

Critical Thinking (L5) Fall 2009

DePaul University, School for New Learning
(Wednesdays) Naperville Campus
6:30-9:30pm

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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.

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.

Credit Hours: 4

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.

Learning Activities & Outcomes:

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.

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* (see, [DePaul Student Handbook](#)). Plagiarism of others’ words or ideas, or other violations of the integrity code, will result in the grade of “F” for the course, and possible expulsion from the University.

Grading & Assessment:

This competence is graded Pass/Fail. All student work merits the instructor's narrative feedback and one of the following grades: *HighPass/Pass/LowPass/Provisional Pass/ Fail*. All work handed-in after the due date receives the grade *Low Pass*. These specifications of the "Pass" grade give students a clear sense of how well they are developing the elements of competence in critical thinking.

We might say (with apologies to George Orwell) "Everyone passes, but some pass more than others."

Attendance & Communications Policy

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.

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. This class meets in Room ___ of the Naperville Campus. 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.

Vincentian Principles Governing the Teacher-Student Relationship

This course, and its learning activities and requirements, are designed to reflect the four recognized bases of Vincentian personalism: empathy, clarity, integrity, and flexibility. I invite dialogue around these qualities at any time during the quarter.

Books for the Course

There are three required texts 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.
3. Lewis, C. S. 1949/2001.
The Weight of Glory.
HarperSanFrancisco. 0-06-065320-5.
2. Purchase a three-ring binder (or a clip binder) to hold your "CT Journal" pages.
3. Purchase, or make certain you own, a good dictionary (rec: American Heritage or Oxford).
4. Identify a *New York Times* vendor, and plan to purchase the

paper at least once per week.

C L A S S S C H E D U L E
REVISED

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Subject/Learning Activity</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Session 1	<i>Course Overview</i> <i>Key Course Questions and Definitions</i>	----
Session 2	<i>The Context of Reason</i> <i>Argument: Definition(s) and Structure</i>	*Feldman, ch. 1 & 2 *Chapter Exercises p. 21 *Homework Assignment #1
Session 3	<i>The Context of Reason</i> <i>Argument Analysis</i>	*Tarnas, Pt. I “The Greek Worldview” *Lewis: “Why I am Not a Pacifist”
Session 4	<i>The Great Ideas of Philosophy & Well-Formed Arguments & Strong Arguments</i>	* Due: Homework #2 *Read: Feldman Chpts 3 & 4
Session 5	<i>The Method of Argument Analysis</i>	*Read: Feldman, Chpts 5 & 6 *Due: Chpt. Exercises” p. 92-110 *Read: Tarnas, Pt. II “Transf’n. of Classical Era”

Session 6 *Evaluating Arguments: Basic Rules* *Read: Feldman Chpt. 7
*Due: Homework Assign't #3

Session 7 *Argument Analysis Applications* *Read: Feldman, Chpts. 8 & 9
*Due: Chapter Exercises,
p. 214-215

*Tarnas, Pt. V "The Modern
Worldview"

*Topic for final paper
approval due

Session 8 *Causal Arguments* *Read: Feldman, Chpt. 10
NO CLASS *Due: Homework Assign't #4
LIBRARY NIGHT FOR PAPER (EMAIL HOMEWORK BY
9pm)

Session 9 *Moral Arguments* *Read: Tarnas, Pt. VI:
"Transf. of Modern Era"

Session 10 *Moral Arguments Con't* *Lewis, "Learning in
War-Time"
*Feldman, Chpt. 12
*Due: Chpt. Exercises, p. 368

**ALL Homework
Assignments DUE &
FINAL PAPER DUE**

Session 11 No Class *Due: All rewrites by 9:30pm
& Journal Assignment #5 via email