

Critical Reasoning, PHIL105.004, Spring, 2008

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Study Guide for Midterm Exam - Hi. Next **Wednesday, April 30** is our Midterm. It is a challenging exam, but if you have been reading the material carefully and using the Exercise Sets to develop your skills, you will do fine with some careful preparation using this study guide. I think this study guide tells you everything you'll need to study for the exam. If you have any questions, please let me know. The exam is worth 25% of your grade for this course.

Part 1. Questions – *On the exam there will be five questions from this list to answer in a clear and detailed manner, in at least about eight sentences each, in your own words as much as possible.* (10 points each)

1. Indicate what you see as the main argument made in the “introduction” to the text, (page 5), by expressing it in your own words. Include at least three different premises presented by the author. What are a couple of the foundational assumptions the author is making?

2. Explain as clearly as you can what the difference is between a *convincing* argument and an argument that is merely *persuasive*. How is this difference related to the working definition of critical reasoning on page 9?

3. What are the two meanings of the word “critical” that are central to the meaning of “critical reasoning”?

4. What are the three meanings of the word “reasoning” that are central to the meaning of “critical reasoning”? Define the term “bias” as part of your answer to this question.

5. Define “argument” fully and carefully, and briefly define each of the four main elements of an argument and their relationships to one another.

*6. Explain what logical indicators are, and how they are supposed to work. Then make up your own original example of an argument that has at least one logical indicator in it. Identify the indicator in the argument and tell which type of indicator it is.

7. Explain in your own words what Joel Best sees as “the problem of bad statistics,” and what he takes to be the solution to this problem. What particular facts about statistics does he regard as especially important to consider in assessing arguments based on them?

8. Describe in detail the general approach or mind-set Joel Best recommends we take in relation to statistics. How does this approach differ from the ways he says people commonly approach statistics?

9. Identify clearly and carefully the main characteristics of inductive and deductive arguments based on our discussion of inferences from Chapter 3 of the text.

10. Define “inductive fallacy” and explain the four common ways inductive fallacies occur in a sentence or two each. Think of an original example for one of these four types and identify which type it illustrates.

*11. Identify and explain in at least a couple of sentences each what the three types of statements discussed at the start of Chapter 4 mean and how they work as statements.

12. Explain the three questions to ask in assessing deductive arguments in at least a couple of sentences each.

Part 2.1 Argument Analyses — *On the exam there will be four arguments to analyze by applying the four-step method from chapter 2, as you did in Exercise Set #1: Circle any logical indicators, place the conclusion in brackets, underline the premises, and then write out the question, and at least two foundational assumptions on the lines below each argument.* (32 points)

Part 2.2 Deductive Inference Recognition — *There will be six deductive arguments to match with their valid deductive pattern or deductive fallacy pattern from chapter 4, just as we did with the last part of Exercise Set #2.* (18 points)