Contents

Preface to Instructors (and Curious Students) ix

Introduction: What To Expect 1

PART ONE PHILOSOPHY COURSES 5

1 How To Survive A Philosophy Class 7

Acquiring Informed Opinions 10 Special Features of Philosophy Courses 11 Getting The Most Out of a Philosophy (or Any) Class 12 Deciding What Is Noteworthy 14 Why Attendance Matters 17 Why Ethical Behavior Matters 18

2 Reading Philosophy 21

Healthy Confusion 22 Quick Tips for More Effective Reading 22 Beyond the Textbook 25

PART TWO CRITICAL THINKING, READING, AND WRITING 27

3 Developing A Critical Attitude 29

What Is Uncritical Thinking? 32 What Does Critical Thinking Require? 34 Critical Thinking Practices That Pay Off in the Classroom and Beyond 35 Three Basic Standards of Evidence 40

4 Applying Critical Thinking Skills To Become A Better Reader 43

Use Your Textbook's Organizational Features 44 The Virtues of Annotating and Owning Your Own Text 45 Our Basic Reading Strategy Summarized 47 What to Do If Nothing's Working So Far 48

5 Critical Writing 49

Basic Features of Good Critical Writing 49 Four Great Writing Tips 51 How to Pick a Topic 52 A Quick Guide to Getting Better Grades on Writing Assignments 54 Four Writing Samples for You to Grade 59 A Last Look at the Four Sample Essays 62 Characteristics of Good and Bad Essays 63 A Simplified Style Guide for Excellent Papers 66 A Handy Checklist for Better Critical Writing 71

PART THREE STUDENT WISDOM 73

6 Basic Motivation and Strategy for Getting the Most Out of College 75

Set Realistic Goals 78 **Time Management** 79 Accept What You Can't Change 80 Change What You Can 81 Avoid False Comparisons 82 What It Really Costs to Go to College 83 It's Worth the Effort 86 A Note of Encouragement for Part-time Students 87 Self-Help 89 Avoid the Biggest Mistakes College Students Make 92 Be Cool About Being Cool About School 93

7 Relating To Your Professor 95

Conferences with Your Professor 98 Letters of Recommendation (and Beyond) 99

8 Test Taking 105

Preparing for Tests105Relaxation Techniques for Better Test Scores107How to Do Your Best on Essay Tests108How to Do Your Best on Completion Tests111How to Do Your Best on Objective Tests112How to Do Your Best on Mixed-Question Tests116

Conclusion 117

Beginning Philosopher's Bibliography 119