

Philosophy 121 - Critical Thinking
First Semester, 2017 - 2018

Professor Information

Name: Dona Warren
"Dr. Warren," "Professor Warren," "Ms. Warren," and "Dona" are fine.
Office: 122 CCC
Office Hours: 1:00 - 1:50 on Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment.
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Text and Other Resources

- Handouts: Distributed in class.
- D2L: <http://www.uwsp.edu/d2l/Pages/default.aspx>
- Website: <http://www.drddwarren.org>

Grading

40% of your grade will be based on assignments and quizzes.

- I expect to administer approximately ten assignments and quizzes throughout the semester although I may administer more.

Assignments:

- The assignments will be announced in advance and will be take-home.
- You may turn in assignments late, but no late assignment will get a grade higher than the lowest grade of assignments turned in previously.

Quizzes:

- Some or all of the quizzes may be unannounced and all quizzes will be completed in class.
- You may use your notes and other instructional materials when taking the quizzes.
- There will be no opportunity to make up a quiz. I will, instead, drop everyone's lowest score from the "assignment and quiz" section.

60% of your grade will be based on three equally weighted exams.

- I will announce the first two exams at least one week in advance. The last exam will be the final
- You may not use your notes or other instructional materials when taking the exams.
- If your score on Exam 1 was less than 80% and your score on Exam 2 is 10% or higher than your score on Exam 1, I will raise your Exam 1 score by 10%, up to 80%. I will allow your score on Exam 3 to affect your score on Exam 2 similarly.
- If an emergency prevents you from being in class on the day of an exam, you must notify me beforehand or immediately after the exam. I reserve the right to not let you make up the exam, or to let you make up the exam while docking your grade on that exam, if you should fail to notify me. I also reserve the right to request proof of your excuse (e.g. a doctor's report).

I grade according to the following scale: A [100-95]; A- (95-90); B+ (90-87); B (87-83); B- (83-80); C+ (80-77); C (77-73); C- (73-70); D+ (70-65); D (65-60); F (60-0). Square brackets indicate that the score is included in the range of that grade. There is some *very limited* chance that I may curve down (letting 82 count as a B, for example) but I won't curve up (if you get an 83, you're guaranteed a B).

General Policies

- Disability Information: Any student who has a disability and is in need of classroom or exam accommodations is encouraged to speak with me and to contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center.
- Attendance: I don't take attendance, so you do not need to notify me if you need to miss class. I've noticed, though, that people who regularly miss class don't do well, so I strongly encourage you to attend every day.
- Texting, etc.: Many students have informed me that it's difficult for them to concentrate when others are texting, so please don't text in class (or do anything else that might make it harder for others to learn).
- Academic Misconduct: According to Chapter 14 of UWSP's "Community Rights and Responsibilities," academic misconduct includes "[seeking] to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation," and assisting others to do so. Consequences of academic misconduct may extend from an assignment to repeat the work to a failing grade in the course and the inclusion of a written reprimand in the student's disciplinary file.

The Value of this Course

It's a good idea to take a course in critical thinking. For one thing, critical thinking will improve your reasoning ability which means that critical thinking will prevent you from having any false beliefs. For another thing, this course will increase your popularity because it will help you to find problems with other people's reasoning and people enjoy the company of those who point out their errors in reasoning. Of course, some might deny that it's a good idea to take a course in critical thinking on the grounds that critical thinking is hard to learn. In fact, though, learning how to think critically isn't as difficult as many suppose, and even if it were, many difficult skills are important to learn.

Teacher and Course Evaluations

I will be administering anonymous teacher and course evaluations at the end of the semester. If you have any comments or concerns that you'd like to share with me during the course of the semester, please feel free to do so. I may or may not change the thing concerning you, but if I don't change it, I *promise* to explain it!

The Philosophy Major or Minor

If you find yourself enjoying this course, you might want to consider a philosophy major or minor. (Philosophy as a second major goes well with anything and we have kept the number of credits required for our major relatively low in order to make it as easy as possible for students to double major.)

We also offer a philosophy major with a concentration in religious studies and a philosophy major with a concentration in environmental ethics. It's easy to declare a major or minor. Simply visit the Department Office (489 CCC) and our Academic Department Associate will enter you into the system.