

# PHILOSOPHY 121 - CRITICAL THINKING

First Semester, 2023 - 2024

## INTRODUCTION

I'm Dōna Warren, a professor of philosophy and head of the Critical Thinking Center. Unsurprisingly, this is my favorite course to teach!

You are welcome to call me "Dr. Warren," "Professor Warren," "Ms. Warren," or "Dōna."

## HOW YOU CAN CONTACT ME

Office: Room 122 Collins Classroom Center  
<https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/7153464115>

Drop-In Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. on Mondays and 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. on Thursdays.  
Feel free to stop by my office during this time, hop into my Zoom room, or communicate with me through Canvas chat. No appointment is necessary. You are welcome to make an appointment with me for another time that is more convenient for you.

Email / Message: You may email me at [dwarren@uwsp.edu](mailto:dwarren@uwsp.edu) or message me through the Canvas inbox. I will do my best to respond to your emails and messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

## HOW I WILL CONTACT YOU

I will contact you via

1. Your UWSP email.
2. Your Canvas inbox.
3. Announcements in Canvas: I realize that email can get overwhelming, so I will post every email that I send to the entire class as an announcement on Canvas as well.

It's a good idea to check your UWSP email and our Canvas site at least every other day.

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING

You will work through this course by doing two things:

- 1) Completing modules on Canvas, and
- 2) Earning participation points.

## 1) COMPLETING THE MODULES ON CANVAS

### How to Complete the Modules: Pages, Assessments, and No Final Exam

As you work through each module, you'll be reading material in the pages and taking assessments.

- Once you've read the material in a page, you'll need to mark that page as done in order to continue.
- When you take an assessment, you'll need to achieve a required score to continue. But don't worry! You'll be able to take each assessment as many times as you need to achieve that score.

There will be no final exam, but there will be an opportunity for you to earn a participation point by attending a discussion during the final exam period. Participation points are addressed later in the syllabus.

### Due Dates and Suggested Schedule: Please Keep Up, but Nothing Will Close

The Canvas portion of the course is largely self-paced, but each module has a due date. As explained in the grading section of the syllabus (below), your grade will be partially determined by how many modules you complete by their due dates. You may, of course, complete modules after their due dates have passed. The modules won't close. And you are more than welcome to work ahead!

- ✓ Module 0 is due by the end of Wk. 1: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Sep 10.
- ✓ Module 1 is due by the end of Wk. 3: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Sep 24.
- ✓ Module 2 is due by the end of Wk. 5: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Oct 8.
- ✓ Module 3 is due by the end of Wk. 8: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Oct 29.
- ✓ Module 4 is due by the end of Wk. 10: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Nov 12.
- ✓ Module 5 is due by the end of Wk. 13: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Dec 3.
- ✓ Module 6 is due by the end of Wk. 15: 11:59 p.m. Sun., Dec 17.

To help you meet those due dates, each module will provide you with a suggested schedule to guide your engagement with the material.

## 2) EARNING PARTICIPATION POINTS

One (1) participation point will be available each week.

You may earn the participation point for the week by attending one (1) class period that week and by being actively engaged in the class. (I'll cover the same material on Monday and Wednesday, so it doesn't matter which day you attend. The idea is that you can spend the other class period working on the modules.)

"Active engagement" means:

- ✓ Arriving on time and staying for the entire class (unless you've spoken to me about arriving late or leaving early).
- ✓ Using electronic devices, including phones and computers, only for activities that are relevant to the class (such as mapping arguments using MindMup).
- ✓ Being generally attentive to the lesson.
- ✓ Applying yourself to the class activities.

If you are not actively engaged in the class, I will contact you to let you know that you won't be getting a full participation point for that week and (just as importantly) to discuss any issues or concerns that you might have.

Although your grade will be partly dependent upon your attendance, missing one or two participation points probably won't impact your grade. **Because I've built in this flexibility, I won't normally give opportunities to make up participation points.** In particular, although you are welcome to let me know when you can't be in class, notification of your absence won't result in a participation point.

**Because people sometimes do need to miss a class or two for unexpected reasons, it's important that you attend class every week so that you don't have to worry about missing a participation point if something comes up.** I am, of course, willing to work with you if circumstances beyond your control compel you to miss a larger number of classes. If you should need to miss a larger number of classes due to extended illness, quarantine, family emergency, military service obligations, or a school or team related event, please let me know and I'll be happy to work out some arrangement with you.

**Note:** To see if your record of your participation points matches mine, go on our Canvas site, click "Grades" on the left, and then scroll waaaaay down.

## HOW GRADES WILL BE ASSIGNED

Your grade will be determined by:

- 1) the number of Canvas modules that you complete by the last day of finals week.
- 2) the number of Canvas modules that you complete by their due dates, and
- 3) the number of participation points you earn.

To determine your grade, use the table below.

- First, look down Column A (the modules you've completed by the end of Finals Week) until you've found your row.
- If you haven't completed Modules 0-6, stay in that row. If you have completed Modules 0-6, look down Column B (how many due dates you've met) until you've found your row.
- Now, staying in your row, look at Column C (how many participation points you've earned).
  - ✓ If your participation points *either fall within or exceed that range*, your grade will be the grade in that row.
  - ✓ If your participation points *fall below that range*, look up Column C until you find the row that captures your participation points. Your grade will be the grade in that row.

| Column A                                |   | Column B   |   | Column C                     |   |       |
|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|---|-------|
| Modules Completed by end of Finals Week | & | Number of Modules Completed by their Due Dates   | & | Participation Points Earned  | = | Grade |
| Read Down, then Over<br>↓... →          |   | Read Down, then Over<br>↓... →   |   | Read Up, then Over<br>↑... → |   |       |
| Modules 0-3                             | & | (Not applicable. This only counts if all modules are completed by the end of Finals Week.) | & | 0-5                          | = | D     |
| Modules 0-4                             | & | (Not applicable. This only counts if all modules are completed by the end of Finals Week.) | & | 0-5                          | = | D+    |
| Modules 0-5                             | & | (Not applicable. This only counts if all modules are completed by the end of Finals Week.) | & | 6-8                          | = | C-    |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | None   | & | 6-8                          | = | C     |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any one</u> of the seven modules by its due date.                              | & | 6-8                          | = | C+    |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any two</u> of the seven modules by their due dates.                           | & | 9-10                         | = | B-    |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any three</u> of the seven modules by their due dates.                         | & | 9-10                         | = | B     |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any four</u> of the seven modules by their due dates.                          | & | 9-10                         | = | B+    |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any five</u> of the seven modules by their due dates.                          | & | 11-13                        | = | A-    |
| Modules 0-6                             | & | Complete <u>any six</u> of the seven modules by their due dates.                           | & | 14-16                        | = | A     |

## TEACHER AND COURSE EVALUATIONS

I will be administering anonymous course evaluations at the end of the semester and **there will be regular opportunities for you complete anonymous Canvas surveys to let me know how things are going for you as the semester progresses.** You feedback is useful to me!

And (I hope obviously), if something concerns you about the course at any time, please feel free to talk to me about it. I may or may not be able to change the thing that concerns you, but if I can't change it, I'll at least explain it. I won't take your concern personally or be upset with you for sharing it with me.

## THE PHILOSOPHY MAJOR OR MINOR

This course will give you valuable skills no matter what your major is, but if you find yourself enjoying this course, you might want to consider majoring or minoring in philosophy. (Philosophy as a second major goes well with anything and we have kept the number of credits required for our major low to make it as easy as possible for students to double major.)

We also offer a philosophy major with a concentration in religious studies, a philosophy major with a concentration in environmental ethics, and a philosophy major with a concentration in law and justice.

If you would like to chat with me about possibly declaring a philosophy major or minor, just let me know! I'll be happy to oblige!