



PHIL1037

Critical Thinking

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Co-convenor; Lecturer (Weeks 1-5)

Jennifer Duke-Yonge

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Contact via email

See iLearn for staff consultation times

Co-convenor; Lecturer (Weeks 6, 10-13); tutor

Alexander Gillett

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See iLearn for staff consultation times

Lecturer (Weeks 7-9); tutor

Regina Fabry

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Other staff details can be found in iLearn

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit aims to teach the fundamentals of critical thinking and reasoning. Students learn how to construct, analyse and critically evaluate arguments; how to detect common fallacies in reasoning; and how to think logically and creatively. We teach these skills by developing practical techniques for the evaluation of reasoning, and applying them to arguments from business, law, science, politics, philosophy and the media. Critical thinking skills are invaluable across all disciplines, and will benefit students in academic contexts and in life beyond university.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Recognise the structure of arguments, and represent that structure in a clear standardised form.

ULO2: Differentiate between types of reasoning and the methods of evaluation appropriate to each.

ULO3: Appraise the arguments of others and represent them in a clear and standardised form.

ULO4: Construct well-reasoned arguments of your own.

ULO5: Apply the skills of critical analysis to arguments from a variety of contexts and disciplines.

General Assessment Information

Pass/ Fail Unit

PHIL1037/PHIX1037 is a Pass / Fail unit. This means that all students will receive either "S" for satisfactory or "F" for fail as their final result. However, marks will be awarded for each assignment. If students score 50% or higher overall they will be awarded an "S" for the unit.

Detailed assessment information and rubrics

Detailed information about each of the assessments, including rubrics and submission instructions will be available in the Assessment block in iLearn. Please make sure you read the assessment information carefully, watch the Guide to Assessment video, and post a message in the relevant Assessment forum if you have any questions.

Exam information

The exam will be an invigilated Open Book exam, held during the formal exam period. PHIL1037 students, whether enrolled as internal or online flexible, will complete the on-campus by default, but PHIL1037 online students who live outside Sydney will have the opportunity to apply to take the exam online. Further information about this process will be given during the semester.

Special Consideration

Requests for extensions due to illness or misadventure should be submitted via a Special Consideration request, which is available in the <https://connect.mq.edu.au/s/> portal. Please see <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration> for further details and instructions. Read this information closely as your request may be turned down if you have not followed procedure, or if you have not submitted a request in a timely manner. The Macquarie University Special Consideration Policy can be found at the end of this document.

Please also see here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/assessments/short-e>

[xtensions](#) for information about Short Extensions.

Late Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, **a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted**, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). **Late submission of time sensitive tasks** (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) **will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.**

Academic Integrity

In Philosophy, academic honesty is taken very seriously, and a range of methods, including but not restricted to the use of Turnitin, are used to detect plagiarism. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own may be grounds for referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please ask the convenor for help and see also the Academic Integrity Policy <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity>

Note: All assignments in this unit are individual assignments. Collusion (unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments) is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. This includes sharing or making use of shared assignments, in person or online, including through file-sharing websites. If in doubt, contact a member of teaching staff.

A helpful resource if you would like to know more about referencing and avoiding plagiarism is Macquarie's Academic Integrity Module, available here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills-development>. You will need to complete this Module before accessing the unit content, if you have not already done so. More information is available in iLearn.

Generative AI (ChatGPT etc)

In this unit, unless notified otherwise in writing by the Unit Convenor, it is expected that the work you submit demonstrates your own understanding, analysis, research, reflection, critical thinking, and writing, and you will be marked on the basis of your demonstrated understanding of and engagement with the unit content and activities. This applies to all assessments, including online forums. If your teachers have concerns about whether a submission is your own work in a meaningful sense, you may be required to attend an interview with the Unit Convenor or other academic staff to discuss your work and demonstrate your attainment of unit and task learning outcomes. Further information and advice about policies and expectations around the use of Generative AI will be given in iLearn.

Academic Writing and Study Support

Macquarie University offers a number of services to help with academic writing, referencing and study skills. For details, see: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills/assignments>

For information about policies related to Assessment, see *Policies and Procedures* section below.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Standardisation task	20%	No	11/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Portfolio	30%	No	23/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Formal examination	50%	No	Formal exam period	Individual	No	Observed

Standardisation task

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **11/09/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Argument standardisation exercise

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Recognise the structure of arguments, and represent that structure in a clear standardised form.
- Appraise the arguments of others and represent them in a clear and standardised form.
- Construct well-reasoned arguments of your own.

Portfolio

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **23/10/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

A portfolio consisting of student responses to a series of scaffolded tasks completed over the session

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Recognise the structure of arguments, and represent that structure in a clear standardised form.
- Differentiate between types of reasoning and the methods of evaluation appropriate to each.
- Appraise the arguments of others and represent them in a clear and standardised form.
- Construct well-reasoned arguments of your own.
- Apply the skills of critical analysis to arguments from a variety of contexts and disciplines.

Formal examination

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 38 hours

Due: **Formal exam period**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

Invigilated examination during formal exam period

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Recognise the structure of arguments, and represent that structure in a clear standardised form.
- Differentiate between types of reasoning and the methods of evaluation appropriate to each.
- Appraise the arguments of others and represent them in a clear and standardised form.
- Construct well-reasoned arguments of your own.
- Apply the skills of critical analysis to arguments from a variety of contexts and disciplines.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment

- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Learning Activities

- **Lectures**

Lectures will be delivered live on campus from 1-3pm on Tuesday of each week in the Lotus Theatre (27WW), and lectures will also be streamed and recorded for online students, and those unable to attend. **You will need to attend or watch the lectures before engaging in tutorial discussion, workshops and activities each week, and internal students are strongly encouraged to attend in person.** Further instructions about accessing the lectures will be available in iLearn.

- **Tutorials and online forums**

Students will enrol in PHIL1037 in either the **in-person scheduled offering**, or the **online flexible offering**.

- 'In-person scheduled' students will register for a tutorial when enrolling. Tutorials will be held **on campus** starting in Week 1
- 'Online flexible' students will discuss the content through asynchronous forums in iLearn, rather than in scheduled tutorials. Online flexible students will be allocated to a forum group with a member of staff as group leader at the beginning of semester.

Because the way you engage in the unit will depend on which offering you're enrolled in, please make sure you've enrolled in whichever one you would prefer at the beginning of semester. If you have enrolled in the 'in person' offering but decide you would rather participate via forums, for example, you will need to withdraw and reenrol in the 'online flexible' version as soon as possible and no later than week 1.

Tutorials and forums are an important part of your learning in the unit. In the tutorials you will get practice with the skills introduced each week. Tutorials will also be used to help you with assessments, and will assist you to write your Portfolio and develop a workbook resource that you can take with you into the open-book exam at the end of semester. There will be an online equivalent activity for Online Flexible students.

Course Texts

The Course Notes available through the PHIL/PHIX 1037 ilearn site constitute a text for the course. No other text is required.

Teaching staff consultation times

See iLearn for information about staff consultation times

Unit Webpages and E-Resources

This unit is delivered online through iLearn (<http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>). PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement. Please consult teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 (week beginning 27/7)	Introduction to Critical Thinking What is critical thinking and why is it important? What is an argument and how do you identify them? We introduce a central theme about the importance of epistemic virtues.	
Week 2 (w/b 3/8)	Building and Representing Arguments We look at the process of building an argument and the skill of standardisation.	
Week 3 (w/b 10/8)	Deconstructing Arguments Using the method of standardisation to represent other people's arguments. How can we accurately and fairly portray the views of others?	
Week 4 (w/b 17/8)	Critical Thinking and the Human Mind The way we think can influence how we understand the arguments of others, and how we make arguments of our own. How can we be responsible believers and reasoners?	
Week 5 (w/b 24/8)	Types of arguments (I): Deduction There are different types of arguments. We'll consider why it's important to recognise these different types of reasoning, and what methods of evaluation are appropriate to each.	
Week 6 (w/b 31/8)	Types of arguments (II): Induction and Abduction We continue our study of different types of arguments, and the methods of evaluation appropriate to each.	
Week 7 (w/b 7/9)	The Impact of Cognitive Biases Our tendency towards schematic thinking leads us to make assumptions about the causal relations between things in analogies. So, what makes a good causal or analogical claim?	Standardisation Task due Friday 11/9
Week 8 (w/b 14/9)	Evaluating Evidence What counts as reliable evidence? Who or what should we trust? When is it appropriate to 'do your own research'? What responsibilities do we have when it comes to accepting evidence? We return to the importance of epistemic responsibility.	
	Mid-semester break (21/9-4/10)	

Week 9 (w/b 5/10)	The Language We Use: the power to persuade What is the relationship between language, rhetoric and argument? How can word choice and rhetoric manipulate or persuade?	Standardisation Task marks and feedback returned
Week 10 (w/b 12/10)	The Rules of Engagement Sometimes arguments become diverted away from the rational core. What can we do about this? Can we treat arguments as a form of game with rules?	
Week 11 (w/b 19/10)	What happens when the rules are broken (fallacies and pseudo-reasoning) Fallacies are specious forms of reasoning. There are lots of differing kinds of fallacies. Can we avoid fallacies in our own reasoning?	Portfolio due Friday 23/10
Week 12 (w/b 26/10)	Critical Thinking and Beyond How you can take what you have learned on the course into your future university studies into your wider lives? How can the ideas taught on this course help with our current times? We conclude by reflecting upon our epistemic responsibilities.	No Tutorial
Week 13 (w/b 2/11)	Exam preparation Week General advice on exam techniques and specific feedback on how to improve for the exam by going through the mock exam and portfolio feedback.	Portfolio marks and feedback returned

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)

- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.05 of the [Handbook](#)