PHIL 103: LOGIC
Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 2–2:52PM
Website: http://blackboard.bucknell.edu/
Just schedule: http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/mhs016/teaching/103-logic/

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& by appointment

The Course & Learning Objectives
Roughly speaking, logic is the study of reasoning as it is revealed through language. This course will introduce the concepts and methods of logical reasoning. We will analyze the structure and systematic form of arguments, developing standards and criteria for evaluating arguments. The course will consider both formal and informal aspects of logical thinking from a philosophical perspective with the aim of developing your innate reasoning abilities. Aside from surveying various techniques for evaluating arguments, we shall attend to arguments deployed in moral, political, and scientific contexts.

Required Text
Please purchase a copy of the 8th edition of Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin’s Understanding Arguments, available at the Bucknell Bookstore in the Langone Center. Note that the 8th edition is different in several ways from the 7th (and earlier) and that this is not the same book used by other logic sections.

Our Class Meetings
Our time together on MWF afternoons will typically involve me lecturing — it’s the nature of the beast: I have a certain amount of information I want to communicate to you. Interrupt me at your peril! Just kidding. . . . I fully expect that questions will come up during lecture and I’m happy to discuss them, repeat an explanation, or spend more time on a certain topic. Chances are that if you find something frightfully unclear, so do others — so ask! I will be assigning (generally) short Homework exercises (see below) for each class and we will often spend significant chunks of time going over these or tackling other exercises as a group.

It’s a known fact that smart people can find logic frightfully difficult. After teaching and TAing logic many times, I’ve become convinced that the only remedy to this is practice. You can listen intently as much as you like or memorize rules until you’re blue in the face, but unless you get your hands dirty doing problems, you won’t get it. If you find yourself struggling with a concept or technique, I strongly recommend doing more problems.

Evaluation
Your final grade will be based on five components as described below. Please note what the different letter grades represent. According to the Course Catalog (http://www.bucknell.edu/x2902.xml), an ‘A’ means ‘Superior achievement’, a ‘B’ means ‘High pass’, a ‘C’ means ‘Pass’, a ‘D’ means ‘Low pass’, and an ‘F’, of course, stands for ‘Failing work’. Unless you’re some kind of savant, it’s highly unlikely that you can produce ‘superior work’ (or even B-level, good, but uninspired work) without putting time and effort into your studies.

Homework (10%). For each (or most) reading assignment, I have listed on the schedule accompanying exercises which should be completed before our meeting. We will often talk these over in class, but in each case, I will post solutions/discussion online after the class meeting in question). These will be graded for completion only: I’m more interested in your attempting the exercises in a serious way than in your mastering them on the first pass: that is something that will be evaluated in the regular quizzes and exams throughout the course. Nevertheless, it’s in your interest to take these exercises seriously, as the quizzes and exams will involve questions of a very similar style/difficulty.

If you do not come to class, you will be unable to record the homework for that day as completed. If you come without the homework completed, you should still make your presence known so I don’t count you as absent. While I will be strict in only accepting Dean-sanctioned excuses as exempting you from a day’s homework, in calculating your final grade, I will disregard five missing scores with no excuse needed.

Attendance (10%). You attendance grade will be straightforwardly based on the number of times you come to class on time and are undistruptive. You start with 100%; this score will declined by 3% for each unexcused absence I record. Absences may be excused because of illness if I receive word (by phone or email) prior to the class in question. If your illness is serious enough to prevent this advance notice, then I will only excuse it if I get receive notice from the Dean.

Quizzes (25%). There will be approximately six or seven quizzes during the course. Don’t be surprised to find homework questions reappearing on a quiz: this is to give you further motivation to look back at your graded exercises to see what you did wrong. While most quizzes will be announced in advance, I reserve the right to offer “surprise” quizzes on occasion. Quizzes will generally begin at the very start of class and will be strictly limited to twenty minutes, so be on
time if you want to have the full time. Your lowest quiz will be dropped. Missed quizzes may only be made up if conditions are similarly dire and I hear about your absence before the class in question or with Dean approval.

**Exams (30%).** There will be three in-class (52 minute) exams during the term.

**Final Exam (25%).** The final exam will be comprehensive and will be scheduled by the Registrar.

**Other Course Policies ☞ READ THIS!**

**Focus & Attention.** Studies show that multitasking doesn’t work nearly as well as we all tend to think it does, especially when it comes to learning (see http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7700581). I kindly ask you to turn off your various communication devices while you are in class (lest you be tempted to check them). I strongly discourage the use of laptops in class, as they also present a temptation to distraction (at a minimum, please turn off your wireless connection). If I notice you texting, computing, or otherwise distracting yourself, me, or others (with technological wonders or more mundane means), I will mark you as absent for the day. Many of you seem to think that you can check these without being noticed. That’s silly: why would you think that your professors wouldn’t notice someone staring into their laps? In like fashion, I will count you as absent if I notice you dozing off in class. Aside from being rather rude, it’s distracting to me and other students. If you can’t stay awake, you might as well not be there.

**Communication** I have high expectations of you. You may have high expectations of me in return. I am happy to make myself available outside of class to discuss questions/issues, go over assignments, quizzes, exams, and generally help you master this material. If my regularly scheduled office hours won’t work, just get in touch to make an appointment. Nevertheless, as you are no doubt aware, my job at Bucknell is to be a teacher *and* a scholar — to have my research inform and enhance your experience in the classroom. As such, I will need to be protective of my research time. While I could, in principle, respond to emails and phone calls at odd hours, I make it a practice (or try, at least) to turn off my email by 7PM every night. Nor will I be available for appointments on Fridays or weekends (and rarely on Thursdays), as these days I reserve for working at my home office without distraction. I ask for your understanding of this dual role, as my successful research should ultimately improve my teaching.

**Accommodations for the Disabled**

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, please talk to me (either by email or in person) at your earliest convenience and I will make every effort to accommodate your needs. If you have not yet spoken with the appropriate Associate Dean about your disability (see http://www.bucknell.edu/x7759.xml), please do so as soon as possible. Accommodations will need to be sanctioned by their office.

**Course Schedule: available online**

I will maintain a schedule with readings/assignments online on our blackboard site and on my teaching website at: http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/mhs016/teaching/103-logic/. This schedule will probably change (if we wind up needing more or less time than I’m expecting on particular topics); it is not a contract; it is your responsibility to check it often to make sure you have the latest revision.

**Currently Scheduled Quizzes/Exams (again: these may change, depending on our progress)**

- F 1/29: Quiz #1
- F 2/5: Quiz #2
- F 2/12: Exam #1
- W 2/24: Quiz #3
- F 3/5: Quiz #4
- F 3/12: Exam #2
- Spring Break: 3/13–21
- M 3/29: Quiz #5
- W 4/14: Exam #3
- F 4/23: Quiz #6
- Final Exam: TBA