



DEPAUL

School of Continuing and Professional Studies

Critical Thinking Undergraduate Course Information Guide

Course Number: LL 270- 4 credits, 10 Weeks

Delivery Formats: Online Async, On Campus, Online: Sync

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Course Description

This course aims to a) make students more aware of their own thinking processes; b) help them develop those processes; and c) help them bring those abilities to bear on college-level intellectual activity. This involves an emphasis on the skills and strategies of close reading and analysis as well as practice in the recognition, construction and evaluation of arguments. In pursuing these goals, we touch on principles of logic, styles of persuasion and techniques of propaganda. We also consider ethical problems and approaches as well as some methods of thinking outside the box. The course presents a variety of readings, exercises and projects designed to help students develop their abilities in reflecting on experience, connecting assertions with evidence, engaging the ideas of others and bringing multiple perspectives to bear on complex issues.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify claims and assesses their fit with reasons.
- Distinguish between different kinds of reasons presented to support claims.
- Recognize, construct and make evaluative distinctions among different kinds of arguments.
- Examine a personal experience with critical scrutiny.
- Discuss the roles played by perception, emotion and belief in shaping views.
- Recognize problems and limitations inherent in linguistic discourse.
- Examine the ethical dimensions of a specific issue.

- Appreciate, engage with, and make use of viewpoints other than one's own.

Learning Strategies and Resources

All Lifelong Learning courses offered by the School for Continuing and Professional Studies emphasize overarching skills in three categories: Learning from Experience; Inquiry; and Decision-making. The assignments track with these categories as follows:

- The Personal Narrative emphasizes learning from experience.
- The Argument Analysis paper emphasizes inquiry and decision-making.
- The Exercises and Discussion Forums emphasize inquiry.
- The Play on a Word Project emphasizes all three overarching skills.

Required Readings

You do not have to purchase a textbook for this course. All readings for the course appear in the course itself. These consist of a) the Overview sections which accompany each course module; and b) Ares – Electronic Reserve – readings posted by the DePaul Library that are embedded in each module and which appear under the heading "Additional Required Readings" in the Content for each module.

Learning Deliverables

There are three major writing assignments in the course:

1. a Personal Narrative essay;
2. a two-part project called "Play On A Word"
3. a detailed Argument Analysis paper

In addition, several modules require that you submit a set of written Exercises and 9 of the 10 modules require that you participate in a Discussion Forum. (In Module 1, unlike other modules, you're expected to participate in two Discussions forums.)

Assessment of Student Learning

In assessing your work, your instructor will look for:

- knowledge and comprehension of pertinent concepts, issues and texts
- a scope of discussion that goes beyond what is covered in the texts
- thoughtful engagement with the material, i.e., with questions or conflicts raised or implied by the material
- Evidence of one of these elements equates with a C; evidence of two with a B: and evidence of three with an A.

Distribution of Grade Points

Graded Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade
Personal Narrative Essay	12%
Argument Analysis Paper	16%
Play On A Word project	16%
Exercises	32%
Discussion	24%

Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

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Course Schedule

Week or Module Title or Theme	Readings / Learning Activities	Graded Assignments
Week 1, Module 1: Thinking Critically	Read Introduction & Overview: Thinking Critically Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 52-53 Read Staples, Black Men in Public Spaces	1.1 Introduction Discussion 1.2 Times Bandits? Discussion Begin 2.2 Play on a Word, Part 1

	Read Cisneros, Only Daughter	Begin 3.1 Personal Narrative Essay
Week 2, Module 2: Perceiving; Using Language	Read Introduction & Overview: Perceiving; Using Language Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 132-142; 230-235	2.1 Module 2 Exercise 2.2 Play on a Word, Part 1 Submission Form 2.3 Collateral Damage Discussion
Week 3, Module 3: Believing and Knowing	Read Introduction & Overview: Believing and Knowing Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 178-185 Read O'Harrow, Conspiracy Theory Wins Converts	3.1 Personal Narrative Essay 3.2 O'Harrow Article Discussion Begin 4.2 Play On A Word Definitions
Week 4, Module 4: Reporting, Inferring, Judging, Ethics Matters	Read Introduction & Overview: Reporting, Inferring, Judging Read Chaffee Excerpts, pp. 152-153; pp. 370-393 Read Feakes article Read "Calculating Consequences: The Utilitarian Approach to Ethics" Read Sirotkin, "Kantianism > Utilitarianism"	4.1 Sorting Reports Inferences and Judgments 4.2 Play On A Word definitions collected so far 4.3 "Those Who Walk Away From Omelas" Discussion
Week 5, Module 5: Reasoning Deductively	Read Introduction & Overview: Reasoning Deductively Read O'Reilly, Kevin, ed., "Was the United States Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs on Japan?" Read Jefferson, Declaration of Independence	5.1 Exercise 5: Deductive Reasoning 5.2 Dropping Atom Bombs Discussion

Week 6, Module 6: Reasoning Inductively	Read Introduction & Overview: Reasoning Inductively Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 456-457 Optional: Read Tidwell, The Intoxicating Birds of New Guinea	6.1 Inductive Reasoning Exercise 6.2 Reactions to Crime Discussion 6.3 Play on a Word, Part 1: All Definitions Collected
Week 7, Module 7: Fallacies and Appeals to Emotion, and Argument by Analogy	Read Introduction & Overview: Fallacies and Appeals to Emotion, and Argument by Analogy Read Vidal, Drugs Read Rosenthal, The Case for Slavery	7.1 Module 7 Exercises 7.2 Rock Music and Suicide Discussion 7.3 Cast of Characters for Play on a Word, Part 2
Week 8, Module 8: Going Beyond the Given	Read Introduction & Overview: Going Beyond the Given Read de Bono, "Vertical and Lateral Thinking"	8.1 Play on a Word, Part 2
Week 9, Module 9: Rhetoric and Persuasion	Read Introduction & Overview: Rhetoric and Persuasion Read Pratkanis and Aronson, Our Age of Propaganda Read Annotated versions of Vidal, "Drugs" & Rosenthal, "The Case for Slavery" Read Erikson, "Of Accidental Judgments and Casual Slaughters"	9.1 Persuasion vs. Propaganda Discussion 9.2 Study Questions about Erikson
Week 10, Module 10: Questioning Authority	Read Sabini and Silver, "Critical Thinking and Obedience to Authority" Read Perkinson, "The Educated Person: A Changing Ideal"	10.1 Argument Analysis Paper 10.2 Milgram Experiment Discussion

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Course Policies

For access to all SCPS and DePaul University academic policies, refer to the following links:

[SCPS Student Resources Website](#)

[DePaul Student Handbook](#)

The [D2L Course Website](#) for this course.

Course Syllabus

The official syllabus for this course that includes course dates, instructor information and quarter specific details will be provided by the course instructor by the start of the course and available on the course D2L website.

Course Registration

To find out when this course will be offered next, you can go to the [SCPS Registration website](#) for details on how to register for the course.

For information on how this course can apply to your program, contact your academic advisor.

This document was updated 3-4-26.

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