COURSE DESCRIPTION

Develops ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate reasoning in everyday discourse. Examines the elements of good reasoning from both a formal and informal perspective. Introduces some formal techniques of the basic concepts of deductive and inductive reasoning. Promotes reasoning skills through examining arguments from literature, politics, business, and the media. Enables students to identify common fallacies, to reflect on the use of language for the purpose of persuasion, and to think critically about the sources and biases of the vast quantity of information that confronts us in the "Information Age."

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Required Resources

Soomo (2013). Critical Thinking. [Webtext]. Asheville, NC: Soomo Publishing.

Note: For each week of the course, all of the following materials in the Preparation and Evaluation portions can be accessed through the Webtext link within Blackboard. The Activities portion (discussion question) will not be located in Webtext, but rather in a separate Blackboard link within your shell.

Supplemental Resources

Critical Thinking Community. (2013). Defining Critical Thinking. Retrieved from

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>

Ellerton, P. (2011). Reason to Think. Issues, (95), 33-35.

ETS. (2013). Introduction to the Argument Task. Retrieved from

<http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/argument/>

Holyoak, K., & Morrison, R. G. (2005). The Cambridge Handbook of Thinking and Reasoning. New York,

NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, W. (2000). Critical Thinking: An Introduction to the Basic Skills. Peterborough, Ont: Broadview

Press.

Philosophy Pages. (2011). Categorical Syllogisms. Retrieved from

<http://www.philosophypages.com/lg/e08a.htm>

Tittle, P. (2011). Critical Thinking: An Appeal to Reason. New York, NY: Routledge.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Define critical thinking.
2. Explain how critical thinking improves the ability to communicate accurately, both orally and in writing.
3. Develop skills for overcoming barriers which limit objective and productive critical thinking.
4. Demonstrate the importance of pre-writing, drafting, and revising; the consideration of audience, purpose, and text; the application of organizational strategies; and the recognition of effective language in written communication.
5. Apply the principles of argumentation to analyze, evaluate, and compose effective arguments.
6. Analyze the purpose of organizational structure to create persuasive arguments.
7. Identify the informal fallacies, assumptions, and biases involved in manipulative appeals and abuses of language.
8. Recognize the hindrances to the decision-making process in order to apply problem-solving skills to a variety of situations.
9. Write clearly and concisely about critical thinking using proper writing mechanics.
10. Use technology and information resources to research issues in critical thinking skills and informal logic.

**WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE**

The standard requirement for a 4.5 credit hour course is for students to spend 13.5 hours in weekly work. This includes preparation, activities, and evaluation regardless of delivery mode.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Preparation, Activities, and Evaluation** | **Points** |
| 1 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 1: Thinking   + What is Critical Thinking?   + Why Think Critically?   + The Best Possible   Activities   * Course Expectations and Introductions * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 1 | 20  30 |
| 2 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 2: Barriers   + Emotions   + Groups and Culture   + Pride   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 2 * Assignment 1.1: Conflicting Viewpoints Essay – Part I | 20  30  30 |
| 3 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 3: Arguments   + Arguments are Support   + Deduction   + Induction   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 3 | 20  30 |
| 4 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 4: Fallacies   + Fallacies   + More Fallacies   + Even More Fallacies   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 4 * Assignment 1.2: Conflicting Viewpoints Essay – Part II | 20  30  100 |
| 5 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 5: Sources   + Credibility   + Experts   + Everyone Else   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 5 | 20  30 |
| 6 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 6: Explanations   + Qualities of Explanations   + Scientific Explanations   + Statistics and Fallacies   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 6 * Exam 1: Chapters 1 through 5 | 20  30  100 |
| 7 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 7: Problem Solving * Defining the Problem * Generating Solutions * Make Your Choice   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 7 | 20  30 |
| 8 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 8 Language   + Language and Thinking   + Define Your Terms   + Word Games   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 8 | 20  30 |
| 9 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 9: Ethics   + Ethical Claims   + Ethical Reasoning   + Moral Theories   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 9 * Assignment 2: Problem Solving | 20  30  150 |
| 10 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Chapter 10: Case Study   + Introduction to the Case Study   + Exploring the Context   + Taking Sides   + Debating Whether to Act   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Soomo Webtext Assignment: Chapter 10 | 20  30 |
| 11 | Preparation  **(Note:** **Access materials through the Webtext link in BlackBoard)**   * Reading(s): None   Activities   * Discussion   Evaluation   * Exam 2: Chapters 6 through 10 | 20  100 |

**GRADING SCALE – UNDERGRADUATE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Total Points** | **% of**  **Grade** |
| Weekly Soomo Webtext Assignments | 300 | 30% |
| Assignment 1.1: Conflicting Viewpoints Essay – Part I | 30 | 3% |
| Assignment 1.2: Conflicting Viewpoints Essay – Part II | 100 | 10% |
| Assignment 2: Problem Solving | 150 | 15% |
| Exam 1: Chapters 1-5 (open book with a 2-hour time limit)  (25 questions, worth 4 points apiece) | 100 | 10% |
| Exam 2: Sections 6-10 (open book with a 2-hour time limit)  (25 questions, worth 4 points apiece) | 100 | 10% |
| Participation (11 discussions worth 20 points apiece) | 220 | 22% |
| Totals | 1,000 | 100% |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Points | Percentage | Grade |
| 900 – 1,000 | 90% – 100% | A |
| 800 – 899 | 80% – 89% | B |
| 700 – 799 | 70% – 79% | C |
| 600 – 699 | 60% – 69% | D |
| Below 600 | Below 60% | F |