

**IBH 2AE3
Critical Thinking
Fall 2024 Course Outline**

**Integrated Business and Humanities
DeGroot School of Business
McMaster University**

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Dr. Megan Stotts
Instructor**

stottsm@mcmaster.ca

Office: UH 306

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30–
3:30pm, and by appointment

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TA

Éamon Brennan

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Office: UH 317

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00–1:15pm,
and by appointment

Course website: <https://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
A2L:	Yes	Ethics:	No	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	No
Evidence-based:	No	Experiential:	No	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	No

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures: twice per week, once for 2 hours and the second time for 1 hour

Tutorials: N/A

Course Delivery Mode: In-person

Course Description:

Reasoning is something we do all the time, and in many cases, effortlessly—we reason about the best way to get to a particular destination, what the cause of a traffic delay might be, or how to explain a family member’s unusual behavior. While our reasoning may often be effortless, it’s surprisingly difficult to articulate what makes good reasoning good, and bad reasoning bad. This course aims to develop students’ ability to identify and evaluate various kinds of reasoning frequently encountered in everyday life, and their ability to articulate their evaluations of that reasoning. It is simultaneously a critical reading course and a critical thinking course: because people tend to be more explicit about their reasoning when they are writing, most of the examples of reasoning we consider will be in written form. Although our primary focus will be to gain an understanding of how good reasoning works, we will also work on identifying some common pitfalls that can lead to bad reasoning and other errors of thought: informal fallacies and cognitive biases.

MEETING DETAILS

Mondays 10:30am–12:20pm and Wednesdays 10:30–11:20am

The **first class** will be Wednesday, September 4.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. When given a passage of writing, identify its structure and which parts of the passage include reasoning and which do not
2. Correctly schematize reasoning found in passages of writing to reveal its structure
3. Evaluate the quality of reasoning in a variety of kinds of arguments
4. Identify errors in reasoning and thinking due to a variety of informal fallacies and cognitive biases

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Required:

Larry Wright, *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to Analytical Reading and Reasoning*, 2nd Edition.
ISBN: 978-0199796229

Note: Please be sure that you purchase the correct edition of the textbook. Some important content was changed for the second edition, so having the wrong edition would put you at a significant disadvantage. A used or e-book version is fine.

Textbook Listing: <https://textbooks.mcmaster.ca>

CLASS FORMAT

This is an in-person course. Our class time will consist of a combination of lecture, taking questions from students, going over exercises, completing exercises in small groups, and occasional discussions. There will be a short break midway through our 2-hour meetings.

COURSE EVALUATION

There will be no extra credit or bonus points in this course. The scale used by the Registrar's Office will be used to convert number grades to final letter grades. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

Component	Weight
Homework	10%
Tests	52%
Reflection Paper	10%
Final Exam	28%

HOMEWORK

A homework assignment will be due at the beginning of each Monday class. The homework can be submitted in person in hard copy form, or virtually by emailing the TA. Homework will not be accepted once class has begun. The homework assignments will consist of one or more exercises from the textbook, and they will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Students who complete the entire assigned exercise(s) will receive 100%, and partial completion will receive 75% or 50%. All homework assignments will be weighted equally.

Homework grades will be posted on Avenue, and the homework will not be handed back. If you would like to retain a copy of your homework, please make a copy or take a photo for yourself.

TESTS

There will be four in-person tests over the course of the term (see the course schedule for dates), all weighted equally. Each test builds on the skills from the previous tests, so if you do poorly on a test, you should attend office hours to receive assistance from the instructor or TA as soon as possible.

REFLECTION PAPER

At the beginning of the last day of class, a 2–3-page (typed, double-spaced) paper will be due via Avenue to Learn. In that paper you should discuss your view of the ways in which the skills learned in this class will be applicable in a business context. Additional information will be provided near the end of term.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be an in-person exam, scheduled by the Registrar's Office. It will assess the skills we learn after the material covered on our fourth test. It is not technically a cumulative exam, but like all of the other tests, it will rely on skills developed earlier in the term as well as on new skills.

Students who missed more than one test, where the dates of multiple missed tests were covered by an MSAF (Self-Report) or MSAF (Administrative Report), will write a longer exam, as described in the policies below.

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties: Homework and Reflection Paper

Extensions on the homework and the reflection paper will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A student who needs an extension on one of those assignments should contact the TA via email *before* the assignment is due. If a student requests lengthy or frequent extensions, they may be asked to get an MSAF (Administrative Report) in order to receive the extension. When a student submits an MSAF (Self-Report) that covers the date on which exercises or the reflection is due, the assignment's deadline will automatically be extended by 48 hours for that student, and longer extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Monday homework is due at the very beginning of class, and it will not be accepted late (that is, once class has begun) in the absence of an extension. The reflection paper will still be accepted late in the absence of an extension, but it will be penalized 5% as soon as the deadline passes, and an additional 5% for every additional day it is late. Once the reflection paper is 5 days late without an extension, it will no longer be accepted and the student will receive a 0.

Policy on Missed Work, Extensions, and Late Penalties: Tests and Final Exam

No extensions will be given for the tests or final exam. If you submit a successful MSAF (Self-Report) or MSAF (Administrative Report) for the date of a test, you will be excused from that test and the weight of that test will be redistributed evenly among the other tests. If this occurs for more than one test, every missed test after the first one will have its weight redistributed to the final exam, and that student's final exam will be longer than the standard exam and will include questions that cover the material from all of the tests they missed *after* their first missed test. A missed test will receive a mark of 0 if there is no MSAF of either kind covering the date of the test.

Attendance Policy:

In-person attendance is required for this course. The timing of when attendance is taken will vary depending on our activities that day, and students must be present when attendance is taken in order to count as present. Each student is allowed three absences before their grade is impacted. After three absences, each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1% penalty to the student's overall grade in the course. Absences after the first three can be excused via MSAF (Self-Report), MSAF (Administrative Report), or contacting the TA to say that you had to be absent for medical reasons (there is no need to provide detail beyond the fact that the reason for your absence was medical) or some other emergency. When an absence is excused, there is no penalty. For extended or frequent excused absences, an MSAF may be required before further absences can be excused.

Note: If you have not yet been absent three times, please do **not** contact the TA about your absence.

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

1. **Textbook:** Please be sure to bring the textbook to class with you each day (unless there is a test).
2. **Technology policy:** Cellular phones, tablets, and laptops may be used during class only for the purposes of taking notes or displaying electronic versions of the textbook. Use for purposes not related to our class can be distracting for others around you.
3. **Office hours and appointments:** All students are welcome to stop by unannounced during the instructor or TA's scheduled office hours. To schedule an appointment to meet with the instructor or TA at a time other than during their scheduled office hours, be sure to contact the instructor or TA at least 24 hours before the time when you wish to meet.
4. **Student Success Centre:** All students are encouraged to utilize the resources available at the [Student Success Centre](#). These services include workshops focused on academic skills such as notetaking and time management, as well as academic coaching (which could be a good place to start if you're not sure which resources you might most benefit from). They also offer some resources specific to [exam preparation and self-care](#) for the end of the term.
5. **Mental health support:** It is common for students to experience mental health difficulties during their time in university, and there are resources available to you for support. The [Student Wellness Centre](#) provides in-person counseling services to students. For 24/7 assistance, students on the MSU insurance plan can contact [We Speak Student](#) (1-877-234-5327). All students can contact [Good2Talk](#) (1-866-925-5454), also available 24/7.

Land Acknowledgement:

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "Dish with One Spoon" wampum agreement.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student.

All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

Students who have concerns about the course content, evaluation methods, or delivery should first reach out to the course instructor. If your concern remains unresolved after speaking with the instructor, you may then reach out to the relevant Area Chair for further consideration.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar [“Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”](#) and the link below*;

<http://ug.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

* Non-Commerce students must follow the Missed Course Work protocols outlined by their home faculty and Program Office.

COURSE MODIFICATION

From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or the delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

GENERATIVE AI

USE PROHIBITED

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with [McMaster academic integrity policy](#), it “shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source”. This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, “Contract Cheating is the act of “outsourcing of student work to third parties” (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment.” Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in IBH 2AE3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**IBH 2AE3
Critical Thinking
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Date	TOPIC	Reading
September 4	Course Introduction	
September 9	Introduction to Paraphrasing	Chapter 1
September 11	Introduction to Paraphrasing (cont'd)	
September 16	Structured Paraphrases	Chapter 2, pp. 35–60
September 18	Structured Paraphrases (cont'd)	
September 23	More Difficult Structured Paraphrases	Chapter 2, p. 61–end
September 25	TEST 1	
September 30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Class does not meet.	
October 2	Schematizing Reasoning	Chapter 3
October 7	Schematizing Reasoning (cont'd)	
October 9	Schematizing Reasoning (cont'd)	
Midterm Recess: October 14–18		
October 21	Argument Analysis	Chapter 4, pp. 143–168
October 23	TEST 2	
October 28	Argument Analysis (cont'd)	Chapter 4, p. 168–end

October 30	Argument Analysis (cont'd)	
November 4	Diagnostic Arguments	Chapter 5, pp. 206–220
November 6	TEST 3	
November 11	Diagnostic Arguments, (cont'd)	Chapter 5, p. 220–end
November 13	Diagnostic Arguments (cont'd)	
November 18	Cause and Correlation	Chapter 6, pp. 259–284
November 20	TEST 4	
November 25	Sampling, Counting, and Circumstantial Evidence	Chapter 6, p. 302–end
November 27	Prediction	Chapter 7, pp. 331–348
December 2	Recommendation	Chapter 7, p. 349–end
December 4	Prediction and Recommendation (cont'd) Reflection paper due (beginning of class)	