

PPT 1 skills: The master plan¹

By the end of the semester, you will be able to write a sophisticated paper – one in which you introduce a pressing contemporary problem, reconstruct an argument from a text regarding how to solve that problem, and assess that argument on the basis of interpersonal evidence. This will be an impressive accomplishment!

As stepping stones to this final goal, you will progress through the following sequence of activities:

- Week 1: Identifying evidential and explanatory relationships.
- Week 2: Interpreting metaphors and similes.
- Week 3: Working with inference to the best explanation.
- Week 4: Structuring your ideas across and within paragraphs; peer review exercise for paper 1.

Paper 1: Interpret a central idea from a text, using quotations to support your claims.

- Week 5: Working with argument forms involving *conditionals* (if-then statements).
- Week 6: Developing good objections.
- Week 7: [N/A – LAB week.]
- Week 8: Expressing yourself precisely; offering illuminating explanations; contributing effectively to an academic discussion.
- Week 9: Peer review exercise for paper 2.

Paper 2: Reconstruct an argument from a text, paying special attention to logical form and using quotations to support your claims. Then develop a strong objection to that argument and explain how the argument can best be defended against the objection.

- Week 10: Working with two forms of argument by elimination.
- Week 11: Using quotations.
- Week 12: Writing introductions and conclusions.
- Week 13: Review; using signposts.
- Week 14: Peer review exercise for paper 3.

Paper 3: Introduce a pressing contemporary problem. Then reconstruct an argument regarding how to solve that problem from a text, paying special attention to logical form and using quotations to support your claims. Finally, assess that argument, making sure to support your assessment with interpersonal evidence.

Thus, if you truly invest in this course, by the end of the semester you will have an entirely new toolkit of skills – skills that will make an enormous difference to your daily life.

¹ I owe a large intellectual debt to Jay Garfield for his extensive and thoughtful suggestions on this handout.