

DePaul University
School of Continuing and Professional Studies
Undergraduate Programs
LL-270 CRITICAL THINKING
Fall Quarter, 2019

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Instructor is available to talk. Request a time by email or in person.
See Faculty Biography section on last page for further information.

Course Dates: Thursdays: September 12, 2019 – November 26, 2019
5:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location: Loop Campus, on the ground with building and room to be determined.

Credit Hours: 4

Course Description: This course aims to help students develop your 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, including understanding of the elements and styles of persuasion. We also encounter some methods of thinking outside the box. We do this through a variety of readings, exercises, in-class experiential activities, 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.

Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Interpret experiences by a) analyzing what is relevant, b) placing those experiences in perspective, and c) forming judgments using clear criteria;
2. Demonstrate refined thinking that improves upon an idea after identifying risks and benefits of various alternatives;
3. Identify claims and assess whether they are supported adequately by reasons;

4. Use evidence to be persuasive;
5. Identify assumptions, assertions, evidence, and common elements of persuasion in speech and writing;
6. Demonstrate active listening skills;
7. Apply thinking strategies to solve problems by producing ideas creatively, exploiting resources, and exploring experience to notice new things about familiar situations.
8. Understand and discuss listening and reasoning as skills to be developed throughout lifelong learning after the class ends;
9. Understand and discuss how emotions affect listening and reasoning, and practice suspending judgment during those activities;
10. Demonstrate reasoning in communications by choosing points to emphasize and thinking about information needed by the audience;
11. Identify and discuss multiple viewpoints on issues, seek new perspectives by working collaboratively with classmates and incorporating thoughts that strengthen deliverables on the major assignments, and apply methods of breaking out of a fixed view of a situation.
12. Identify the limits of your knowledge on a subject, including questions that need to be answered and information that needs to be gathered, as an early and continuing part of critical thinking, and describe those limits specifically enough to guide your research.

Competences to be Developed and Assessed for BAIFA Students: L-5

"Student 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 policy arguments in the context of real-life experiences and issues.

You will demonstrate this competency by applying the elements of critical and appreciative thinking to solve problems and analyze issues; appreciative thinking involves seeking different ways of looking at an issue or problem to a) access the strength of other viewpoints, and b) understand other viewpoints, strong or not.

Learning Resources and Strategies for All Students:

Each week, you will be directed to reading assignments from the textbook and articles and video links available on D2L. Check this syllabus or the class' D2L site for assignments.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS: Chaffee, John, Thinking Critically, Eleventh Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company; de Bono, Edward, Six Thinking Hats, latest edition, Little, Brown and Company.

Critical thinking is **a skill** that can be learned, developed and demonstrated while engaging in college-level intellectual activity.

Students will pay attention to their own thought processes and observe how thinking is influenced by emotions and habits of mind. Students will study thinking skills while analyzing articles, solving problems, evaluating ideas, working in small groups and discussing current events and history. We will experiment with a new style of debating that does not depend upon teams and encourages participants to express their thoughts as individuals rather than as conforming members of a tribe. They will practice skills of *metacognition* – thinking about thinking – while working collaboratively on individual problem-solving and persuasive essay assignments. Your classmates are resources for you, and you are a resource for them. You will work together at times on the major assignments - your individually chosen topics for problem-solving and the persuasive essay.

LEARNING DELIVERABLES:

Written deliverables will include:

- 2 short evaluations of proposed policies;
- A short quiz on the 6 Hats Thinking Method;
- A first draft of problem-solving worksheets that marshal the facts relevant to your problem and begin to creatively produce ideas for potential solutions;
- Final draft of problem-solving worksheets that show facts, ideas, the actions that you took to solve the problem, and the results of the actions;
- A persuasive essay that identifies an issue and persuasively argues for a policy to resolve the issue.

In addition, the instructor may add quizzes about assigned readings as part of the class participation evaluation.

The assignments are sequenced to assist your learning. Your evaluation of policy ideas during the second and third weeks will serve as baselines for your self-assessment – how comprehensively do you evaluate ideas at the beginning of the class? The Six Hats system provides a method for thinking holistically while constructing a policy. These short assignments will assist with construction of your policy and argument for it in the persuasive essay. The draft of the problem-solving worksheets gets you started on two key aspects of problem-solving: identifying relevant facts that are part of the problem with enough specificity to allow for targeted production of ideas for potential solutions; and producing ideas for specific actions that you might execute to solve the problem.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING: Written deliverables will be assessed a) for the short written evaluations and quiz: for thought that identifies relevant known information about the idea, important information that is missing or questions that need to be answered, benefits of the idea, risks of the idea, and alternatives to the idea, b) problem-solving will be assessed pursuant to a rubric that examines your formulation of the idea; production of relevant information to describe the situation that is unacceptable, prior attempts at solution, and resources available to solve the problem; production of creative ideas for potential solutions that target the unacceptable situation; execution of at least three solid ideas and evaluation of the results of those executed ideas; and thinking strategies used to solve the problem; c) persuasive essay will be assessed as outlined in “Instructor’s Practices on Work Presented for a Letter Grade.”

Major Assignments: Students will choose topics for these Major Assignments:

1) *Persuasive Essay, due the 7th class session (October 24)*. Students will demonstrate critical and appreciative thinking while analyzing an issue and advocating a policy – the action that we should take on the issue. Students will apply the Six Hats thinking

method, and will analyze opposing arguments, generate and compare alternate positions and viewpoints while noting strengths and weaknesses in them, and design a position that answers all reasonable objections. **This essay must be original work performed for this class, and not recycled work from another class.**

2) *Problem-Solving Exercise, due the 10th class session (November 14)*. Students will demonstrate critical and appreciative thinking by identifying a problem in their lives, and by working to solve the problem using a thinking method studied in class. Students will choose the problem from work, home, school, family, or social relationships or settings. The problem must require a creative solution. Students will produce ideas creatively, analyze information and experience that is available at the beginning of the problem-solving process, think of information that needs to be gathered, take action on their ideas, and analyze the results of their actions. Along the way, they will be alert to insights and changes in how they view the problem or interpret their experience. Students will turn in worksheets that *list* their thoughts (this is not an essay!) and demonstrate their thinking in each of these directions. Separately, students will present an 8-12 minute speech to the class about their problem-solving efforts. These presentations will occur during weeks 9 and 10.

All assignments should be double-spaced and must be turned in by the specified due dates, unless permission from the instructor has been granted in advance. Work that is turned in late without permission will not be read. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that assignments delivered electronically are received in proper form when due.

GRADING CRITERIA AND SCALE: This course generally is Pass/Fail. Alternately, students may, *by written request*, obtain permission from the instructor within the first two weeks of the course to receive a letter grade. Under this grading option, grades A through C- represent passing performance. Once students commit to receiving a letter grade, they cannot switch back to a grade of Pass/Fail. For those students choosing to obtain a letter grade rather than taking the course Pass/Fail, consult the syllabus for grading practices regarding written work. The grading scale shall be: 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 = 61-64; F = 60 or below.

POINT ASSESSMENTS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:

(Points reflect the maximum points available for each activity. Fractions will be rounded up).

10 points total for completing the first three short, written assignments (two evaluations and a quiz on the Six Hats Thinking Method). You will receive points only upon completion of all three assignments due on Weeks 2-4; partial credit will not be given for completing individual parts of this sequence.

25 points for the persuasive essay described above under “Major Assignments.”

25 points for the problem-solving exercise, consisting of the first draft of facts and ideas, the final worksheets, and the speech to the class described in “Major Assignments.” Of these points, 20 attach to the written work, 5 to the speech.

40 points (4 per week) for respectful and well-prepared participation in class discussions, demonstrating knowledge of the readings, and in-class appreciative thinking with classmates about Major Assignment topics. Full points will be awarded each week in which you attend class and actively participate unless the instructor notifies you of a deduction. Participation points, at the instructor’s discretion, for weeks Weeks 6, 8, and 9 may be based in part (2 points each) on short written quizzes about the readings for those weeks. Points are lost *automatically, without notification to you by the instructor* for absence from class or failure to turn in those quizzes, due before class. It is your responsibility to collaborate with classmates during class time, both about your own work and theirs, to work together to identify different perspectives, problems, objections, answers, assumptions, benefits, risks, alternatives, information that is needed, and new lines of inquiry.

Instructor’s Practices on Work Presented for a Letter Grade

All work in this class will be evaluated in part by how well you apply thinking methods that we study. Written work, including the short written assignments and the persuasive essay, will be evaluated as follows:

A = work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of an idea; reflects strong evaluation of evidence and sources of evidence, identifies alternatives and different viewpoints, and rebuts opposing arguments persuasively; reflects a strong ending that emphasizes a key point; reflects a perspective that not all evidence, argument, or reasons are of equal weight, but rather shows why some items are more compelling; and reflects overall a trustworthy tone as an advocate.

B = work of good quality; chooses an issue that truly presents the possibility

of reasonable opposing arguments; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with strong evidentiary development and support of ideas; rebuts opposing arguments; identifies at least roughly the alternate viewpoints appropriate to the issue at hand.

C = work which minimally meets requirements set forth in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete; may not evaluate evidence and sources of evidence persuasively, or may be missing reference to alternatives, different viewpoints, and opposing arguments; may formulate the issue in a way that does not allow for reasoned argument.

D = work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treats material superficially or simplistically; fails to research or evaluate the subject thoroughly, or fails to understand or apply principles discussed in class, in conference with instructor, or in readings.

Written work on the problem-solving assignment will be evaluated as follows:

A = work of high quality; reflects sustained thinking and action that progresses toward solving a problem that truly requires a creative solution; formulates the problem as well as could be done at the beginning of the problem-solving efforts; produces an excellent list of ideas for potential solutions, a list that is lengthy, that approaches the problem from different directions; that exploits available resources, that elaborates and uses previously-produced ideas to generate new ideas, and that contains innovative and unusual ideas; reflects strong use of available information, providing that information in detail and noting insights that occurred from analysis of that information; identifies the limits of the student's knowledge of the subject by thinking of information that must be gathered and questions that must be answered about the problem in order to achieve a solution, and produces ideas to obtain that information; takes action on several ideas for potential solutions, and demonstrates learning by analyzing the results of those actions, including learning in the sense of a change in viewpoint or insight.

B = work of good quality; reflects sustained thinking and action that progresses toward solving a problem that truly requires a creative solution; formulates the problem reasonably; produces several ideas for potential solutions that approach the situation from different directions, and that indicate use of creative-thinking techniques studied in class; lists available information that is relevant with some degree of detail; identifies information that is needed and questions that need to be answered about the problem, and generates at least some ideas to gather that information or answer those questions; takes action on multiple ideas and analyzes the results of those actions in a manner that demonstrates learning by analyzing the results of those actions.

C = work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects a basic understanding of the problem-solving method studied in class, but displays an

incomplete or undeveloped inventory of available information; reflects limited creative thinking such as by producing a short list of ideas for solving the problem, or a list that features ideas with only one or two approaches to the problem when others approaches are readily apparent; reflects superficial or incomplete thinking about the limits of the student's knowledge about the situation, including information that must be gathered, or questions that need to be answered about the situation as a part of reconciling the problem; reflects few attempted actions based on the student's ideas; and/or reflects superficial analysis of the results of the attempted solutions.

D = work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment, typified by any of the following: student chooses a problem that does not require a creative solution or sustained thinking, or that amounts to choosing between options that the student understands fully before engaging in the assignment; reflects lack of understanding or effort regarding the problem-solving method studied in class; failing to think about information that is available, including information that describes the situation that is unacceptable, resources that might help toward a solution, and past attempts to solve the problem, and failing to note available information in a form that is sufficient to aid the student's problem-solving efforts; failing to demonstrate creative thinking by producing several ideas for potential solutions that identify actions that the student might take; failing to think about the limits of the student's knowledge about the problem; failing to take action on multiple ideas, or to analyze the results of those actions, in a meaningful way that demonstrates progress toward a solution.

The instructor will uphold the University's guidelines on academic integrity found in the Student Handbook. Violation of the plagiarism policy, or use of recycled work to fulfill current assignments, constitutes grounds for issuance of a failing grade.

Incomplete Grade: This process follows University policy.

- You must formally initiate the request by submitting the *Contract for Issuance of Incomplete Grade* via email, in a Word document, no later than Week 10.
- The instructor has discretion to approve or not approve the request.
- The instructor has discretion to set the deadline for completing the work, which may be earlier but not later than two quarters (not counting Summer term).
- The instructor may not enter an IN grade on behalf of a student without a completed and agreed upon contract.
- You are alerted that IN grades are not considered by Financial Aid as evidence of satisfactory academic progress.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

PLEASE DOUBLE-SPACE ALL WRITING.

Week One: Introduction:
September 12 New Terms: Appreciative Thinking; Intellectual Discourse;
Reiterative Problem-Based Learning; Persuasion (Ethos, Logos,
Pathos); Collaborative Thinking;
“Analyze,” “Issues,” “Assumptions,” “Assertions,” “Evidence” Defined.

Next Week: Chaffee, 2 (pp. 54-61) and 4 (pp.144-155); De Bono, Table of
Contents, Preface, Conclusion (p. 172), article on **“The Art of Listening.”**

Week Two: Perceiving and Judging; Do Our Expectations Affect Our Perceptions?
September 19 Listening Influences Creative and Appreciative Thinking;
Types of Evidence, Using Evidence Responsibly (Plagiarism Policy).

Next Week: Chaffee, 4 (pp. 160-177), 5 (pp. 197-207, 217-226);
De Bono, White and Green Hats

Week Three: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning: Producing Ideas Creatively;
September 26 Information, Internet Filter Bubbles;
Looking for Vagueness in Ideas, Information that is Needed,
and the Limits of our Knowledge.

Next Week: Chaffee, 6 (pp. 250-260, 267-273, and 283-288), 10 (pp. 454-
458 on Deductive Arguments), and 11 (pp. 473-476 on Inductive Arguments);
“A Soldier’s Story” from D2L; de Bono, Red Hat.
Quiz on the Six Hats Method on D2L.

Week Four: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning (continued);
October 3 Emphasis and Bias; Language and Thought; Public Speaking;
Primary Sources.

Next Week: Chaffee, 8 (Relating and Organizing, pp. 349-374, and 383); De
Bono, Black & Yellow Hats,
Writing Assignment: Problem-Solving Facts and Ideas

Week Five: Problem-Solving. Non-Traditional Debate.
October 10

Next Week: Chaffee, 9 (Thinking Critically About Moral Issues, pp. 388-424),

and 3 (“Is Google Making Us Stupid?” pp. 130-136).

Week Six: The Evaluation Style: Summarizing, Evaluating and Judging;
October 17 Ethical Thinking; Reading Critically.

Next Week: Chaffee, 11 (478-483, 490-503, and 516-525 [Milgram]);
Public Speaking (and the Problem-Solving Presentation).

Week Seven: Logical Fallacies;
October 24 Milgram’s Experiment;
Introduction to Active Listening.
Skim “**The SCAMPER Method.**”

Week Eight: Building a Persuasive Case;
October 31 Thinking Errors and Hazards of Argumentation;
Active Listening, continued;
SCAMPER: Dealing with Exhaustion - Generating New Ideas.

Next Week on D2L: “On Nation and Race” (short writing assignment); skim “**Errors in Thinking**” by de Bono.

Week Nine: Emotional Appeals and Assumptions;
November 7 Adversarial Thinking versus Design Thinking;
Errors in Thinking Caused by Narrow Perception;
Reiterative Problem-Based Learning Presentations.

Week Ten: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning Presentations (continued).
November 14

COURSE POLICIES

Policy on Attendance

Attendance is critically important to this skills class. First, to apply the thinking methods studied in class, you’ll need to build upon and apply new practices from week to week. Missing a week is a setback to your performance the following week. Also, attendance in class assures your opportunity to practice and demonstrate appreciative thinking from the L-5 competence. This is your chance to collaborate with classmates, and to benefit from their thoughts on your Major Assignment topics, while assisting them with their topics. It is an express goal of this class to practice active listening and appreciative thinking to strengthen your design of a policy or solution. **If you miss two classes, any unexcused absence thereafter shall result in a failing grade.** The instructor will

consider extenuating circumstances that led to an absence, but does not promise to accept an excuse or justification. In addition, the instructor will not accept late work submitted after an unexcused absence.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU ATTEND EACH CLASS SESSION. WE WILL LEARN AND APPLY SKILLS THAT BUILD UPON EACH OTHER FROM WEEK TO WEEK.

Policy on Plagiarism

Students are expected to observe the University's established guidelines regarding academic integrity. Penalties for violation of the policy are quoted from the University's Handbook for Undergraduate Studies:

“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.”

Links to College and University Policies: This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

[Academic Integrity Policy \(UGRAD\)](#)

[Incomplete Policy](#)

[Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences](#)

[Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability](#)

[Protection of Human Research Participants](#)

[University Center for Writing-based Learning](#)

[Dean of Students Office](#)

OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

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

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or inquire via email at csd@depaul.edu.

Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677.

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential.

Writing Help: For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and much more, and for on-campus and online tutoring, see the DePaul University Writing Centers at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>. Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course. You may schedule appointments on an as-needed or weekly basis, in person or online. Writing Center tutors are specially 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. Use this resource! It is a free way to supplement instruction to develop this key communications skill.

INSTRUCTOR BIO: Charles F. Stone is an attorney retired from private practice. He received his B.S. degree in Journalism from the University of Illinois, Urbana, worked as a newspaper reporter in Texas and Illinois, and then returned to UI/Urbana and received his law degree in 1984. He has taught at DePaul since 1992, including courses on critical thinking, prejudice, social justice, business writing, the universe, the Advanced Project Online, and conflict resolution. He is State Coordinator for the Better Angels organization, a nationwide nonprofit dedicated to uniting liberals and conservatives in a working alliance to depolarize America.