



COURSE INFORMATION

1. TEACHING ASSISTANT AND OFFICE HOURS

The Teaching Assistant (TA) for this course, Elizabeth Bell (ebell3@wisc.edu), will hold office hours on Fridays, 9-11am, at 5160 H. C. White Hall. There is also a free tutor for this course, Jonathon VandenHombergh (vandenhomber@wisc.edu), who will hold office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1-2pm, at 5145 H. C. White Hall, and also by appointment. If you want to meet with me (Peter B. M. Vranas, the lecturer for this course), feel free to make an appointment. My office is at 5171 H. C. White Hall, and you can best reach me by email (vranas@wisc.edu).

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Grade component (see syllabus for dates)	Weight
1	Thirteen problem sets. Each set contains a quiz to be taken in class on the due date.	55%
2	Three 50-min in-class exams. These are closed-book and cumulative: they cover all material up to the date on which you take them. (There is no final exam.)	45% (15% each)
	Some handouts are on my website: https://vranas.website	100%

This is a 4-credit course. It meets for four 50-minute class periods each week (including the discussion period) over the semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities on average for about 2 hours out of classroom for each class period.

3. CLASS PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION RULES

Class participation is not graded, because (1) I would like people to speak out of intrinsic motivation and interest in the topics, not to get a higher grade, and (2) I wouldn't like people to be afraid of speaking because saying something less than brilliant might hurt their grade. On the other hand, I would like *everyone* to participate: I believe that each of you has interesting things to say, and I would like to hear them.

The fundamental discussion rule is that we must *treat everyone with the utmost respect*. It's not acceptable to insult or ridicule people or views. Everyone should feel free to voice unpopular opinions, as long as the opinions are expressed respectfully and backed by arguments. *You should feel especially free to disagree with me.*

The fundamental rule of respect has two concrete consequences. (1) Interrupting others is disrespectful: *please raise your hand and wait for your turn* before you speak. (2) Ignoring speakers is disrespectful: *please don't talk among yourselves* while someone is speaking.

4. MAIN COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main course objectives are to help you develop (1) the ability to think critically about arguments, (2) the ability to analyze complex texts logically, and (3) the ability to communicate precisely and concisely in writing. In particular, and in addition, the course tries to:

1. Help you focus on *arguments* rather than *conclusions*, on reasons rather than opinions.
2. Teach you standards for *evaluating* arguments, for finding out whether they are good or bad.
3. Help you apply the standards to the evaluation of real-life arguments proposed by others.
4. Help you apply the standards to the construction of your own real-life arguments.
5. Fight superficiality by emphasizing quality rather than quantity.
6. Help you develop valuable skills by emphasizing rigorous thinking, clarity, and precision.

5. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

If you would like special arrangements because (1) you have a disability or (2) you are observing some religious holidays or (3) you have work responsibilities, please let your TA know within the first two weeks of the term. Students with disabilities may wish to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>).