

**DePaul University**  
School for New Learning

Summer 2017

Syllabus:

**Critical Thinking**

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Day/Time: Tuesdays, 5:45-9 PM

Location: Loop campus, Daley 1502  
Credit hours: 4

**Competencies offered:**

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

**Course Description**

This course aims to help students develop their critical thinking abilities and apply them to college-level intellectual activity. When we study critical thinking, we cultivate the skills and strategies of thoughtful reflection, close inquiry and focused analysis. We also foster openness to the viewpoints of others and a healthy skepticism about what's taken for granted. Among other things, this entails becoming aware of cognitive processes and cultural frameworks which enable us to make sense of the world – processes and frameworks that are so deeply ingrained in us that their operation in everyday life is virtually invisible. It also involves practice in the recognition, construction and evaluation of arguments, a pursuit in which we consider principles of logic, styles of persuasion and techniques of propaganda. We also encounter some methods of thinking outside the box. We do this through a variety of readings, exercises and projects designed to help students develop competence in reflecting on experience, connecting assertions with evidence, engaging the ideas of others and bringing multiple perspectives to bear on complex issues. Such abilities are crucial to individual development, communal engagement and democracy itself.

**Please note: This is a hybrid course**, which means that it combines online with in-person learning. The class meets online one week and in-person the next, throughout the quarter. That is, in weeks 1, 3, 6,8 and 10 we meet and conduct our work in person, in the classroom, while in weeks 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9 we meet and conduct our work in person online.

### **Faculty biography:**

John Kimsey received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago. His teaching and writing interests include modern literature and popular music. A member of the SNL resident faculty, he serves as Associate Professor with tenure and as the school's coordinator for Critical Thinking .

### **Course Learning Goals**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify claims and assess their fit with reasons
- Distinguish among different kinds of reasons presented to support claims
- Distinguish between reports, inferences and judgments
- Identify and analyze common rhetorical strategies, logical fallacies and propaganda devices
- Recognize, construct and make evaluative distinctions among different kinds of arguments
- Examine experiences with critical scrutiny
- Discuss the roles played by perception, emotion and belief in shaping views
- Identify and dramatize problems and limitations inherent in linguistic discourse
- Appreciate, engage with, and make use of viewpoints other than one's own

### **How Competencies will be Addressed in this Course**

**There are three major writing assignments in the course:**

1. a Personal Narrative essay;
2. a detailed Argument Analysis paper;
3. and a quarter-long project called "Play On A Word"

In addition, several modules require that you submit a set of written Exercises and all modules require that you participate in a Discussion Forum.

All Lifelong Learning courses offered by the School for New Learning emphasize overarching skills in three categories: Learning from Experience; Inquiry; and Decision-making. The assignments listed above track with these categories as follows:

- the Personal Narrative emphasizes learning from experience;
- the Argument Analysis paper emphasizes inquiry and decision-making;
- the Exercises and Discussion Forums emphasize inquiry; and

- the Play On A Word project emphasizes all three overarching skills.

## **Course Resources**

For each of the 10 Modules in the course, you will find an Introduction & Overview posted online. Your reading for a given module/week should always begin with that module's Introduction & Overview.

In addition, each module of the course assigns other readings, all of which are posted online by the DePaul Libraries through the electronic reserve or Ares system. Links to these electronic reserve readings are embedded in each module of our course.

*Having this wealth of material posted online means that there is no hard copy textbook for the course that you must purchase.* The Introduction & Overview sections, combined with the electronic reserve readings, comprise our textbook – a virtual textbook, one might say.

Selected articles posted on Electronic Reserve at [De Paul University Library ARES](#)

## **Course Structure**

This course consists of 10 modules, the topics of which are listed below. Each module corresponds to a week of class. All readings, assignments and due dates are posted in each module in D2L.

**Module 1 6/13** Thinking Critically (**we meet in person**)

**Module 2 6/20** Perceiving; Using Language (**we meet online**)

*Five Accounts Exercise due*

*Play on a Word choice due*

**Module 3 6/27** Believing and Knowing (**we meet in person**)

*Personal Narrative essay due*

**Module 4 7/4** Reporting, Inferring and Judging (**we meet online**)

*Feakes exercise due*

*Play on a Word Part 1 (first 10 definitions due)*

**Module 5 7/11** Reasoning Deductively (**we meet online**)

*Deductive Reasoning Exercises due*

**Module 6 7/18 Reasoning Inductively (we meet in person)**

*Inductive Reasoning Exercises due*

*Play on a Word Part 1 (all definitions) due*

**Module 7 7/25 Fallacies and Appeals to Emotion (we meet online)**

*Fallacies Exercises due*

**Module 8 8/1 Rhetoric and Persuasion (we meet in person)**

**Module 9 8/8 Going Beyond the Given (we meet online)**

*Argument Analysis due*

*First portion of Play on a Word Part 2 due*

**Module 10 8/15 Questioning Authority (we meet in person)**

*Complete Play on a Word Part 2 due*

## **Assessment of Learning**

In assessing work like that described above, your instructor will look for:

- knowledge and comprehension of pertinent concepts, issues and texts;
- a scope of discussion that goes beyond what is covered in the texts; and
- thoughtful engagement with the material, i.e., with questions or conflicts raised or implied by the material.

Evidence of one of these elements equates with a C; evidence of two with a B; and evidence of three with an A. In making such assessments your instructor will strive to be clear, flexible, forthright and empathetic.

Assessment rubrics for specific writing assignments will be shared with you by the instructor.

**Regarding Assessment of Online Discussions:** This course contains 8 online Discussions spread throughout our online modules – that is, modules 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. Students are expected to contribute to these online Discussions in a substantive, timely and interactive fashion. Each Discussion is worth 2.5 points.

To receive full credit (2.5 points) for a given online Discussion, you must make a contribution that is

- a. **Substantive:** This means that you offer a considered opinion, a thought–provoking speculation and/or new information. A substantive contribution does more than simply indicate "I agree" or "Me too";
- b. **Interactive:** This means that, in addition to posting your own view(s), you respond to at least one other student and that you do so by, again, saying something more than "I agree" or "Me too".
- c. **Timely:** This means that you make your first post by the halfway point of the week (according to the due date for 'First post' listed in your Checklist for each week/module); and that you make at least one additional post later in the week.

In addition, you can receive an extra credit point for a contribution that your instructor judges to be of exceptional quality.

### Point Values of Assignments

Personal Narrative Essay	15 points
Argument Analysis Paper	25 points
Play On A Word project	20 points
Exercises	35 points
Online Discussions	20 points

### Course Grading Scale

Critical Thinking is designed as a Pass/Fail course. You may opt instead to take it for a letter grade, but if you wish to take it for a letter grade, then you must notify your instructor in writing of your wish to do so by the beginning of week three of the quarter. (For more information on this, see SNL Grading Policy for Lifelong Learning Courses below.) The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

### Grading Policies and Practices

To complete the course, you must complete each of the assignments as described in the course and submit them to your instructor by the assigned deadline. In addition, you must participate in the course discussion forum by responding to all instructor requests and by interacting with fellow classmates as necessary.

Assignments that are turned in late will receive reduced points. Assignments that are more than one week late will receive zero points.

## **SNL Grading Policy for Lifelong Learning Courses**

In certain SNL courses in the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum, instructors regularly use the pass/fail grading system. However, SNL also offers students the opportunity in several of these courses to select a "Grading" option where grades A through C- represent passing performance. The faculty member and the individual student together decide which system will best promote the student's learning in that particular course. With no exceptions, a student must obtain permission from the instructor to use the grade option by the beginning of the third week of the quarter. After the third week of the quarter the assessment style agreed upon, whether pass/fail or grading, cannot be changed. The instructor is required to provide the student the specific assessment criteria by which a grade will be determined prior to the student officially selecting this option. Grading criteria shall appear in the syllabus along with pass/fail assessment criteria.

Lifelong learning courses that already employ a grading system such as *Quantitative Reasoning* and *Collaborative Learning* will continue to use this system. The Lifelong learning courses *Learning Assessment Seminar*, *Foundations*, and *Summit Seminar* will continue to employ the pass/fail system exclusively. This policy applies to the other lifelong learning competencies and courses including, *Academic Writing for Adults*, *Critical Thinking*, *Research Seminar*, and *Externship*. The pass/fail policy and procedure of the university found in the student handbook should be followed where a student wishes to seek this option for a graded course.

### **Policy on Attendance:**

You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you miss a class, it is incumbent on you to check with the instructor or a fellow student about any information or handouts you may have missed. Students who miss more than two class sessions will not have met the requirement for a passing grade.

### **Policy on Late Submissions**

Written assignments that are submitted late will receive reduced points. Written assignments that are more than one week late will receive zero points.

### **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*). The code's Plagiarism Policy reads as follows:

*Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:*

*The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.*

*Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with proper acknowledgement.*

*Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.*

*The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.*

*Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.*

### **Policy on Incompletes:**

It is expected that students will complete course assignments by specified due dates within the quarter. In circumstances that the instructor determines to be exceptional, when the student is unable to complete required coursework by the established due dates, the student may request that a grade of Incomplete (IN) be issued. This request must be made formally, in writing, by completion of IN Request Form that the student signs. The form specifies the final date by which all outstanding coursework must be completed. Failure to submit outstanding work by the specified due date will result in a grade change from IN to W or FX for each enrolled competence, along with serious academic and/or financial consequences. **After the final submission deadline, the student will have no further opportunities to submit work for a passing grade.**

### **For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;

The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

### **General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments**

Writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation. Your instructor will be happy to work with you on these points, on a draft-revision basis, if you so desire. You are also encouraged to consult the Writing Resources page on the SNL website.

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include 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.

Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily 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.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing).

## **Online Discussion**

### **Discussion Forums**

Discussion Forums are an important component of your online experience. This course contains discussion forums related to the topics you are studying each week. For requirements on your participation in the Discussion Forums, please see "Course Expectations" in the syllabus.

A Course Q & A discussion forum has also been established to manage necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. This is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers throughout the course. Please feel free to answer any question if you feel you know the answer; this sharing of information is valuable to other students.

### **Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation**

In the online discussions your responses will be assessed on whether one or more of the following are present:

1. Offering up ideas or resources and inviting a critique of them
2. Asking challenging questions

3. Articulating, explaining and supporting positions on ideas
4. Exploring and supporting issues by adding explanations and examples
5. Reflecting on and re-evaluating personal opinions
6. Offering a critique, challenging, discussing and expanding ideas of others
7. Negotiating interpretations, definitions and meanings
8. Summarizing previous contributions and asking the next question
9. Proposing actions based on ideas that have been developed

The above list was adapted from Gilly Salmon's book *E-Moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page: p.143 (2000).

## **Online Participation Guidelines**

A significant part of your online learning experience involves learning *with* and *from* your classmates and the instructor in the online discussions and group assignments.

Active participation means sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. This discussion is informal in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. You are expected to follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and usage, although you will not be assessed for these particular characteristics when you are participating in online discussions.

These discussions are for you to exchange your reflections with your classmates and instructor about what you are learning. The discussions will be organized into forums around the particular topic you are studying each week.

You may be asked by the instructor to take leadership in a certain group for a certain time of the course. You will receive further instructions from your instructor if this occurs.

You should contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted.

For each Discussion Forum, you are required to make at least one original contribution to each topic and respond to one classmate's contribution.

## **Course Expectations**

### **Time Management and Attendance**

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### **Your Instructor's Role**

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

Please also note that this is a course offered by DePaul University's School for New Learning (SNL), a college for undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking students 24 years and older. SNL welcomes the perspectives and encourages the participation of all DePaul students, and students who take this course should respect and be mindful of SNL's mission in supporting a diverse and inclusive environment. More information about SNL can be found [here](#).

View this brief demo [Taking SNL Online courses in D2L](#) to learn how to navigate through your course.

*If you're new to SNL Online see additional resources on the course home page under Student Resources/Getting Started.*

## **Course Netiquette**

Online discussions are an important part of your course experience. To ensure a positive learning environment, please follow the following minimum expectations. Use your common sense, as not all situations can be covered:

- Be polite
- Respect other participants' views or opinions
- Think before you write, and ask yourself if you would say the same thing in person
- Use positive phrases (i.e., "Good idea!" or "Thanks for the suggestions," etc.)
- Be sensitive to cultural differences
- Avoid hostile, curt or sarcastic comments
- No objectionable, sexist, or racist language will be tolerated
- Create a positive online community by offering assistance and support to other participants
- Use correct grammar and syntax

## **Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas.

Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your [Student Handbook](#) for further details.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's.

- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.
- Resubmitting one's own previous work from a different course or college, without the permission of the current instructor.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### **DePaul University Incomplete Policy**

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). See the [Incomplete Grade Contract Form](#).

Undergraduate and graduate students will have up to two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four-week grace period before final degree certification.

### **Description of Pass/Fail Grading Options**

Students have the option of taking all SNL undergraduate courses as Pass/Fail even if a class is initially structured for a letter grade assessment. In these cases a Pass is awarded when competence is demonstrated at a level that would otherwise earn a grade of C- or higher.

In deciding to select Pass/Fail grading students should be aware that competencies assessed in a course as Pass **will earn credit hours toward degree completion but will not be included in computing grade point averages**. Attempted competence demonstration assessed within a class as Fail will not only be recorded as credit hours attempted but **will also be included in computing a student's grade point average**.

For SNL students, competencies awarded for Independent Learning Pursuits and in the Lifelong Learning Domain do not count toward the university's specification that only twenty credit hours may be earned through the Pass/Fail assessment option.

**Please note:** *There are three SNL courses within the BA curriculum that are always assessed on a Pass/Fail basis: Foundations of Adult Learning (course number LL 250; competences L-2 and F-1), Advanced Project (course number FA 303; competences F-11 and F-12) and Summit Seminar (course number LL 390; competence L-12). These classes may not be taken for a letter grade assessment. Therefore, work that might otherwise be assessed at grades A through C- will earn a Pass in these classes.*

*There are an additional four SNL courses within the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum for which instructors regularly use a Pass/Fail grading system that may instead be taken for a letter grade assessment if this is a student's preference. These classes are: Independent Learning Seminar (course number LL 103; competence L1); Writing to Competence (course number LL 260; competence L-4), Critical Thinking (course number LL 270; competence L-5), Research Seminar (course number LL 300; competences L-8 and L-9), and Externship (course number LL 302; competences L-10 and L-11). In addition, SNL's undergraduate Writing Workshop (course number LL 140; competence H-3-J) regularly uses Pass/Fail, although students may request a letter grade assessment. In these instances SNL offers undergraduate students the opportunity to request a letter grade assessment from their instructor. Students who need a letter grade for tuition reimbursement may wish to consider this option, as well as those who wish to raise their GPA. Students planning to attend graduate school may also prefer letter grades to Pass/Fail assessments.*

If a student wants to switch the method of assessment, either to or from the Pass/Fail option, this must be requested from the instructor in writing by the beginning of the third week of the quarter. For courses that meet fewer than ten weeks of the quarter, this request must be made by the beginning of the third week of the *course*. The grading basis may not be changed after these deadlines, with no exceptions.

### **Dean of Students Office**

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students

both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally we have resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, substance abuse and drug prevention, and LGBTQ student services. We are committed to your success as a DePaul student. Please feel free to [contact us](#).

- You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
- The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
- If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

### **Copyright and Student Privacy**

In accordance with [DePaul's Acceptable Use Policy](#), commentary and materials within SNL Online classes shall not be copied, reproduced or published elsewhere without the express written consent of individuals involved.