

LL 155 Critical Thinking Summer Quarter, 2005

Faculty: David Morris; 773-290-8155; dmorris@condor.depaul.edu
Location: O'Hare Campus
Hours: Quarter Hours: 4 hours

Note Regarding Schedule

The class meets on Mondays at 6:30, beginning June 13. However, because the July 4 holiday falls on a Monday, I have tentatively scheduled class that week for Tuesday, July 5 at 6:30.

Competencies Offered:

L-5 Can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking.

Required Text

We will not be using a formal text. Rather, we will rely on handouts and downloaded readings, which you can find on BlackBoard. I highly recommend purchasing a binder to maintain and organize your documents.

BlackBoard

Because I will be communicating with you electronically via BlackBoard, it is imperative that you ensure that the e-mail address DePaul has for you is current. Please take a look on CampusConnect to make sure that your e-mail address is current.

Course Description

We will focus on identifying and developing critical thinking skills related to logic, argumentation, and accurate analysis of information. Such skills involve the capacity to reason and the ability to evaluate our thinking as well as that of others. For our purposes, they also involve active reflection of our thought processes, active listening skills, engaging in intellectual discourse, and valuing a diversity of thinking while pursuing truth. Lifelong growth in these areas provides students with a greater capacity to engage intellectually with ideas, share their thinking with others, and more effectively engage in social discourse regarding important social/ethical issues and family concerns. In addition, accurate assessment of the increasing flow of information available, particularly on the Internet, requires developing effective ways to judge the reliability and implications of that information.

Attendance

More than one absence may adversely affect your ability to pass this course. To make up for the absence, students will be required to write a brief response to an additional reading assignment. Please see me with respect to any situation that threatens your attendance or performance in this class. Late assignments will be accepted after the due date on *rare occasions* and *only with a valid reason*.

Expected Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Identify the issue, point, and the support for that point.
- (2) Identify underlying assumptions.
- (3) Understand different reasoning patterns.
- (4) Use data and information accurately and responsibly.
- (5) Recognize and apply different methods of argumentative validation.
- (6) Create an effective argument.

Learning Strategies

Exercises will be performed individually, in small groups, and by the class as a whole. Discussions and exercises may be integrated with reading and writing homework assignments. Your active, reflective, open-minded, and objectively-oriented participation will be an important component of the class. During the first part of the course, we will focus primarily on analyzing articles from downloaded documents, daily

newspapers, and various periodicals, with eye toward understanding logic, argumentative structure, and the accurate use of information. During the second part, students will write a series of position papers, which, in turn, set the stage for writing a *final persuasive paper*. A selection of videotapes may also be shown during the latter part of the class.

Evaluation

This is a PASS/FAIL course, and each assignment will be so graded. Students will be evaluated based on their conscious attention to the development of their critical thinking abilities and skills, as evidenced by:

1. Thoughtful and active participation
2. Completion of all written assignments
3. Posting certain assignments on BlackBoard as instructed
4. Completion of one eight-page multi-draft persuasive paper

Note: All written assignments will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Cohesiveness, structure and organization, and soundness
2. Quality of thought and attention to detail

Class Participation

Your success in this class will depend on your active, committed, open-minded participation. Many assignments are collaborative. As a result, a lack of preparedness not only diminishes your learning experience, but may also diminish the learning experiences of your group members. Consistent lack of preparation may result in failing this class.

Weekly Blackboard Postings

In order to record your impressions and develop your ideas about the essays you read, as well as encourage discussion, you will post responses to many of the readings on our Blackboard site.

Responses will generally take the following forms: a summary (one to two paragraphs), a pro/con position (two paragraphs), or a position paper (one to two pages). All assignments should follow the organizational pattern set forth in class.

Postings are due by 3 p.m. on the day before the readings are discussed in class. You will receive credit for the smaller assignments simply by completing them. However, these assignments will help you develop the skills necessary for the larger essays, and should therefore be taken very seriously. Credit for larger assignments, such as the position papers and final persuasive essay, will be given on the basis of their sense of structure and organization, logical soundness, quality of thought, and attention to detail.

Plagiarism

For the University's policy on plagiarism, see the "Academic Integrity Policy" in the *Student Handbook*, <<http://condor.depaul.edu/~handbook/code17.html>>.

Topics and Framework

Week 1: 06/13/05

Introductions: Class overview and expectations: General discussion – introduction to argument: Purpose of persuasion: Introduction to elements that contribute to formation of opinions and positions.

Assignment: Introduction to Fallacious Appeals
Editorial write-up

Week 2: 06/20/05

Lecture/discussion – Fallacious Appeals: Class exercises.

Assignment: Causation/Analogy/Statistics
Editorial write-up

Week 3: 06/27/05

Lecture/discussion – Causation/Analogy/Statistics, cont'd.: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning: Group assignment.

Assignment: Analyzing Advertisements and Other Forms of Persuasion

Week 4: 07/05/05*

Discussion—advertisements and other forms of persuasion: Group assignment: Writing paragraphs.

Assignment: “Responses to Physician-Assisted Suicide”: BlackBoard posting (pro and con paragraphs)

Week 5: 07/11/05

Discussion—Physician-Assisted Suicide: Group assignment.

Assignment: “Sexual Harassment: Defining the Boundaries”: BlackBoard posting (pro and con)

Week 6: 07/18/05

Discussion—sexual harassment: The Persuasive/Argumentative Essay – Introduction: Group assignment.

Assignment: “Gun Control: Triggering a National Controversy”; BlackBoard posting (position paper): “The Communist Manifesto”

Week 7: 08/25/05

Discussion—Gun Control: The Persuasive/Argumentative Essay - thesis and paragraph structure.

Assignment: “Same-Gender Marriage: What is a Family?": Marx, “The Communist Manifesto”: BlackBoard posting (pro and con)

Week 8: 08/01/05

Outline due: Discussion—Same Gender Marriage: Group exercise—application of logical techniques to final essay.

Assignment: Hitler, “The Purpose of Propaganda” and Machiavelli, “Should Princes Tell the Truth?": BlackBoard posting (reflection)

Week 9: 08/08/05

Individual Meetings: Rough Draft Due.

Week 10: 08/15/05

Evaluations: Video(s): Discussion.

Final Paper Due: Sunday, August 21, by 5:00 p.m.

*Monday, July 4, is a holiday.