Course Description

This course aims to a) make students more aware of their own thinking processes; b) help them develop those processes; and c) help them bring those skills to bear on college-level intellectual activity. This involves an emphasis on the skills and strategies of close reading and analysis as well as practice in the recognition, construction and evaluation of arguments. In pursuing these goals, we touch on principles of logic, styles of persuasion and techniques of propaganda. We also consider some methods of thinking outside the box. The course presents 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.

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 common rhetorical strategies, logical fallacies and propaganda techniques
- 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
- Recognize problems and limitations inherent in linguistic discourse
- Appreciate, engage with, and make use of viewpoints other than one’s own
Course Competencies

In this course, you will develop the following competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Competence Statement and Criteria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>Can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking.</td>
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</table>

How Competences 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

You do not have to purchase a textbook for this course. All readings for the course appear in the course itself. These consist of a) the Introduction & Overview sections which accompany each course module; and as b) Ares – electronic reserve – readings that are embedded in each module and which appear under the heading “Additional Readings” in the Content for each module.

Selected articles posted on Electronic Reserve at www.lib.depaul.edu

[Please note: the Chaffee text contains numerous “Thinking Activities” and “Questions for Analysis.” You are not required to write up any of these unless you are expressly instructed to do so. Any such instructions will appear under “Learning Activities” in the modules that follow.]

Course Structure

This course consists of 10 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is one week.

The following table outlines the course:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week, Module # and Title</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Week 1, Module 1: Thinking Critically** | Read Introduction & Overview: Thinking Critically  
Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 52-53  
Read Staples, *Black Men in Public Spaces*  
Read Cisneros, *Only Daughter* | 1.1 Introduction Discussion  
1.2 Times Bandits? Discussion  
Begin 2.2 Play On a Word, Part 1  
Begin 3.1 Personal Narrative Essay |
| **Week 2, Module 2: Perceiving; Using Language** | Read Introduction & Overview: Perceiving; Using Language  
Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 132-142; 230-235 | 2.1 Module 2 Exercise  
2.2 Play on a Word, Part 1 Submission Form  
2.3 Collateral Damage Discussion |
| **Week 3, Module 3: Believing and Knowing** | Read Introduction & Overview: Believing and Knowing  
Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 178-185  
Read O'Harrow, *Conspiracy Theory Wins Converts* | 3.1 Personal Narrative Essay  
3.2 O'Harrow Article Discussion  
3.3 Jesdanun Article Discussion  
Begin 4.2 Play On A Word Definitions |
| Week 4, Module 4: Reporting, Inferring, Judging | Read Introduction & Overview: Reporting, Inferring, Judging  
Read Chaffee Excerpts, pp. 152-153; pp. 370-393  
Read Feakes article | 4.1 Sorting Reports Inferences and Judgments  
4.2 Play On A Word definitions collected so far  
4.3 Moral Dilemmas  
Discussion |
|---|---|---|
| Week 5, Module 5: Reasoning Deductively | Read Introduction & Overview: Reasoning Deductively  
Read O'Reilly, Kevin, ed., "Was the United States Justified in Dropping Atomic Bombs on Japan?"  
Read Erikson, *Of Accidental Judgments and Casual Slaughters*  
Read Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* | 5.1 Exercise 5: Deductive Reasoning  
5.2 Dropping Atom Bombs Discussion |
| Week 6, Module 6: Reasoning Inductively | Read Introduction & Overview: Reasoning Inductively  
Read Chaffee, Excerpts, pp. 456-457  
**Optional** Read Tidwell, *The Intoxicating Birds of New Guinea* | 6.1 Inductive Reasoning Exercise  
6.2 Reactions to Crime Discussion  
6.3 Play on a Word, Part 1: All Definitions Collected |
| Week 7, Module 7: Fallacies and Appeals to Emotion | Read Introduction & Overview: Fallacies and Appeals to Emotion  
Read Vidal, *Drugs*  
Read Rosenthal, *The Case for Slavery* | 7.1 Module 7 Exercises  
7.2 Rock Music and Suicide Discussion |
### Assessment of Learning

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8, Module 8: Rhetoric and Persuasion</th>
<th>Read Introduction &amp; Overview: Rhetoric and Persuasion</th>
<th>8.1 Persuasion vs Propaganda Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Pratkanis and Aronson, <em>Our Age of Propaganda</em></td>
<td>Continue working on 9.1 Argument Analysis Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue working on 10.1 Play on a Word Project, Part 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9, Module 9: Going Beyond the Given</th>
<th>Read Introduction &amp; Overview: Going Beyond the Given</th>
<th>9.1 Argument Analysis Paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read de Bono, &quot;Vertical and Lateral Thinking&quot;</td>
<td>Continue working on 10.1 Play On A Word project part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Dormen &amp; Edidin, &quot;Original Spin&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10, Module 10: Questioning Authority</th>
<th>Read Sabini and Silver, “Critical Thinking and Obedience to Authority&quot;</th>
<th>10.1 Play on a Word Project Part 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Perkinson, “The Educated Person: A Changing Ideal”</td>
<td>10.2 Milgram Experiment Discussion</td>
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</table>
• 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.

**Percentage Distribution of Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Analysis Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play On A Word project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91 to 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 to 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85 to 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81 to 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 to 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69 to 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65 to 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61 to 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 or below</td>
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<tr>
<td>INC</td>
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</table>

**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. Assignments submitted late will receive reduced points. Assignments more than a week late will receive zero points.

Points are deducted for late work.

**Criteria for Discussion Performance**

Students are expected to participate in course Discussions and to do so in a timely manner. In order to receive full credit for a given week’s Discussion, you must a) Make an initial post by the
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.

**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.

Online Discussion

Discussion Boards

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


**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 the WebBoard 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.

**College and University Policies**

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#) (UGRAD)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#) (GRAD)
- **Incomplete Policy**
- [Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences](#)
- [Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability](#)
- [Protection of Human Research Participants](#)
- [APA citation format](#) (GRAD)

**Additional Course Resources**

- [University Center for Writing-based Learning](#)
- [SNL Writing Guide](#)
Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary. If a change occurs, it will be clearly communicated to students.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by faculty and staff at SNL Online of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.

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