

V71RPM

REASONING AND ARGUMENT



Autumn Semester, 2009-10

Key Information

Level	1
Pre-Requisites	None
Semester	Autumn 2009
Module Convenor	Carrie Jenkins, C6 Trent Building
Office Hours	Friday 1pm-3pm
Email	carrie.jenkins@nottingham.ac.uk
Phone	(0115) 95 15861
Lecture location	LASS B62
Lecture time	Friday 4pm
Lectures begin when?	First lecture on 2 nd October

Teaching

10 one-hour lectures (weekly, with the module convenor)

5 one-hour seminars (fortnightly, with your personal tutor)

Aims

This module introduces a series of key skills relevant to the aims and methods of philosophical inquiry. It is designed to help students understand the nature and structure of arguments, acquire critical tools for assessing the arguments of others, and improve their ability to present their own reasoning in a clear and rigorous manner. The module also aims to assist the development of an independent, reflective and self-managed approach to study, and to familiarize students with the abilities and competences that are expected to be developed during their degree.

Learning Objectives

- Develop the ability to read, summarize and analyse philosophical texts in a critical manner
- Develop the ability to formulate, assess, and critically engage with arguments
- Develop the ability to present ideas systematically, and in accordance with best academic practice
- Develop a variety of intellectual skills, capacities and attributes relevant to personal and professional life

Lecture Plan

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u> (see 'Reading' below for details)
2 nd Oct	What is a philosophical problem? What is a philosophical argument?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggini, sections 1.1 - 1.6
9 th Oct	Reading philosophical texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saunders, Mossley, MacDonald Ross and Lamb, pp. 27-66
16 th Oct	Class test 1: comprehension of philosophical texts	
23 rd Oct	Philosophical methods I: arguments and argument types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggini, sections 1.7 - 1.12 and chapter 2
30 th Oct	Philosophical methods II: assessing arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggini, chapter 3
6 th Nov	Class test 2: summarizing a philosophical argument	
13 th Nov	Philosophical methods III: definitions and distinctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggini, chapter 4
20 th Nov	Writing philosophy I: content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saunders, Mossley, MacDonald Ross and Lamb, chapter 5 • 'Writing Essays' handbook, sections 2-5
27 th Nov	Writing philosophy II: style and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lipton, 'Writing Philosophy' • 'Writing Essays' handbook, sections 6-8
4 th Dec	Academic standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Writing Essays' handbook, sections 9 and 10

Seminar Arrangements

Seminars for this module are fortnightly. Your seminars will be lead by your personal tutor. You do not need to sign up on Nexus for these, as you are already assigned to a tutor group. At the beginning of the semester students will receive information from their personal tutor or joint honours liaison tutor about the time and location of the seminars. The seminars will be based around the topics covered in the lectures, but your tutor will decide on the exact content and style of each seminar.

Seminar Plan

(Subject to variation at the discretion of seminar leaders)

<u>Weeks</u> <u>Commencing</u>	<u>Topic</u>
28 th Sept and 5 th Oct	Participating in philosophy seminars Preparation/practice for first in-class test
12 th and 19 th Oct	Reading philosophy Preparation/practice for second in-class test
26 th Oct and 2 nd Nov	Philosophical methods
9 th and 16 th Nov	Writing philosophy
23 rd and 30 th Nov	Review of module; preparation/practice for final exam

Assessment

This module carries 10 credits. You get these by completing two in-class tests, worth 15% of your mark each, and a one-hour exam worth 70% of your mark. There is no essay for this module.

(a) About The Exam

You will answer one question from a choice of four. Each question offered will relate to one or more of the topics covered in lectures. Sample exam questions will be made available on WebCT as the module progresses.

(b) About The Class Tests

The two class tests will be held at the same time and place as the lectures, and will be conducted under examination conditions. To complete the tests you will require only writing implements and your student ID number. You should be prepared to leave everything else at the front of the lecture room for collection when you have finished. The time allowed

for each test is 50 minutes, though you may leave as soon as you are satisfied with your answers. As with coursework for other modules, class tests will be marked anonymously.

Reading

(a) Main textbook

- Julian Baggini (2003): *The Philosopher's Toolkit: A Compendium of Philosophical Concepts and Methods* (Blackwell).

There should be plenty of copies of this book available from the library and from Blackwell's bookshop in the Portland building.

(b) Other reading required for lectures and seminars (see lecture plan)

- Saunders, Mossley, Ross and Lamb (2007): *Doing Philosophy – a Practical Guide for Students* (Continuum)
- Lipton, 'Writing Philosophy', available here: <http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research/wp.html>
- 'Writing Essays', Philosophy Department handbook
- NB: your seminar leader may also suggest or require further reading

(c) Additional/background Reading

- Guttenplan, Hornsby and Janaway (2002): *Reading Philosophy - an Introductory Text with Readers* (Blackwell)
- Martinich (1997): *Philosophical Writing – an Introduction* (Blackwell)
- Fisher (1998): *The Logic of Real Arguments* (Cambridge University Press)
- Walton D. (1989): *Informal Logic: a Handbook for Critical Argument* (Cambridge University Press)
- Weston (2001): *A Rulebook for Arguments* (Hackett)

WebCT

Lecture slides, this module guide, and other important information will be provided online through WebCT. You can access WebCT via your portal. If you have any problems with this, please let the module convenor or your seminar leader know.

Feedback on This Module

We value your opinion on our teaching, and seek to improve our courses and modules all the time. At the end of the course you will be asked to complete a short evaluation questionnaire. But of course, you don't have to wait until the end of the course if there is something we should know. Please contact the module convenor or your seminar leader at any time if you have suggestions or comments about the course.

Getting The Most from This Module

Please let the module convenor or your seminar leader know, at any time, of any way in which your studies for this module could be facilitated.