

SNL BA Syllabus (Updated 4/01/09)

School for New Learning DePaul University Course Syllabus: Critical Thinking (Summer, 2009)

1. General Information

Faculty: Lori Neblung
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312.476.4528 (anytime)
708-788-5076 (Mon-Fri, 8-5)
Office Hours available upon request, typically Mondays, Thursdays and some Saturdays

Location: Naperville, Room 228??

Dates/Time: Monday, 6/15/09-8/17/09
Class will meet from 6:30-9:30pm

Credit Hours: 4 credit hours

2. Course Description

This course aims to (a) make students aware of their own thinking processes (b) help them develop those processes; and (c) help them bring those processes to bear on college-level intellectual activity. These aims emphasize the skills and strategies of critical thinking and reading, as well as practice in the recognition, construction, and evaluation of arguments. Bottom line, we will continuously unravel the questions, "What do we know?" and "How do we know it?"

In pursuing these goals, we encounter principles of logic, strategies of persuasion, and techniques of propaganda. The course presents a variety of readings, exercises, and projects designed to help students develop competence in the following areas: identifying assumptions, connecting assertions to evidence, stating generalizations, analyzing arguments, and bringing multiple perspectives to bear on complex issues and questions. We are particularly interested in the development of reasoning skills across historical time, and on the shaping force of ancient Greek culture on our ways of thinking.

Faculty Biographical Sketch

Lori Neblung received her Bachelor of Arts from DePaul University and her Master of Liberal Arts degree from The University of Chicago. In her career, she has worked in the area of learning and development with companies such as Thomson NETg, Albertsons, Osco Drug, Baxter Healthcare, Motorola, National-Louis University, C.N.A Insurance, Hewitt Associates, DeVry University to enable these strategic clients to effectively and efficiently integrate learning programs into their organization.

She has over 25 years of corporate management experience. She has extensive professional experience in relationship management, internal and external business consulting, and development of training materials and processes across various industries. She has additional skills in business acumen, project management, communications, and problem solving.

3. Competencies –

Competence Statement & Criteria for Assessment:

(L5): **Can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking.**

1. Analyzes, critiques, and evaluates different forms of thinking and reasoned discourse;
2. Constructs well-reasoned arguments in the context of real-life experiences and issues.

4. Learning Experience – The course design brings together a number of different learning activities in the pursuit of evidence for the L5 competence: textual analysis (written and oral), argument-development, collaborative critical reading, journal writing, oral presentation, dialogue, and debate. These activities for learning are the foundation of all required assignments, and reflect the formal specifications of the L5 assessment criteria.

Evidence of Learning

- Analysis of text (written and oral)
- Structured journal writing MAPs(5 assignments)
- Dialogue (classroom discussion and written activity)
- Other classroom exercises and written assignments (IE: BlackBoard)

REQUIRED INTERNET ACCESS

So that students have an opportunity to adjust to the DePaul BlackBoard system, we will be using the BlackBoard for course documents, assignments, and handouts. You will learn to use the Blackboard system in this class. Thus reliable and consistent internet access, and ability to use email, will be necessary for all students.

Required readings (please purchase):

There are two required texts to purchase for the *Critical Thinking* course:

1. Tarnas, Richard. 1991.
The Passion of the Western Mind.
Harmony Books, Crown Pub. 0-345-368-096.
2. Feldman, Richard. 1998.
Reason & Argument (2nd ed.)
Prentice-Hall, NJ. 0-13-624-602-8.

Additional Readings Required (The text to Plato's dialogues can be found online as digital text, as individual books on each dialogue, or in a thorough Plato collection such as Edith Hamilton's)

3. From the *Dialogues of Plato*:
 - a. Euthyphro
 - b. Phaedrus

You may purchase these through the DePaul Bookstore (Barnes & Noble) OR locate them through another vendor. (Amazon.com or half.com, for instance, offer low-cost used copies.) **I will also have translations available for you via BlackBoard.**

Required Materials

1. Purchase a three-ring binder to hold your "CT Journal" pages, homework and handouts.
2. Identify a *New York Times* vendor, and plan to purchase the paper at least once per week.
3. Purchase, or make certain you own, a good dictionary (rec: American Heritage or Oxford).

Attendance and Participation:

Students must attend all class sessions. Missing two (2) sessions will make it difficult for you to pass the course. Missing three (3) sessions results in the grade of "F." If you need to miss class, all work due at that time must be sent to me prior to the end of the class session or it will not be accepted. I will make exceptions to this only for illness and serious personal matters. You have my phone number and email for being in communication.

Please arrive on time, remain for the entire class period, and disable all cell phones and other such equipment while you are in the room. Cell phone usage and texting will not be tolerated in class.

If someone needs to contact you for a serious reason while you are in class, he or she may phone the campus front desk (312/476-4500) and a staff member will bring you the message.

IF YOU MISS THE FIRST CLASS AND DO NOT CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR BEFORE CLASS OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER CLASS-- YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DROP THE CLASS

Attendance and participation are essential. In the event of an absence it is imperative that you (1) let me know ahead of time, and (2) contact a classmate ahead of time to be your "tutor" for the missed session. Always consult our Blackboard for handouts and assignments. Students missing more than two classes of our ten week course will not have met the requirements for a passing grade.

5. Evidence the Students will Submit –

- There are five (5) structured journal assignments worth 10 points each, using the course metaphor of a MAP (Meaning/Awareness/Precision). This will be discussed in class the first evening;

- A quarter-long exercise called “Play on a Word” will be discussed on the first night of class. This will be due at the end of the quarter and will be worth 25 points.
- All students will submit an organized portfolio/notebook containing all work from the class. This notebook will be worth 15 points and will be assessed with a rubric to be shared with students;
- There will be several other miscellaneous assignments worth 5 points each;
- Attendance will be worth 50 points, or 5 points for each of the 10 sessions.

6. Criteria for Assessment –

Grading Basis: Pass/Fail or Letter Grade Option

It is assumed students will take SNL’s Critical Thinking course on a Pass/Fail grading basis (i.e., PA or F). If you are enrolled in the course then the grade roster already lists you as taking the course on the Pass/Fail basis. Most of the courses in SNL’s Lifelong Learning Area are set up this way. However, if you like, you may elect to take Critical Thinking for a letter grade (i.e., A, B, C, D or F) instead. If you’re interested in taking the course for a letter grade, you should discuss the matter with your instructor. (You want to choose the option that’s best for you.) *If you wish to take the course for a letter grade, you must notify the instructor of your wish to do so by the start of Week 3 of the quarter.*

You should be aware that if you choose the letter grade option in this course, then the grade you receive (whether A, B, C, D or F) will impact your grade point average in the standard weighted fashion. On the other hand, if you take the course on the Pass/Fail basis and you receive a Pass grade, then there is no impact on your grade point average. Finally, if you take the course on the Pass/Fail basis and receive a Fail grade, then you receive negative credit.

Meaning of Pass/Fail and Letter Grades

Each of the major assignments in the course has its own mini-rubric for assigning points. Speaking generally though, the following descriptions apply:

Work assessed as A or High Pass with high marks is characterized by *thorough and thoughtful engagement* with the material, superior comprehension of key concepts and exceptionally fluent, college-level writing. Work that is “thoughtfully engaged” covers the basics but goes beyond them by a) drawing insightful connections; b) raising incisive questions; and c) making well-supported evaluations, inferences or arguments.

Work assessed as B or Pass with good marks is characterized by *thorough engagement* with the material, good comprehension of key concepts and fully fluent, college-level writing. Work that is “thoroughly engaged” covers the basics and applies them aptly and consistently while providing the occasional provocative connection, relevant question or well-supported evaluation.

Work assessed as C or Low Pass with adequate marks is characterized by *engagement* with the material, comprehension of key concepts and mostly fluent, college-level

writing. Work that is "engaged" covers the basics and applies them aptly without going beyond them.

Work assessed as D or Provisional Fail with mostly low marks is characterized by *low engagement* with the material, comprehension of few key concepts and writing that is intermittently fluent. Work that is "lowly engaged" occasionally covers the basics and attempts to apply them with limited success.

Work assessed as F or Fail with overall low marks is characterized by *poor engagement* with the material, incomprehension of key concepts and writing that lacks fluency. Work that is "poorly engaged" covers few or no basics and attempts to apply them without success.

Unfinished work or work requiring revision will be given an Incomplete (IN) grade. In order to qualify for the IN, students must have regularly attended class, and must have completed three-fourths of assignments.

*In order for a student to have an incomplete (IN) grade granted in this course, there must be a significant extenuating circumstance evidenced by the student (e.g., medical and/or significant personal issues). **The student will need to initiate and file an SNL Incomplete grade contract before the final session of the course to receive an incomplete grade.** Students are strongly advised to review the university deadlines for withdrawal without tuition refund and the implications for financial aid and grades.*

Points for grading are as follows:

Attendance: 5 points x 10 sessions=	50 points
Journals: 10 points x 5 journals =	50 points
Play on a Word:	= 25 points
Notebook:	= 15 points
Misc. exercises	= 10 points

150 points total

(Any assignment that is turned in late will automatically be assessed a 20% reduction in points, or a low pass.)

A= 136-150 points

B= 121-135 points

C= 106-120 points

D= 91-105 points

F= 90 points or less

Date	Wk #	<i>Class Subject/Learning Activity</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
6/15	1	Course overview Key course questions and definitions Part 1 of Play on a Word explained and assigned	Nothing due for first night. Be sure you have your books!
6/22	2	The Context of Reason Belief and disbelief Argument: Definitions and Structure	>Read Feldman, Ch. 1-2 >Chapter exercises as assigned >Journal Assignment #1 >"Play on a Word" posting to BB
6/29	3	The Context and History of Reason Belief Principles and Perception	>Tarnas, Pt. I "The Greek Worldview"
7/6	4	Approaching the Dialogues Plato's "Euthyphro"	>Journal #2 >Read "Euthyphro"
7/13	5	Argument: Analysis, validity, cogency and reconstruction	>Read Feldman, Ch. 3-4 >Chapter exercises as assigned >Read Tarnas part II "Transformation of Classical Era"
7/20	6	Argument: Expanding Reconstruction Play on a Word part II explained	>Journal #3 >Read Feldman, Ch. 5 >Chapter exercises as assigned
7/27	7	Elements of Critical Analysis/Evaluation (Vague and incomplete arguments)	>Read Feldman, Ch. 7 >Chapter exercises as assigned >Read Tarnas part V" The Modern Worldview" >Journal #4
8/3	8	Elements of Critical Analysis Statistical Arguments	>Read Feldman, Ch. 9 >Chapter exercises as assigned >BB assignment by Saturday noon
8/10	9	Engaging the Dialogues Plato's "Phaedrus"	>Tarnas part VI "Trans. Of Modern Era" >Read Phaedrus >Journal #5
8/17	10	Moral Argument Analysis Summary & Assessment Great Debaters	>Read Feldman, Ch. 11 >Chapter Exercises, as assigned >Play on a Word final project due >ALL NOTEBOOKS ARE DUE WITH ALL ASSIGNMENTS INTACT!!

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials

and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

- PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

Chronic Illness Initiative

The Chronic Illness Initiative (CII) provides access to higher education for students disabled by chronic illnesses that unpredictably increase and decrease in severity such as chronic fatigue syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or illnesses requiring frequent hospitalizations. At SNL, staff and faculty are compassionate and committed to helping CII students achieve their educational goals. Contact CII at CII@depaul.edu.

Writing Help

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much more, see the [Writing Guide for SNL Students](http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html) at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the [DePaul University Writing Centers](http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/) at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>.

The Writing Center

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are *free*.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email. Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. Bring your assignment handout and other relevant materials to your appointments.

Quick Links & Locations:

- To schedule an appointment at the Center's LPC and Loop locations: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/WCOnline.html>
- To schedule Real-time conversations with IM and/or webcam: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/im.htm>
- To request Feedback by Email: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/email.html>
 Loop Campus Office: 1620 Lewis Center, 312.362.6726
 Lincoln Park Office: 250 McGaw, 773.325.4272
 For more information, visit: <http://www.depaul.edu/writing/>