

Phil 4110: The Art of Reasoning (Seminar)

Class Number 2102 Section MW11

M, W 11:00am – 12:15pm 3305 Boylan

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Reasoning well is an art that requires cultivation. But what exactly should this art be? What are its aims? What do we hope to learn by reasoning well? What are our actual reasoning powers to pursue those aims? Are we insightful or intelligent enough? Are the things we want to investigate transparent or opaque to our abilities to reason about them? What should be our methods then? Philosophers have proposed several different methods for cultivating and mastering the art of reasoning, depending on their answer to these questions. We will study some of the most important arts for reasoning well that have been proposed since the advent of modern science and philosophy. These may include methods proposed by Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, Antoine Arnauld, Jacob Bernoulli, Isaac Newton, G.W. Leibniz, and John Stuart Mill. The cornerstone of the course will be Charles Peirce's Reasoning and the Logic of Things.

