Dr. Kelly Smith 208 Hardin Hall 650-1093 Cell 653-7233 H* kcs@clemson.edu
*Feel free to call me 6:30 AM - 9:30 PM weekdays or 8:30 AM - 9:30 PM weekends

Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 Mon/Wed or 9:30-10:30 Tues/Thur or by appointment

Texts: There are no texts in the textbook store for this course, though students will have to acquire a few resources as the semester progresses, in particular Think Like a Freak ($15 on Amazon). Students must also purchase online access to Top Hat Monocle ($20 for the semester).

Clemson Thinks²: Clemson University has instituted a university wide initiative called Clemson Thinks² where a number of faculty across the disciplines will teach intensive critical thinking courses to foster these skills. I have redesigned my logic course to be one of these classes. To be sure, logic has always been about getting students to think, but in a traditional logic course this is often fairly narrowly focused, with emphasis on the kind of formal reasoning skills like those in mathematics. I have thoroughly revamped this course to teach not only formal skills, but also a variety of informal techniques. The goal of this class is nothing less than to help you think better: more clearly, more critically, and in more depth. If it’s successful, it will be the most important class you ever take. In a world where anyone can access any factual information with a few keystrokes, it matters much more that you can think effectively than that you have memorized content. But even the best thinkers amongst you will quickly see weaknesses you didn’t even realize you had, and learn techniques to fill these gaps. You will know you have gotten your money’s worth when your family and friends refuse to argue with you anymore because you always win...😊

Classroom techniques: You can’t learn to think well by listening to someone tell you how to do it or even by watching someone else do it. You have to do it yourself and then be challenged to improve. So I am going to put a lot of emphasis on your learning the material for yourselves as opposed to having me spoon feed it to you. If this works well, then my primary involvement will be in providing a critical environment through Socratic questioning. What this means in practice is that I will ask students to come to class prepared to discuss something, then I will ask you to share your thoughts. Then (this is the annoying bit) I will challenge you to defend whatever you say. The idea is to force you out of your intellectual complacency so that you really THINK. You will find, as Socrates’ victims did, that this can be very frustrating. DO NOT GIVE UP – you will improve over time, but it’s not a painless process! In addition to the constant questioning, I will use small group discussions, staged debates, inquiry activities, student presentations, student essays and other assignments to force you to think deeply, critically and independently about a wide variety of issues.
Undergraduate TA's: There will be an undergraduate teaching assistant in each class. These are senior Philosophy majors who are very familiar with critical thinking. Their job is to help you – they are not involved in grading, so you don’t have to worry about what they think of you or anything like that. To be clear, you certainly do not have to use them and you can always come straight to me with whatever you wish. But I have found in the past that many students like being able to approach another student with their issues, so don’t be shy about using them to help. If you have a question that you are afraid to ask me or if you just can't understand the way I explain something, I encourage you to reach out to your TA.

- 12:20 class: Matthew Julyan mjulyan@g.clemson.edu
- 1:25 class: CJ Perkins cjperki@g.clemson.edu

WARNING: This class will be intense. In addition to the Socratic discussions, there will also be assignments to complete before every class, along with daily quizzes. So if you are looking for an easy class where you don’t have to be actively involved, you should drop now.

### Tentative Schedule of Classes

#### I. An Introduction to Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>Introduction to the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8/22</td>
<td>Knowledge, truth and thought</td>
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#### II. Formal Logic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Basic concepts of formal logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>What makes an argument good or bad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Class exercises on validity and soundness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/ 1</td>
<td>Logical operators and truth tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/ 3</td>
<td>More operators</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/ 5</td>
<td>Even more operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/ 8</td>
<td>Class exercises on operators and truth tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Immediate inferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Syllogistic reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>More syllogistic reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>In class exercises on syllogistic reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>In class discussions of critical thinking projects</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Fallacies are assigned for presentations*

#### III. Fun with Fallacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>Student presentations on fallacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Student presentations on fallacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Student presentations on fallacies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. Scientific Thinking
M  10/6    Statistics 101
W  10/8    The Scientific Method
          **NOTE:** If you want an official midterm evaluation, tell me by today
F  10/10   Ghosts and other weird stuff
M  10/13   How to think like a freak
W  10/15   How to think like a freak
F  10/17   How to think like a freak

M  10/20   How to think like a freak
          **Critical thinking project topics must be approved by today**
W  10/22   How to think like a freak
F  10/24   How to think like a freak

V. Ethical Thinking
M  10/27   Common ethical misconceptions
W  10/29   Ethical theory lite
F  10/31   Ethical scenario 1
          **Critical Thinking Project workups due online by class today**
          **Dates for critical thinking presentations assigned**

Fall Break
W  11/5    Ethical scenario 2
F  11/7    Ethical scenario 3
          **Feedback on critical thinking projects is due by the start of**
          **the class one week before the presentation (so today are due**
          **the ones presenting on 11/14)**

M  11/10   Ethical scenario 4
W  11/12   Ethical scenario 5

VI. Student Critical Thinking Projects
F  11/14   Student presentations
M  11/17   Student presentations
W  11/19   Student presentations
F  11/21   Student presentations
M  11/24   Student presentations
Thanksgiving Break

M 12/1  Student presentations
W 12/3  Student presentations
F 12/5  Student presentations

Final exams:
  12:20 class - Monday 12/8 8AM (sorry)
  1:25 class - Friday, 12/12 3PM (sorry)

IMPORTANT NOTE:
You should never take a class without first checking out the professor carefully. I recommend Rate My Professors: http://blog.ratemyprofessors.com/. This is not a perfect rating by any means, but it’s often very valuable if you look for patterns over many comments.

Grading:
Daily Quizzes (total)  20%
Daily Assignments (total)  20%
Critical Thinking Project  20%
Cumulative Final Exam  20%
Fallacy Presentation  10%
Class Participation  10%

I do not curve individual assignments, though I will occasionally curve the final grades, if necessary. Each class is different, but a typical distribution of final grades would be 20% A’s, 40% B’s, 30% C’s, and 10% D’s and/or F’s. As a general rule, if you are good at logic and you work hard, you have a good shot at an A. If you meet only one of those requirements, you will likely get a B (those who at least try hard will usually receive at least a C, though not always).

Class Participation:
Class participation is 10% of your grade, which may not seem so much but it can easily make that critical difference between letter grades, so don’t forget it. If you rarely talk in class and your participation grade is a 60%, for example, that will effectively remove 4 full points from your final grade in class! One common problem with participation is that, since students don’t see it in any tangible way, they tend to forget I am grading it. **Rest assured, though: if you lose focus and forget about participation, your class grade will suffer, sometimes dramatically!** If you ever want to know how you are doing with participation, you can ask me and I will give you an estimate of your grade to date. Another common confusion about participation is that someone who shows up all the time should get an A for participation. However, while it is true that you must show up to participate, you must keep in mind that participation means more than simply showing up - it means that you actually contribute in some form to class discussions.
on a regular basis. It is important that you take part in the class discussions whenever you can and in any way you can. For example, there's nothing wrong with pointing out that what we are discussing is stupid, bogus, impractical, wrongheaded or just plain weird (it may well be) - just don't be intimidated if I ask you WHY it's stupid, etc. If you learn nothing else in a Philosophy class, you must learn to think for yourself and then articulate and defend your views.

**Daily Quizzes:** This semester I am experimenting with a new approach to testing. Rather than give you several big tests during the semester, I will instead give you a quiz almost every day of class, sometimes one at the beginning and one at the end of class. These quizzes will be short – usually one or two multiple choice questions each – and can cover a) material from the last class or two, b) material from the assignment for class or c) material we have covered that day in class. Over the course of the semester, you will be given something like 60-70 of these quizzes, so if you mess up on one or two, it's no big deal. If you get into the habit of messing up, however, it will begin to have a serious effect on your grade. If you want to do well on the quizzes, here are a few important tips:

1) Come to class on time and stay for the entire period. If you miss a quiz, there are no makeups unless there are VERY unusual circumstances.

2) Take good notes in class.

3) Complete any assignments well before class begins (i.e., not 5 minutes before class begins).

4) Take a few minutes to read over your old notes from the previous class or two before each class begins.

**Important Note:** I will be using an in class response system, top hat monocle, to administer quizzes. It is every student's responsibility to purchase access to top hat and then come to class each day with a device that can access the internet wirelessly.

**Daily Assignments:**
On most days there will be a small assignment students will have to complete before class. Typically, this will consist of doing some research on a given topic on your own and then posting a brief report. They will be designed to be completed in less than an hour, often in less than 30 minutes. The basic idea is to help you organize your own thoughts about something before class, so it's definitely in your interests to take it seriously. However, they will not be graded for quality, only for whether they meet the minimum standards (e.g., on time, on topic, etc.). I will read them periodically though and if it seems that you are not taking them seriously I reserve the right to take further action.

**Fallacy Presentation:**
Each student will be assigned an informal fallacy. You will then have to research that fallacy and prepare a presentation for the class – in effect, you will be teaching the class about that fallacy. At then end of each class, your classmates first take a quiz over that day's fallacies, then grade each presentation on both quality of
content and how well you held their interest. So you need to prepare carefully.
The presentation can take no more than 5 minutes, but can be in any form you wish. I will also give you wide latitude about exactly what you say/do, but a good basic format might be:

1) Define the fallacy in clear terms
2) Give two examples of the fallacy. One should probably be very clear, while the other can be more subtle. It’s always good to have real world examples (from commercials, etc.) rather than just making up some sentences.
3) Talk about any common problems people have with the fallacy – for example, are there other fallacies that it is confused with, etc.?

If at all possible, I will allow a question or two from the class after each presentation.

**Critical Thinking Project:**
So the idea here is to let each student pick something they are personally interested in and then develop an extensive critical analysis on it using what they have learned in class. This project will proceed through a few discrete stages:

1) You will each pick a topic. I really don’t care what you choose as a topic, as long as it’s something which is amenable to critical analysis, which typically means two basic things:
   a. It’s something about which people do not all see eye to eye. In order to allow you to be critical, there has to be something others think or believe that you can critique.
   b. It’s clear. Often, students will have a pet topic they want to work on but it takes them 20 minutes to explain what it is. This is a sign you should listen to...

You might want to pick some controversial issue facing society and take a position on it (e.g., “Human cloning should be legalized immediately!”) but it’s also fine to talk about something that is not a “big issue” but matters to you personally, like that it doesn’t make sense to drive the speed limit. You might even be inspired by Think Like a Freak and want to tackle some social question with empirical data you generate. Remember: my only concern is that you pick a topic which will let you display your critical talents effectively (and be at least somewhat interesting to others in the class).

Actually, since students so often choose bad topics initially, what I will do is ask each of you to come up with three topic ideas early on and think about them. Eventually, you will settle on a single topic and do your project on this.

2) You will think about your potential topics carefully, consulting with as many people as you can and trying to figure out all the angles that you need to address. Document your thought process as it develops in a critical thinking diary. Once you narrow this down to a single topic, you will need to write up a 1,000 presentation loosely based on the element of critical thinking available at criticalthinking.org (we will talk about this in class). Then you will post your diary and your presentation online. If possible, you should include a link to a draft of your video as well, though this is not required.

3) Each student in class will read your presentation and diary and make critical comments no later than one week before you are scheduled to present in
class.

4) You will prepare a short video presentation of your work of 5 minutes in length (give or take 30 seconds). When you present in class, you will first show this video, then you will field questions about your work for another 5 minutes or so.

I encourage you to be creative. There are many degrees of freedom here. For example, you can produce the video using a camcorder or some animation program like xtranormal or a slide show with PowerPoint or other things I haven’t thought of. I don’t really care about the technical details of how it gets done. There are some basic things that make a video good you should keep in mind:

a. It should be interesting as there is nothing worse than watching a video that puts you to sleep. Humor, background music, and special effects can all help.

b. There needs to be real content pitched to a general audience – anyone who watches this, whether they have taken logic or not, should think a bit for themselves in new ways as a result.

c. It should be polished. I don’t expect professional production standards, of course, but I do expect that the soundtrack is easily audible, there aren’t tons of typos, etc., etc.

d. I have had students do this kind of project before and then asked them to provide advice to future students. By far, the most common piece of advice they give is to start early. It will take much loner to do this well than you think, so don’t put it off!

5) Your grade for the critical thinking project will be based on all of these elements together.

Extra Credit:
There may be some opportunities to earn extra credit during the semester, particularly in connection with the ethics engine project coming to Clemson. Pay attention during class for opportunities, but feel free to ask me about them as well.

Email: I send out a lot of announcements and material via email. Each student is therefore responsible for checking their email at least once every 48 hours.

Attendance: Man, I HATED professors who took attendance when I was a student and swore I would never do so myself. Generally speaking, therefore, I will not take attendance. However, there are two important points to keep in mind. First, missing class will usually also mean missing a quiz and there are no makeups for quizzes, so your quiz grade will suffer if you make a habit of not coming to class. Second, if you miss class regularly it is extremely likely that you will not understand the material very well and thus will punt the next test. You are all (theoretically) adults, so if you decide to miss class for whatever reason, I won’t nag you about it. All I ask is that you accept the consequences of your decision to skip class without complaint.
**Waiting for the Prof:** I’m supposed to tell you how long you should wait for me if I’m late. I figure your time is as valuable as mine, so I will try very hard to start and end each class exactly on time. If I’m sick or some such, I will email everyone as well as try to arrange an in-class announcement of class cancellation. If 1) I am not in class or my office 5 minutes (by the Tillman Hall clock) after the class is supposed to start, and 2) you check my office and I am not there, then you are free to leave.

**Late or missed assignments:** You are all adults and, as adults, you are responsible for making sure that all assignments arrive at the beginning of class on the assigned day. If you wait until the last minute to do an assignment and are then frustrated by a down printer, hungover roommate, deranged pet, etc. I am not likely to be terribly sympathetic. **Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day (not class day) late.** If you have a legitimate reason for missing an assignment or turning something in late, you need to talk to me about the circumstances WELL BEFORE the event in question. If you miss an assignment without a legitimate excuse, you will receive a grade of zero.

**Cheating and plagiarism:** The following academic integrity policy is now in effect for Clemson University:

> “As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a “high seminary of learning.” Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any

I helped write this policy and I have served on the University committee which reviews cases of academic integrity, so it’s fair to say that I take these matters pretty seriously. Bottom line – if you cheat on any assignment or use material that is not your own (without acknowledgment) in a paper, you will (at least) receive a failing grade in this COURSE. I may also file formal charges against you which could result in your expulsion from Clemson. Enough said...

**The Powers That Be (me):** Ok, DO NOT PANIC! This class is not as bad as it may sound. I just want to make sure that all class policies are crystal clear at the outset - it’s only fair that you know what you are getting into. **I am your employee (sorta, anyway) and you should not hesitate to come to me with questions, complaints, suggestions, etc.** Please do not feel shy about talking to me or calling me at home - I don't (usually) bite or anything.

Just to give you an idea of what other students thought of past sections of this class, I’ve provided some typical comments from student evaluations:

Positive: “A very valuable course!”
“Humorous lectures with cool examples.”
“Taught me to be more objective, argue and write better.”

Negative: “Grading is too harsh (Hey, we’re not philosophy majors!)”
“Too much difficult homework.”

Mixed: “Prof seems like an AH at first, but is actually a nice guy.”
“Not nearly as boring as I thought it would be!”

So now you can’t say you didn’t know...