Students

This course studies the methods and principles used to distinguish good reasoning from bad, or better from worse. It is a weakness of contemporary culture that ideas are often taken to be matters of opinion only. After all, it is said, nothing can be proven. But it is best to take ideas as matters for rational investigation. Even if an idea is so controversial that we cannot expect agreement, we should nevertheless ask what is most reasonable to believe rather than merely grabbing at whatever seems attractive.

To evaluate an idea therefore, we examine the reasoning behind it. Knowing this, logicians investigate, develop and systematize procedures for determining good and bad reasoning. Truth is discovered by considering the reasons for and against the various alternatives—the correct idea is the one that has the best arguments on its side. Thus students will learn how to recognize, assess and formulate arguments so as to separate truth from falsehood, right from wrong, reasonable from unreasonable.

While the semester does not start until February 9, the Blackboard web site for the course will be available starting January 12. Thus it would be prudent to access the web site (Go to “canyons.edu” and click on the Blackboard tab at the top of the page, then click on the Bb button. Follow the directions to log in, then click on the underlined title of the course, which takes you to the Blackboard Announcements page), read “Orientation” and then follow the directions in “Getting Started.” Namely, thoroughly explore the site and peruse everything: Information (all files) and Documents (all files). Also, get the text as soon as possible and be reading the first chapter when the semester begins. Get a jump on the class now and stay ahead throughout the semester. Contact me with any questions or concerns via Blackboard Messages.

Professor Sanders