



**Course** BIS3320-0U1.13U, The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry  
**Professor** David A. Wright  
**Term** SUM 2013  
**Meetings** Sat. - 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Room HH2.502

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### Professor's Contact Information

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**Office Hours** Before or after class and by appointment.

### General Course Information

**Course Description** **The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry** (3 semester hours) Core course designed to enhance the student's critical thinking and reasoning in order to understand and utilize the methodologies of scholarly pursuits. To be taken during the student's first twelve hours as a junior in the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Texas Core Area 010 - Communication (English rhetoric/composition) - Chart I

### Learning Outcomes

#### Course Objectives:

1. Students will be able to locate primary sources (6-8 per paper) and evaluate the usefulness of each source based on the criteria discussed in class.
2. Students will be able to concisely paraphrase the findings of studies and properly document sources according to the guidelines set forth by the APA manual.
3. Students will be able to develop a thesis statement and write a paper that discusses the scientific studies that support their claims.
4. Students will be able to describe the differences and similarities between philosophical ideas and scientific facts and/or theories.

**Required Texts & Materials** The assigned texts are *Nonsense on Stilts*, by Massimo Pigliucci, The University of Chicago Press, (ISBN -978-0-226-66786-7) 2010; A "Logical Fallacies" printout and PPT presentations will be provided online.

### Assignments & Academic Calendar

June 1 Class begins, syllabus review, course introduction  
June 8 How we know what we know and the scientific method; Introduction to logical thinking  
June 10 *Last day to drop a class without a "W"; Signature required June 11-July 15*  
June 15 Survey History of the Idea of Science - PPT  
June 22 Nonsense on Stilts, pgs: 302-305; Introduction; Chapters 1-3. Term paper proposals due.  
June 29 Nonsense on Stilts, Chapters 8 & 9.  
July 6 Nonsense on Stilts, Chapters 8 & 9.  
July 13 Mid-term Exam  
July 20 History of an idea: E=mc<sup>2</sup> - Movie  
July 27 Nonsense on Stilts, Chapters 4-7; Logic Project Due.  
August 3 Nonsense on Stilts, Chapters 4-7.  
August 10 Class Summary; Final Exam; Term Paper Due.  
August 16 Grades available online

## **Grading (credit) Criteria**

Grading will assess how well students comprehend and recall course content and further demonstrate the ability write well and critically assess topics.

**Academic essay style:** Writing assignments must be in an academic essay style, which means: (1) having an introduction to the topic with a thesis presenting the position to be taken, along with an indication of the relevant evidence to be considered in defense of the thesis; (2) having a middle part which presents well-reasoned arguments and cites evidence in support of the thesis; (3) having a conclusion that affirmatively summarizes and confirms the thesis as being supported by the evidence. Students must avoid vagueness and provide properly cited sources and quotes as evidence to support claims rather than strongly held personal opinions or beliefs.

All essays are to be written in English (American) as critical evaluations rather than in the familiar report form. Critical evaluation involves the discernment of an author's intent, formal stylistic considerations, affective content, kind of evidence (scientific, historical, quantitative, statistical, testimonial, anecdotal, etc.), and the logical or reasoning processes employed.

The personal pronouns (I, we, you, etc.) referring to the writer or reader of the essay are to be avoided. Essays must be typed and use proper academic (APA) style. Properly cited primary and secondary source materials must be used. Proper grammar is required. Students must keep a copy of their essays aside from the one turned in for a grade. Students are urged to use a computer with a word processing program, spell-check functions and a grammar utility. A writing lab is available to assist students. With all rewrites (available for the logic project and mid-term make-up exam), the original, marked-up and graded essay must accompany the rewrite. Essays must be original work for this course and not written for another course.

**1. Logic Project:** Write a critical essay that takes an assigned logical fallacy and finds a "real world" and publicly accessible example of someone committing the fallacy. You must describe the fallacy referring to provided definitions and descriptions, use quotes and cite sources so that anyone could verify your claim that the statements made by your source constitute a logical fallacy. Be careful to not take your source out of context, leaving out information that might refute your claim that an assertion is a logical fallacy. Good sources to consider can be found in politics, issues of law, pseudo-scientific theories, conspiracy theories, advertisements, alternative medical practices and social commentary expressed through various public media outlets. You must provide a printed version and you must e-mail your essay, by the assignment due date, to [wright@utdallas.edu](mailto:wright@utdallas.edu) as an attached MSWord (.doc) or text (.txt) document. If a student is dissatisfied with their logic project grade they may rewrite their essay. With all rewrites the original, marked-up and graded essay must accompany the rewrite. Proper academic essay (APA) style must be used.

**2. Mid-term Exam:** An in-class examination covering the scientific method, history of the idea of science and logic must be taken on the assigned date. If a student is dissatisfied with their mid-term exam grade, the student has the option to write a 6-page academic essay covering an assigned topic, using only the textbook and lecture notes as sources. Proper academic essay (APA) style must be used. Those making a 90 or better on the mid-term exam are exempt from taking final exam.

**3. Term Paper Assignment:** Write an 8-page academic essay that critically evaluates whether a topic's claim has a scientific basis and is supported by the kind and quality of arguments and evidence being presented. Relate the topic to a definition of science as developed in class. The topic must make a claim(s) to being scientific and not be a topic solely a matter of ethics, religion, politics, or law. A well-developed topic must be submitted using a provided format, including primary and secondary sources and the names of those involved, for approval and will constitute 10% of the term paper grade. Students are encouraged to consider topics of fringe or pseudo science. Possible topics will be discussed. Students will have an opportunity to submit a draft version of their term paper for editorial review (no grade). Essays must be original work for this course and not written for another course. Proper academic essay (APA) style must be used.

**4. Final Exam:** The final exam will be in-class and include an essay portion. Those making a 90 or better on the mid-term exam are exempt from taking final exam.

## **Grading (credit) Criteria**

Logic Project:	10%
Mid-term:	30% -- with first grade of 90+, final exam essay waived.
Term Paper Proposal:	10% -- of term paper grade.
Term Paper:	40%
Final In-class exam:	20%

## **Class Attendance**

Regular attendance is required. Without satisfactory explanation, the missing of more than two classes begins a deduction of 5 percentage points from the final grade for every subsequent class missed. A class role will be provided for student signature during each class and will provide evidence of attendance.

## **Classroom Decorum**

Unless a student has an approved compelling reason (for example: emergency response purposes), cell phones, pagers, tablet or pad devices and laptop computers must not be used during class., except for referencing the textbook.

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations that govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained here: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

## **Course Policies**

**Note:** This Syllabus is for informational purposes only, does not constitute a contract and may change at the discretion of the lecturer.