

# PAR 110: Introduction to Logic

**Term:** Summer 2023                      **Instructor:** Robert Smithson  
**Time:** Online asynchronous      **Email:** smithsonr@uncw.edu

## Course Description

In ethics, in politics, on the internet, and in daily conversation, in courtroom and in hospitals, when reading the news or when doing scientific research... we are always trying to figure which statements we should believe or not believe. When we ask about whether a certain belief is true, we consider what reasons or evidence can be given in its favor. When studying logic, we are learning how to distinguish good reasons for believing something from bad reasons for believing something. The ability to distinguish good reasons from bad reasons is known as critical reasoning.

Given this description, it is clear that logic and critical reasoning are two of the most important topics for any person (and, in particular, anyone in college) to study. They are also essential for a well-functioning democracy. They are also essential skills for almost any kind of vocation one might pursue after college.

This class is not about learning any facts or information. Instead, it is about improving your ability to think in general: to sift through the complex facts and information you might encounter in any domain.

## Course Goals

There are four main goals for this course:

1. To help students understand the value of logic and critical reasoning.
2. To teach students how to construct maps that represent the structure of an argument found in a speech, piece of writing, etc.
3. To teach students to assess the strength of these arguments.
4. To teach students to develop a "sustained argumentative thread" in the direction of greater depth.

There is also an ancillary goal for the course. Recently, generative AI (e.g., chatGPT, GPT-4) has become widely available. These programs are very useful for practicing critical reasoning. For this reason, the assignments for this course will be based around the use of these programs. So this course will have the following additional goal:

5. To give students practice with using generative AI, especially as a tool in reasoning and argument.

## Course materials and programs

As an online course, all lectures, assignments, etc. will be posted on Canvas. For more information on this, simply click the “Start Here” whenever you first open the course’s Canvas site. Because the course is entirely online, it is especially important that you email me any questions that might come up during the class. This will help ensure that you do not fall behind in the class.

There are no readings or books required for this course. There are, however, two programs that we will use.

1. ***OpenAI: ChatGPT and GPT-4.*** Many of the assignments require the use of artificial intelligence programs available from OpenAI (<https://chat.openai.com/>). Students can complete these assignments with either chatGPT or GPT-4 (which is the updated AI program). To this end, you need to form an account on the OpenAI website. chatGPT is free. For GPT-4, you have to pay \$20 for a month subscription. It does not matter which version you use, although GPT-4 is somewhat better at remaining focused on what you ask it.
2. ***Rationale:*** Some of the assignments for this course are called “argument maps.” Rationale (<https://www.rationaleonline.com/editor/>) is an online program that provides a convenient way to complete argument maps. It costs \$30 for a month subscription (which is what would be required for this course). However, if a student would (understandably) prefer not to pay this fee, they can complete argument maps using Word, Powerpoint, or some like program. Instructions for how to construct argument maps using these various programs are provided in the assignments for the course.

Instructions for how to use these programs are provided in the assignments for the course.

### **Grading**

The students’ entire grade is based on their performance on daily homework assignments.

### **Honor Code**

All students enrolled at UNCW are subject to the UNCW Student Academic Honor Code, which is intended to help every member of the UNCW community appreciate the high value placed on academic integrity and the means that will be employed to ensure its preservation. Students are expected to perpetuate a campus culture in which each student does his or her own work while relying on appropriate resources for assistance. In such a climate, students enjoy a special trust that they are members of a unique community in which one’s thoughts and words are attributed correctly and with proper ownership, and in which there is little need for systems to sanction those who cheat. As such, all UNCW students shall commit to the principles and spirit of the Honor Code by adhering to the following pledge:

As a student at The University of North Carolina Wilmington, I am committed to honesty and truthfulness in academic inquiry and in the pursuit of knowledge. I pledge to uphold and promote the UNCW Student Academic Honor Code.

More information on the Honor Code is available at the following website:

<http://www.uncw.edu/odos/honorcode/>.

Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

1. You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.
2. You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other person's.
3. You get ideas from some other reference material and do not reference that material.
4. Related to (3): you use an AI program such as chatGPT to complete an assignment in a way not specifically requested in the assignment itself.

***Note on the proper use of generative AI:*** As mentioned above, students will use generative AI (like chatGPT) in many of their assignments throughout the course. However, this is not true of ALL assignments (or all parts of assignments). It should be understood that students should NOT generative AI on any assignment except in the ways specifically outlined in the instructions for that assignment. If a student uses generative AI in a place where they are not asked to do so, that counts as plagiarism and is a violation of the Honor Code (see above).

### **Accessibility Services**

It is very important that this classroom be an inclusive environment that meets the learning needs of all of its students. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking, please make sure I have the referral letter no fewer than three days before the test.

### **Title IX Statement**

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962- 2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://uncw.edu/noharm/resources/index.html>.

### **University Learning Center**

The University Learning Center's (ULC) mission is to help students become successful, independent learners. Tutoring at the ULC is NOT remediation: the ULC offers a different

type of learning opportunity for those students who want to increase the quality of their education. ULC services are free to all UNCW students and include the following:

- |Learning Services (University Learning Center) <http://uncw.edu/ulc/learning/>
- Supplemental Instruction <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/si/index.html>
- Writing Services <http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html>

### **Course Schedule**

The entire course schedule, including all assignments, can be found under the “Modules” tab on Canvas. A summary of the assignments is found under the “Syllabus” tab on Canvas. The schedule and the due dates of the assignments are subject to change, depending on the progress of the course.