

**DePaul University School for New Learning**  
**Winter 2009 LL 155 Critical Thinking**  
**Class ID Number 11215**  
**Course Syllabus (DRAFT)**  
**Meets Mondays, 6:30 p.m. -9:30 p.m. (when in session)**  
**(Check Blackboard by 2:00 p.m. CT on day of class for possible Cancellations)**

**Contact Information**

**Faculty:** Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner  
**Phone:** (w) 574.232.1500  
**Email:** [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com)  
**Location:** South Campus at Oak Forest  
**Credit Hours:** 4

**Introduction to the Instructor**

Bill Wassner is the pastor of St. Peter's UCC in South Bend, Indiana and the Executive Director of the United Religious Community in St. Joseph County. He is also a certified addictions counselor and a volunteer chaplain with the Indiana State Police assigned to the Indiana Toll Road. He has taught at the School for New Learning since 2001 conducting the courses, *The Divine Dialogue*, *Critical Thinking*, *Research Seminar*, *Crime and Violence: Law Enforcement in America*, and *Contemporary Ethics*. He holds masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago Divinity School, and subsequent masters degrees from Christian Theological Seminary, and Capella University.

**Course Description and Learning Objectives**

In this course, students will examine their thought processes, becoming aware of the ways observations, assumptions, and opinions influence the ways they interpret the written word, visual images, etc. Students will learn to analyze complex issues from multiple perspectives, distinguish between claims and evidence, and construct solid and interesting arguments of their own.

**SPECIAL NOTE: THIS CLASS IS A HYBRID (THAT IS, WE WILL NOT MEET EVERY WEEK BUT DO WORK VIA THE INTERNET. EACH WEEK IS LABELED AS SUCH).**

**Assigned Reading-Available at the Bookstore or used copies OnLine**

Marlys Mayfield, Thinking for Yourself (Seventh Edition 2007)  
Student Edition ISBN – 13: 978-1-4130-1772-4

**Articles on Blackboard and Handouts as distributed in class**

**Recommended Reading**

Alec Fisher, Critical Thinking: An Introduction, (Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Vincent Ruggiero, The Art of Thinking, (Seventh Edition, Pearson Education, Inc., 2004)

Linda Elder & Richard Paul, The Art of Strategic Thinking, (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2004)

Richard Paul & Linda Elder, Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts & Tools, (FCT, 2003)

## Course Competency and Demonstrating Competence

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

- \*Students will demonstrate competence through participation, reading, and written work.
- \*Attendance is mandatory. Exercises and discussions cannot be replicated once missed.
- \*Assigned readings and homework must be completed **prior** to the beginning of class.
- \*Each student will write short essays (1 page in length) during the quarter and one position paper (10-12 pages in length) at the end of the quarter. Students will also participate in one debate about a contentious issue, which may also be the topic chosen for their position papers.
- \*Students must post their work on Blackboard and respond to at least two other learners submissions

## Evaluation

Assessments will be based on the L-5 statement above. Your competency and improvement will be evaluated during the course and will be periodically discussed with each individual student. Class attendance, participation, and homework assignments will count for 60% and the research paper will count for 40% of your final grade. *Missing 3 or more deadlines/classes will result in a failing grade.*

## Research Paper Guidelines

An issue on which you take a position (i.e. gun control, abortion, assisted suicide) and present a logical argument to defend your position. Your work should include both proponents and opponents on your particular issue. Research must include at least 5 sources – which may include academic journals (i.e. APA, JAMA, ABA, etc.), books written on the subject chosen, interviews, surveys (must include own analysis of results and data). Newspaper articles as well as non-peer reviewed Internet articles are NOT acceptable. Due Dates are fixed and non-negotiable. MLA or APA style of documentation is required.

Please consult with the DePaul University Writing Center for Assistance (see page 6):

[Writing Guide for SNL Students at http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html](http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html). For on-campus and online tutoring, see the [DePaul University Writing Centers at http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/](http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/).

## Policy Statements: Critical Thinking

### 1. SNL Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory in SNL courses. Students and faculty are expected to arrive on time, and to participate in every scheduled class session. Specific course policies can be listed in the course syllabus, and acceptance of the syllabus indicates agreement to policies outlined in that document. Missing class makes assessment a difficult process, and all students who miss any class work are subject to grade reduction. Students who miss more than 10% of any given course are subject to failure.

### 2. SNL Incomplete Policy

In Fall Quarter 2001, the School for New Learning began enforcing a recently approved policy on the issuance of the grade of Incomplete (IN) in all undergraduate courses. Overall, the policy is intended to provide specific information to students about their responsibilities in making up Incompletes and the implications of neglecting IN grades. <http://condor.depaul.edu/~snl/service/useful2.htm>

**NOTE: Three absences and/or late assignments (in any combination) will constitute an automatic failure.**

**Week 1      January 5<sup>th</sup> Classroom**  
Review of Syllabus  
Computer Lab presentation on doing research  
Introduction to Critical Thinking  
Chapter One: Observation Skills: What's Out There?  
**Have Read:** pp. 12-43

**Assignment Due by January 10th:**

After reading the chapters, write an essay that explores the use of words to convey meaning.

Please submit to [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note:** Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

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**Week 2      January 12<sup>th</sup> Classroom**  
Chapter Two: Word Precision: How Do I Describe It?  
Chapter Three: Facts: What's Real?  
**Have Read:** pp. 44-75

**Assignments Due by January 17th:**

1. Find a photograph in a popular or news magazine. Use the photograph to complete the exercise on pp. 119-120.
2. TOPICS FOR POSITION PAPER DUE

Please submit to [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note:** Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

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**Week 3      January 19<sup>th</sup> Blackboard**  
Chapter Four: Inferences: What Follows?  
**Have Read:** pp. 105-143

**Assignments Due for Class and by January 24th:**

1. Find one newspaper or magazine article that relies on assumption to make its claim. What hidden assumption underlies the argument? (Bring for discussion)
2. BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR PAPER

Please submit to [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note:** Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

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**Week 4      January 26<sup>th</sup>                      Classroom**  
Chapter Five: Assumptions: What's Taken for Granted?  
**Have Read**: pp. 144-174

**Assignment Due by January 31st:  
Thesis Statement and Outline for Position Paper**

Please submit to [bstpeters@juno.com](mailto:bstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note**: Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

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**Week 5      February 2<sup>nd</sup>                      Classroom**  
Chapter Six: Opinions: What's Believed?  
**Have Read**: pp. 175-194  
*"Letter from Birmingham Jail"* by Martin Luther King, Jr. (**On Blackboard**)

**One Page Paper Assignment Due by February 6th:**

After reading the article, what assumptions do you find underlie the argument? Did he persuade you to agree? Why or why not?

Please submit to [bstpeters@juno.com](mailto:bstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note**: Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

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**Week 6      February 9<sup>th</sup>                      NO Classroom or Blackboard**

**NO CLASS OR ASSIGNMENTS - WORK ON PAPERS**

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**Week 7      February 16<sup>th</sup>                      Classroom**

Debate Day (Each will have 5 minutes to present their position on their issue for paper)

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**Week 8      February 23<sup>rd</sup>                      Classroom**  
Chapter Seven: Evaluations: What's Judged?  
Chapter Eight: Viewpoints: What's the Filter?  
**Have Read**: pp. 195-239

**ROUGH DRAFT OF POSITION PAPER DUE BY FEBRUARY 28<sup>th</sup>:**

(Includes outline, abstract, text, citations in text, and work cited page) This draft will be returned to you with comments and recommendations the next week. Then, after meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>, you will have 1 week to revise the paper accordingly.

Please submit to [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions.

**Note:** Each student must respond to at least two other students' submissions in Discussion Board area.

Week 9      March 2<sup>nd</sup>              No Class or Blackboard

Work on Papers

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Week 10    March 9<sup>th</sup>                    Classroom (abbreviated)

Conclusions and Course Evaluations

**DISCUSSION OF PAPERS INDIVIDUALLY**

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Week 11    March 16<sup>th</sup>                  Blackboard

**Assignment Due by Midnight Today: Final Draft of Position Paper**

Please submit to [sbstpeters@juno.com](mailto:sbstpeters@juno.com) and also in Blackboard Discussions. They will be available for you at the front desk by April 1st.

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**Some Web Resources:**

Foundation for Critical Thinking (excellent articles!):

[www.criticalthinking.org/resources/articles](http://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/articles)

Critical Thinking: What It is and Why It Counts article (Peter Facione):

[http://www.insightassessment.com/pdf\\_files/what&why2007.pdf](http://www.insightassessment.com/pdf_files/what&why2007.pdf)

The Critical Thinking Consortium:

<http://tc2.ca/about/about-critical-thinking/>

Chaco Canyon Consulting:

<http://www.chacocanyon.com/index.shtml>

Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum Project, Longview Community College:

<http://mccckc.edu/longview/CTAC/toc.htm>



### **What is the Writing Center?**

One of the most important resources available at DePaul is the DePaul University Center for Writing-based Learning (UCWbL). The Writing Center, which is part of the UCWbL, is open to all DePaul students who would like to discuss or review their writing. You can use this service to discuss your assignments for any class, as well as non-academic writing projects like resumes and application essays. The Center has two full-time offices, Library Outposts at the Lincoln Park and Loop campuses, and online services that include Quick Questions, 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.

### **What kinds of help does the Writing Center offer?**

You determine the direction of the sessions. Tutors will help you understand your assignment and develop your paper's topics, thesis, and ideas. They can show you how to revise your paper and can teach you basic writing skills such as grammar, mechanics, summarizing, and paraphrasing. A tutor can also help you find, narrow, and support your thesis with prewriting exercises and by talking through your ideas to get started. Although tutors will help you with grammatical difficulties, tutors will not proofread your paper for you or speculate on what grade you might receive on that paper. Obviously, the tutors can't 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.

### **When should I use this service, and what should I bring?**

The best way to use this service is to schedule your appointment with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. Always bring your assignment sheet, your paper or working draft (if you have one), and any source materials, such as an essay or book to which you are responding. If you have copies or drafts of a paper, bring your flash drive. During the session, expect to answer questions from your tutor about your paper topic, your writing process, or other issues regarding your assignment.

### **How do I request help?**

When possible, the Writing Center accepts walk-in requests, but the best way to line up help is to use the Center's online scheduler, which confirms appointments in real time. You may schedule standing weekly appointments or schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week.

### **Quick Links and Locations**

- To schedule an appointment at the Writing 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 – as well as online scheduling and writing resources – visit:  
***<http://www.depaul.edu/writing/>***