignments:**

**1. Homework/classwork.** Students will prosper in the course only to the extent that they do the homework regularly so as to develop skills. Homework and other exercises will be covered in every class period with students being called on to give their answers. Class size is kept low so that every student will get feedback from the instructor at least once every class period. Classwork to be turned in for credit will take place every other Thursday; there will be seven (7) classwork assignments; the lowest grade of these seven will be dropped. Books and notes may usually be used.

**2. Quizzes.** There will be seven (7) quizzes, held on opposite Thursdays from the classwork. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. No books or notes may be used on the quizzes.

**3. Paper(s).** The University General Education policy states that each course in lower division GE must have a 2,000 word writing requirement. Accordingly, each student will be required to complete writing assignments, consistent with the GE Policy, at a minimum of 2,000 words. The writing assignments require the students to use their knowledge of good definitions and good reasoning to state a position and defend it using good arguments.

The classwork assignments will include writing using the basic elements of critical thinking. In addition, there will be five writing assignments: three Critical Thinking Paper (2 double-spaced typed pages) and two Position Paper (3-4 double-spaced typed pages).

NOTE: Students must be "certified" on their first Position Paper before they may proceed to work on and receive credit on the second Position Paper. Further details on the certification process and the structure of the paper assignment will be provided.

Critical thinking papers will be evaluated according to the following criteria: (1) completeness (paper covers all the required parts of a critical thinking paper); (2) organization (all the parts are in an appropriate order with headings and transitions); (3) quality of writing (correct grammar and clarity of expression, avoidance of spelling errors, typographical errors, and incomplete sentences); (4) attention to audience; and (5) evidence of critical thinking dispositions (disposition to be accurate and honest; disposition to be fair in stating views; disposition to take on another's viewpoint). [see attachment #5 for an example of a grading grid which could be used to evaluate a critical thinking paper.]

**4. Conference.** Each student will have required conference with the instructor, arranged by appointment, to work together on the second position paper.

**5. Final exam.** The final exam is cumulative and will include a critical thinking paper. No books or notes may be used. The final exam will be held on Thursday, May 21, 1998, 1530 - 1730 in our classroom.

### Course calendar

**Note:** The schedule and procedures for this course indicated below are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Topic with readings for the day</u>	<u>Homework</u>
1	1/27		Introduction to the course	
	1/29	Classwork A	<b>Types and characteristics of arguments</b> (p. 5-11)	Ex. 1-2, p. 11-15
			Identification of premises and conclusion (69-74)	Ex. 1, p. 83-84
			Types and purposes of inference (74-79)	Ex. 2, p. 84-85
<p>The exercises in the textbook give the student practice in mastering the material in the chapters. For example, ex. 1 (83-84) gives students practice in (a) identifying which statements in a group offer reasons for another statement in the group and (b) identifying which statements may be correctly inferred from some given statements. Ex. 2 (84-85) offers practice in identifying statements which, when added to a given set of premises, strengthen the support for the given conclusion. By working these exercises the students get interesting practice with the structure and flexibility of ordinary language arguments and with making inferences from a given set of premises.</p>				
2	2/3		Evaluating inferences: general approach (79-82) Evaluating inferences: acceptability of premises, link between premises and conclusion (103-109)	Ex. 3-5, p. 85-88
<p>Ex. 3 provides practice in identifying a statement in a set of premises which contributed nothing to the support of the truth of the conclusion. Ex. 4, in finding the conclusion and writing it precisely, and Ex. 5, in extracting an argument from a text.</p>				
	2/5	Quiz #1	Varieties of inferential strength, contrasts between deductive and inductive inferences (109-113) Strategies for estimating strength of inferences (113-119) Role of unstated assumptions, background knowledge, emotion in estimating strength of inferences (119-124)	Ex. 1-2, p. 125-29
<p>Ex. 1 provides practice in assessing the strength of an inference and in formulating unstated assumptions. Ex. 2 provides practice in identifying the parts of complex arguments (where the conclusion of one argument serves as a premise in another).</p>				
3	2/10		<b>Use of language and definitions.</b> (239-247). Survey of some common uses of language; persuasive use of language in contrast with cognitive use	

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Topic with readings for the day</u>	<u>Homework</u>
	2/12	Classwork B	The identification of ambiguity, equivocation, and vagueness in statements and arguments: when these occurrences are <b>fallacies or defects</b> .	Ex. (handouts)
	Exercises on handouts provide practice diagnosing and identifying fallacies committed in passages from actual texts and from instructor-designed examples.			
4	2/17		Value-laden terminology: "neutral" and "emotive" terms; mis-uses of language in communication: begging the question and vituperative obfuscation	
	2/19	Quiz #2	Types and purposes of definitions. (248-257) dictionary definitions; stipulative, theoretical, "essential", technical, persuasive.	Ex. (handouts)
	Exercises on handouts provide practice separating value-loaded language from descriptive language and recognizing different types of definitions and the contexts in which these types of definitions would be needed.			
5	2/24		Assessing claims (16-31)	Ex. 1-10, p. 31-42
	Credibility of testimony; credibility of sources: Criteria for credibility; evaluating credibility;			
	Exercises 1-10 provide practice identifying and evaluating the sources of claims, and judging the credibility of the source in relation to the substance of the claim.			
	2/26	Classwork C	Reportage; eyewitness testimony; observation reports; experts and expertise; evaluating credibility of expert reports.	
6	3/3	CT Paper N <sup>o</sup> 1	Information and the Media (43-59) Mass communication and symbolism; news, descriptions, headlines;	Ex. 1-4, p. 59-68.
	Ex. 1 provides practice scrutinizing loaded language. Ex. 2 provides practice writing critiques of actual newspaper articles. Ex. 3 involves working with a group of classmates to monitor television news coverage and compare coverage on several networks. Ex. 4 involves comparing coverage in different newspapers.			
	3/5	Quiz #3	Incompleteness, limits sources, missing background; bias.	
7	3/10		<b>Deductive Inference</b> Review of validity. Conditional statements and arguments; <b>formal fallacies</b> in conditional arguments (91-92, 228-234)	Ex. 1-6, p. 98-102



# ATTACHMENT #5

Phil 25  
K.R. Bell

## POSITION PAPER EVALUATION

Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 100.

		Very good	Satisfactory	Needs Work/Missing
Title: (2 pts) (a) informative and brief				
FRISCO ANALYSIS:				
FOCUS: (5 pts) (a) clear statement of conclusion. (b) stated in one sentence.				
REASONS: (20 pts) (a) clear statement of reasons. (b) grounds of acceptability given for each reason.	(a)			
	(b)			
INFERENCE: (10 pts) (a) strength of support defended.				
SITUATION: (10 pts) (a) "Big Picture" in which this argument fits. (b) type of evidence needed.				
CLARITY: (10 pts) (a) define terms or concepts to assist reader in deciding whether to accept your conclusion.				
OVERVIEW: (20 pts) (a) Describe information which would provide additional support for your conclusion (b) Consider at least one alternative point of view with a different conclusion; be sure to clearly identify reasons supporting this alternative.	(a)			
	(b)			
Organization: (5 pts) (a) all parts of the analysis clearly displayed with headings. (b) reasons numbered.				
Quality of writing: (10 pts) (a) grammar (b) spelling/typos (c) complete sentences (d) clarity				
Audience: (3 pts) (a) sufficient explanation of what is to be done in each section (b) appropriate vocabulary				
Critical Thinking Dispositions: (5 pts) (a) to be accurate and honest. (b) to be fair in stating views. (c) to be able to take on another's viewpoint.				

CERTIFIED TO PROCEED: YES! \_\_\_\_\_ NOT QUITE \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_