

DePaul University
School for New Learning
LL 155 Critical Thinking Tuesday 6:00-9:00
Winter Quarter 2008-2009

Loop Campus

This class consists of 11 class sessions meeting from January 6, 2009 to March 17, 2009.

Dr. Rita Thomson

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Course Description: Students will learn the analytical reasoning skills necessary for college work. They will learn decision making skills, discussing and writing about ideas in an organized way, and problem solving techniques. They will learn to think critically about subjectivity and belief systems. They will learn different structures of arguments and logical fallacies. They will refine these skills by writing papers which demonstrate these abilities.

Competencies:

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

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

Students demonstrate this competence by applying the elements of reasoning and critical thinking. Students will be able to critique as well as construct arguments by analyzing and creating claims, appropriate reasons, and rebuttals. Students will also analyze the audience and address a variety of points of view. Students may demonstrate this competence through the Critical Thinking course or the Writing/Reasoning/Proficiency Exam. SNL will not accept transfer courses as fulfillment of this competence. Students should continue to develop their critical thinking skills throughout the program.

Attendance: Since the class meets only once a week for 11 weeks, missing even one class is a serious matter. More than one absence would certainly be grounds for failure. Students must arrive on time and stay until the end of class. Students who arrive late or leave early will find that their attendance is marked accordingly. Assignments are to be turned in on time.

Biographical Sketch: Dr. Rita Thomson has a Ph.D. in literature from Loyola University with a specialty in women's literature and psychoanalytical criticism. She teaches College Writing and Critical Thinking at DePaul University. Previously, she taught for many years at Truman College.

Learning Experience: The class will demand careful reading of the text, many short homework writing assignments, short in-class writing assignments, small group discussions and reports, and two short fully documented papers.

Texts: Chaffee, John. *Thinking Critically*. 9th Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2009. ISBN -13: 978-0-618-94719-5 and ISBN-10: 0-618-94719-1.

Students may also need to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a good grammar handbook. There are many acceptable versions of these standard books.

Grading and Assessment:

All students must be registered and listed on the class roster by the beginning of the second week of the term. Students not on the roster by this time cannot stay in the class under any circumstances. Please contact the SNL Advising Center or the Office of Financial Aid to work out your particular situation.

Students who need to withdraw from the course must do so by the end of the second week of the quarter. After that point 100% tuition is charged. It is possible to withdraw from a course or competence through the end of the seventh week of the quarter, but there is no tuition refund after the end of the second week.

In certain circumstances (such as illness, death of family members, natural disasters, etc.) a later withdrawal will be refunded tuition. These circumstances must be documented, and presented to the University through the SNL Exceptions Committee. In no case is such a refund allowed more than once during a student's career at DePaul.

It is assumed students will take SNL's Critical Thinking course on a Pass/Fail 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 are 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 in the Pass/Fail basis and receive a Fail grade, then you receive negative credit.

Criteria for Assessment:

Evidence Students will submit: Students will submit 2 (short) major papers and a series of in-class assignments and homework assignments as evidence of their learning.

Assignments: Students will have many reading assignments in *Thinking Critically* which provide a lot of information about the process of critical thinking. Many classes will include a short writing assignment analyzing, evaluating, and reacting to the readings, learning games, analysis of videos, and group work. There will be 2 major writing assignments during the course of the semester. Special instructions for the papers will be given in class. The text suggests “Thinking Activities” to guide students towards a mastery of concepts. Usually, one of these exercises, demanding one or two paragraph answers, will be assigned for homework. The major writing assignments will count for 30% of the class grade. 70% of the class grade will be based on in-class assignments, homework, and participation in such activities as discussions and group activities.

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 at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the DePaul University Writing Center at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>. The Writing Centers’ syllabus supplement is available at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/fac/supplements.html>.

Class Schedule:

Chaffee’s text provides an enormous amount of material. It would be wonderful to read the entire text, but, given time constraints, we will read parts of each assigned chapter and summarize other parts, discussing the concepts. Your own curiosity will guide you to read more of the text, as you recognize the importance of these ideas.

Specific page numbers for the chapter reading assignments and specific critical thinking activities for each chapter will be listed on the class blackboard site. While we will try to keep closely to the assignments, there may be some adjustments and revisions as the quarter progresses.

Week 1: Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Introduction to the course

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee’s Chapter 2, “Thinking Critically”

Mary Barnett and Tom Randall talk shows and debates

Preparation for Culture Game

Homework:

Write a six paragraph essay arguing either for or against the guilt or innocence of Mary Barnett or Tom Randall. (Note: This is a short homework assignment, not a major paper)

See the handout for an outline of what you need to do.

Week 2: Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Culture Game

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee’s Chapter 4, Perceiving and Believing

Discussion of “Five Accounts of the Assassination of Malcolm X” (pp. 125-28)

Presentation of material for first major writing assignment, "Play on Words"

Week 3: Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 5, "'Construction of Knowledge'"

In-class video of commercial

Homework: Write a one page essay analyzing the emotional appeals and manipulative aspects of the commercial seen in class (also available on You Tube)

Week 4: Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Discussion of the ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 6 "Language and Thought"

Week 5: Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Definitions for "A Play on Words" due; directions for second part of assignment passed out

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 7 "Forming and Applying Concepts"

Week 6: Tuesday, February 17, 2009

Discussion of the ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 8 "Relating and Organizing"

Week 7: February 24, 2009

Discussion of the ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 9 "Thinking Critically about Moral Issues"

Major paper due on "Play on Words"

Week 8: Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 10 "Constructing Arguments"

Discussion of research and documentation techniques

Week 9: Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Discussion of ideas in Chaffee's Chapter 11 "Reasoning Critically"

Major argument paper due

Week 10: Tuesday, March 17, 2009

In-class video on Critical Thinking

Papers returned

Written class evaluation