

DePaul University
School for New Learning

Syllabus
LL 155 Critical Thinking

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Day/Time: Thursday/Evening

Location: TBA
Credit Hours: 4

(This syllabus is based upon and adheres to closely to the one developed by Professor John Kimsey.)

Competencies Offered:

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

Course Description:

This course aims to focus the students on approaches to college-level intellectual “work,” and enable them to use those approaches in the classroom and beyond. It will introduce them to a number of skills and methods used in critical thinking. The students should become familiar with principals of logic and persuasive techniques to enable them to determine the premises of an argument and to discern the difference between valid and invalid arguments. They will develop the ability to recognize and respond to generalizations and the evidence for those generalizations. In other words they will be able to recognize and then employ a variety of reasoned approaches in formulating their own arguments.

Faculty Biography:

Mike Perkovich received his PhD in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago. His specialty is Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Literature, with additional teaching and writing interests in International Modernism, Gender Studies, and Popular Culture.

Criteria for demonstration of competence:

There are four major pieces of work in the course.

A Personal Narrative essay.

A set of take-home exercises on Induction, Deduction, and Propaganda Devices.

An argument analysis.

A quarter-long project called “A Play on a Word.” This assignment will be explained in class.

Expected Outcomes:

By the end of term students should be able to

1-Be able to distinguish among different kinds of reasons adduced to support claims.

2-Be able to distinguish between reports, inferences and judgments.

3-Be able to identify common rhetorical strategies, propaganda devices and logical fallacies.

4-Be able to recognize, construct and make distinctions among different kinds of arguments

5-Be able to examine experience(s) with critical scrutiny.

6-Be able to recognize and discuss the roles played by perception, emotion and previously held beliefs in shaping views and responses.

7-Be able to appreciate, engage with, and make use of new viewpoints.

Learning Tools:

Required Texts:

--Chaffee, John. *Thinking Critically*. 9th edition. Houghton Mifflin, 2009. ISBN 061894791

--A **college** dictionary. No particular edition, as I would prefer to have several different dictionaries. You will need to bring these to class at least once, however, for an in-class exercise.

Additional materials will be made available through the E-reserves services of the DePaul Library.

Learning Strategies:

We will employ several strategies, including textbook reading, class discussions, informal lectures, individual and group exercises, dialogues and papers.

Grading Basis: Pass/Fail or Letter Grade Option

It is assumed that the student will take SNL's Critical Thinking course on a Pass/Fail basis (PA or F). If you are enrolled in the course the grade roster already lists you as taking the course on a Pass/Fail basis. Most of the courses in SNL's Lifelong Learning Area are set up this way. If you like, however, you can take Critical Thinking for a letter grade (A,B,C,D, or F) instead. If the letter grade option is your choice, however, discuss the matter with your instructor and notify her or him by the start of Week 3 of the quarter.

You should be aware that if you choose the letter grade option, then the grade you receive will impact your grade point average in the standard fashion. If you take the course on a Pass/Fail basis and you receive a Pass, there is no impact on your GPA. If you take the course on a Pass/Fail basis and receive a Fail grade, you will receive negative credit.

Meaning of Pass/Fail and Letter Grades:

Each of the major assignments has its own rubric for assigning points. Generally speaking, however, the following descriptions of assessment obtain:

Work assessed as A or Pass with high marks is characterized by a thorough and thoughtful engagement with the material, superior comprehension and fluent college level writing. By "thoughtful engagement" we mean work that goes well beyond the basics and draws insightful connections and raises provocative questions while making well-supported arguments and evaluations.

Work assessed as B or Pass with good marks is work that's thoroughly engages with the assignment, good comprehension of the key concepts and fluent college-level writing while covering the basics and going somewhat beyond them.

Work assessed as C or Pass with adequate marks displays a comprehension of the assignment engages with the assignment and covers the basics but does not go beyond them. The writing is for the most part college-level but is not as fluent as the A and B papers.

Work assessed as D or Pass with mostly low marks displays low engagement with the assignment, low comprehension of key concepts and writing that falls short of fluency.

Work assessed as F or Pass with overall low marks is characterized by poor engagement with the material, displays little comprehension of the key concepts and writing that lacks fluency.

Papers with D or F grades or a low or poor engagement assessment may be rewritten one time and returned by the next class session and will be reassessed.

Points

The course assignments are given point values as follows, with the total Possible points being 100:

Personal Narrative	15 points
Exercises	35 points
Argument Analysis	25 points
Play on a Word	25 points

All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.

Grading Scale

91 – 100	A or Pass with high marks
81 – 90	B or Pass with good marks
71 – 80	C or Pass with adequate marks
61 – 70	D or Fail with mostly low marks
60 or less	F or Fail with overall low marks

Policy on Academic Integrity:

All work done for this course must observe the Guidelines for Academic Integrity as outlined in the *Code of Student Responsibility* (in the *DePaul Student Handbook*). For the code's Plagiarism Policy, see the attachment at the end of this syllabus.

Policy on Incompletes:

See attachment at end of syllabus.

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments:

(Note: (E) means that the item is available on E-reserve and the DePaul Library website, at <http://library.depaul.edu>. When you get to the DePaul Library page, click on “Course Reserves”. Then type “Perkovich” into the Search window and when the Perkovich page appears, click on the **Critical Thinking** course. The password is LL155.

Week One: (6/8)

Introduction to the course.

Nacirema exercise

Cultural myths and critical thinking

The power of stereotypes

Readings: Burke, Kenneth: “Orientation,” from *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*. (E)

Newspaper editorial of your choice.

Personal narrative essay assigned.

Play on a Word (Part One) assigned and explained.

Week Two (6/25)

Perceiving, Believing, Knowing, Inferring

Perception exercise

Discussion of Chaffee readings.

Play On A Word topic Choices discussed.

Readings: Chaffee, Chapter 4, “Perceiving and Believing,” 117-124, 135-148

Chaffee, Chapter 5, “Constructing Knowledge,” 164-177, 187-189

Week Three (7/2)

Rhetoric and Argumentation

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

Take-Home exercises on Induction, Deduction, and Propaganda Devices

Personal Narrative essay due.

Readings: Chaffee, Chapter 10, “Constructing Arguments.”

Week Four (7/9)

Logic and Rationalism

Plato’s Psychology—Its strengths and problems

Common Propaganda Devices and Logical Fallacies

Readings: Chaffee, Chapter 11, “Reasoning Critically.”

Lavine: “The Tripartite Soul.” (E)

Pratkanis and Aronson, “Our Age of Propaganda.” (E)

Week Five (7/16)

Reasoning about an issue and opposing perspectives.

Moral reasoning

Sherman Alexie handout

Play on a Word Part 1 due

Argument Analysis Paper Assigned

Readings: Chaffee 192-202, 307-329

Week Six (7/23)

Rhetorical Analysis: Close reading for content (How); Close reading for rhetorical purpose (How). Opposing Perspectives on a controversial topic—Vidal and Rosenthal; Armentano and DuPont.

Part 2 of Play on a Word introduced

Readings: DeBenedictis, “Parents: It’s OK to Limit Viewing” (E)

Vidal, “Drugs.” (E)

Rosenthal, “The Case for Slavery.” (E)

Week Seven (7/30)

Nets of Language

Language, Perspective and Framing: 4 accounts of the assassination of Malcom X.

Dictionary exercise in class

Discussion of Orwell on political language: is it relevant today?

Discussion of take-home exercises.

Argument Analysis due.

Week Eight (8/6)

In-class work in teams: Debate exercise, based on discussion of your returned Argument Analysis papers. In-class writing: Has discussion changed my analysis? Why or why not?

Week Nine (8/8/13)

Defining concepts. How does precise definition enable useful exploration of concepts? How does a dialogue assist in these endeavors?

Readings: Chaffee, Chapter 7, “Forming and Applying Concepts.”

Week 10 (8/20)

What Have We Learned?

Play On a Word due.

