



Course BIS3320-501, The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry
Professor David A. Wright
Term Fall 2016
Meetings Room HH2.502; Friday – 7:00 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.

Professor's Contact Information

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Office Hours Before/after class and by appointment.

General Course Information

Course Description BIS 3320 The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry (3 semester hours) Major core course designed to enhance the student's critical thinking and reasoning in order to understand and utilize the methodology of scholarly pursuits. To be taken during the first twelve hours as a junior in the Interdisciplinary Studies program on a letter grade only.

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 style manual.
3. Students will be able to develop a thesis statement and write a paper that discusses the scientific evidence 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 text is *Nonsense on Stilts*, by Massimo Pigliucci, The University of Chicago Press, (ISBN -978-0-226-66786-7) 2010 A "Logical Fallacies" handout and PPT presentations will be provided online and reviewed in class.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Aug. 26 Class begins; syllabus review; course introduction.
Sept. 2 How we know what we know and the scientific method.
Sept. 7 *Last day to drop without W. Signatures required Sept. 8 – Oct. 27,*
Sept. 9 How we know what we know and the scientific method; Introduction to Logic.
Sept. 16 *Nonsense on Stilts*, pgs: 302-302; Introduction; Chapters 1-3.
Sept. 23 History of the Idea of Science, PPT presentation.
Sept. 30 *Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 8 & 9.
Oct. 7 *Nonsense on Stilts*, In-class mid term exam.
Oct. 14 *Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 4-7; *Midterm grades posted Oct. 15*
Oct. 21 $E=mc^2$ A Movie about the history of a theory. Logic Project Due.
Oct. 28 *The story and meaning of Halloween; Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 4-7
Nov. 4 *Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 10-12
Nov. 11 *Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 10-12
Nov. 18 *Nonsense on Stilts*, Chapters 10-12, Optional term paper draft due.
Nov. 25 *No Class*
Dec. 2 Class Summary; Final Exam discussed; Term Paper Due; Attendance required.
Dec. 9 In-class Final Exam, hours TBD
Dec. 16 *Grades posted online deadline. (Viewable Dec. 18)*

<p>Grading (credit) Criteria</p>	<p>Grading will assess how well students comprehend course content, demonstrate the ability to recall course content, and use course content to critically assess topics.</p> <p>The following academic essay standards <u>must</u> be met:</p> <p>Academic essay style: Writing assignments <u>must</u> 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 <u>must</u> avoid vagueness and provide properly cited sources and quotes as evidence to support claims rather than strongly held personal opinions or beliefs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The personal pronouns (I, we, you, etc.) referring to the writer or reader of the essay are to be avoided. Essays <u>must</u> be typed and use proper academic (APA) style. Properly cited primary and secondary source materials <u>must</u> be used. Proper grammar is required. Students <u>must</u> 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 <u>must</u> accompany the rewrite. Essays <u>must</u> be original work for this course and not written for another course.</p> <p>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 <u>must</u> 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 <u>not</u> 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 <u>must</u> provide a printed version and you <u>must</u> e-mail your essay, by the assignment due date, to 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 <u>must</u> accompany the rewrite. Proper academic essay (APA) style <u>must</u> be used.</p> <p>2. Mid-term Exam: An in-class examination covering the course introduction, philosophical foundations, basic history of the idea of science, scientific method and logic <u>must</u> 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, course materials and lecture notes as sources. Proper academic essay (APA) style <u>must</u> be used. Students who score 90 or higher on the in-class mid-term exam, may waive the final exam.</p>
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	<p>3. Term Paper Assignment: Write an 8-page academic essay that critically evaluates whether a topic's claim has a valid 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 <u>must</u> 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 <u>must</u> 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 <u>must</u> be original work for this course and not written for another course. Proper academic essay (APA) style <u>must</u> be used.</p> <p>4. Assessment & Grading:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Logic Project:</td><td>10%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mid-term:</td><td>30% -- with first grade of 90+, final exam may be waived.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Term Paper Proposal:</td><td>10% -- of term paper grade.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Term Paper:</td><td>40% -- term paper draft review option available.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Final:</td><td>20%</td></tr> </table>	Logic Project:	10%	Mid-term:	30% -- with first grade of 90+, final exam may be waived.	Term Paper Proposal:	10% -- of term paper grade.	Term Paper:	40% -- term paper draft review option available.	Final:	20%
Logic Project:	10%										
Mid-term:	30% -- with first grade of 90+, final exam may be waived.										
Term Paper Proposal:	10% -- of term paper grade.										
Term Paper:	40% -- term paper draft review option available.										
Final:	20%										
Make-up Exams	By arrangement only										
Late Work	By permission only										
Class Attendance	Regular attendance is required. Without satisfactory explanation, the missing of more than two classes begins a deduction of 5 percentage points (.05) from the final grade for every subsequent class missed. A class role will be provided for student signature during each class and will provide the only evidence of attendance.										
Classroom Citizenship	Classroom Decorum: Unless a student has an approved compelling reason (for example: emergency response purposes), cell phones, pagers, mobile pad devices and laptop computers <u>must</u> not be used during class, except for taking notes or referencing digital versions of the textbook or PPT presentations.										
Rules and Regulations	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, which 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.