

Critical Thinking Syllabus - Spring 2011

Catalogue Description:

Phil 03 - Five Hours Lecture

The function and use of formal and informal logic, argument, critical evaluation, and language in written composition.

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Required Texts:

Critical Thinking, [Ninth Edition, Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker, McGraw-Hill (New York, NY, 2009).

Glossary of Terms, Chris Storer [Available Free on my website:

<<http://www.deanza.fhda.edu/faculty/storer/>>]

Writing Composition and Critical Thinking, Chris Storer, [Available Free on my website:

<<http://www.deanza.fhda.edu/faculty/storer/>>]

Other readings available on the class website.

THE COURSE

WELCOME!

It is my firm conviction that this course can be the most important course in the student's entire curriculum. However, as with most of education, what the student achieves and retains here will be largely determined by the energy and attention s/he invests, both in the classroom and outside of it.

There is an important sense in which all academic courses involve a development of critical thought. By making critical thought the subject of specific study and exercise, this course will improve the quality of all the student's future educational endeavors, and because we will be developing critical thought in general rather than through a specific pattern of thought tied to the content of a specific discipline, the improvement will yield benefits far beyond the classroom. After all, we seek an education to be better prepared for the demands placed on us while living our lives. Even the joy of learning for its own sake is an experience not limited to the classroom and it is always intensified by the application of critical consciousness.

Those familiar with the term "critical" may object that such a negative attitude toward life is deadening and destructive, and certainly there are many who use the word in this manner, but the concept of critical thought is not here intended to be negative. To be critical, in the sense meant here, is to question, not to deny, out of an open curiosity with a desire to understand. "Critical" means, "involving or exercising careful judgment or observation...." (*The Oxford English Dictionary*)

A movie *critic* asks questions about her/his experience and writes a response in the form of a *critical* essay in the newspaper. We will learn from the *critique* things that will help

us decide whether we want to go to the show or not, and which may enrich our experience should we choose to go. The critic may conclude "thumbs up" or "thumbs down," but we can understand their judgment without having to agree with it. With this stipulation, students who apply themselves to the material and exercises in this course with a **positive** and **constructive** attitude will discover new worlds that have previously been beyond their grasp.

Attendance:

Critical thinking is partially the attitude implied by the above discussion, but it is also a set of skills, and like other skills, these must be acquired through practice and exercise with feedback from other minds. Much of class time will be organized around class and small group discussions and exercises. While these activities will presuppose the student's familiarity with the text and other out-of-class assignments, participation in class will be fundamental to the student's success and there are no easy substitutes for it. **Students may be dropped from the class after three (3) unexcused absences.** Note also that when a student arrives late for class, they disrupt the valuable time of the whole class. **Two unexcused late arrivals will be treated as an absence.** If you are unavoidably late, enter with as little disturbance as possible and take an available seat near the door. Call your instructor's attention to your presence at the end of class.

Critical Thinking Website ([LINK](#)) - This Syllabus, assignment schedules, and resources are being developed with on-line access. Links in the left hand column of the pages allow quick access to various pages of the site. Students should familiarize themselves with the site so they know what is available. This site is very much a work-in-process and most of the documents and pages are in draft form. Please [contact Chris](#) if you notice something confusing, broken links, or find typographical errors that need correction. Your help is appreciated.

Assignments: <Current Schedule>

There is an attached calendar of provisional assignments (**Current Schedule**). However, there will be additional assignments made during class as the occasion requires. Assignments should be prepared before the class in which they are due. Note that, since much of the in-class work will be interactive, your lack of preparation may put an unfair burden on your classmates. **A student who comes to class unprepared may be asked to go to the library to complete their assignment.**

Written assignments come in two flavors, general daily assignments and specific work designed to be turned in when it is due. While all work will be more valuable if it is done neatly and carefully, **work to be turned in should be proofread, typed or printed from a word processor, and double-spaced with 1 1/2" margins.** The purposes of this are clarity and ease of comprehension to the reader, and space for my comments.

Intellectual Honesty, Integrity, and Plagiarism

Students should understand that higher education (and critical thought) are fundamentally a process of cognitive development. This process is dependent on social interactions as

an honest dialogue between members of the community of scholars. Dishonesty of any variety undercuts the fabric of the entire community. **Cheating and plagiarism can not be tolerated** because they steal from others the very purpose that draws people to the community of scholars and they weaken the intellectual development on which our educational institutions and our society as a whole are based. While cases of plagiarism and cheating will be treated on a case-by-case basis, they will usually result in a "0" grade on the particular assignment and may result in a failing grade in the course. The student should also be aware that there are potential other disciplinary outcomes from the college that may result in suspension or expulsion.

Class and LISTSERV participation, preparation and homework (200 Points in Phil 03 and 300 Points in Phil 04)

Students are expected to keep up to date on their work for the course. Students should do specific assignments, maintain class notes and reading notes, along with any questions that arise in their mind. Critical thought is a thinking that is aware of itself and when we think "out loud" on paper, we are provided the opportunity of looking at our own thoughts with an objectivity that only comes to meditative thought with much practice (if at all). After working to write down questions as clearly as possible, and seeking answers from the text, if questions remain, they should be raised on the class LISTSERV and/or brought to class for discussion.

You should also plan on keeping notes on **new vocabulary**. Much of what we learn is tied to new words, or to new or more precise meanings of words with which we were familiar. This will certainly be the case as we learn about critical thought and I expect that students will build a **glossary of critical thinking concepts** that may include several hundred important words which become a technical vocabulary for our thinking about thinking, and for our evaluation of thinking.

Again, I need to emphasize, regarding your work in the class in general. **Keep up to date with the reading and assignments.** Not only will your time in class be much more profitable if you are well prepared, the amount of time the work will take will actually be less for the same or better results. Also, quarters go by very rapidly, particularly if you are always trying to play "catch-up."

Another reason to keep your work up to date, well organized and clearly written is that you will be allowed to create a single 4" x 6" index card of notes and use it during quizzes and the Mid-term. Thus, if your notes and homework are up to date, you can quickly review before classes, note important concepts and information you have learned on an index card, and use it should there be a quiz. Also, before exams, you can create an organized summary of the material as part of your preparation for the exam. Actually, the time invested in creating an index card of structured notes is some of the best study time to which you can devote yourself, even in the case of our final exam when notes will not be allowed. (This is true even in courses where you can never use a summary sheet in exams.)

Quizzes and Essays (200 Points)

There will be more than 4 graded quizzes and/or essays during the term. Some of these may be unannounced, or announced only on *CTSymposium*, the class email listserv, and some may be take-home assignments or even small group assignments.

Quizzes will count up to 50 points each and lower scores will be dropped to leave only the four highest counted toward the final grade.

Quiz scores may be improved by turning in a typed **explanation** of the reasoning which led to your response. The more this explanation reflects an understanding of the issues involved in specific quiz questions the greater the improvement in that question's mark. During the term, we will be spending some time talking about the process of writing since well-written compositions require and, to a certain extent, mirror critical thought. To think critically requires that we become conscious of our own thought processes, and it is a great deal easier to become aware of complex relationships when we have something fixed and concrete (written) to refer to. Also, writing our thoughts down often exposes to us their lack of clarity, incoherence, or confusion.

Midterm and Final Exams: (500 Points Total - 200 points for the MT and 300 for the Final)

Major Paper Project - Students in Phil 03 will be assigned a major paper project to be completed in four stages during the term. **(100 Points)**

The exams will be composed of a mixture of short answer and multiple choice questions, and some short essay questions, much like the quizzes in format.

Evaluation: (Total of 1000 Points possible)

All work:	A+ = 100% - 95%	B+ = 86% - 83%	C+ = 76% - 73%
	A = 94% - 90%	B = 82% - 80%	C = 72% - 70%
	A- = 89% - 87%	B- = 79% - 77%	D+ = 69% - 67%
	D = 66% - 63%	D- = 62% - 60%	F = 59% and below

Winter 2011 Schedule (A typical week for me will look like this:)

Mondays - 12:30-5:00 - Faculty Association Office [(650) 949-7544]

Tuesdays - 1:15-1:30 - Office Hour in L13
- 1:30-3:45 - Phil 03-03 in FOR 4
- 4:00-6:15 - Phil 03-04 in L 28
- 6:15-6:30 - Office Hour in L 28

Wednesdays - 12:30-5:00 - Faculty Association Office [(650) 949-7544]

Thursdays - 1:15-1:30 - Office Hour in L13
- 1:30-3:45 - Phil 03-03 in FOR 4
- 4:00-6:15 - Phil 03-04 in L 28
- 6:15-6:30 - Office Hour in L 28

If you need to contact me at other times, or if the above fails, [Email me](#), or, between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm, you can phone my home office number, (650) 949-2287.

Tentative Assignment Schedule

(As you read the chapters in the text, be sure to study the relevant entries in the "Glossary of Critical Thinking Terminology" for the key terms developed in the text. Assignments should be completed by the start of the week assigned so discussion can take place during the week. A quiz might even be given on the first day of the week for which material is assigned.)

Written assignments to be turned in should be typed or printed from a word processor, double spaced with 1.5" margins.

These are minimum levels of the assignments to assure comprehension of the material. You should look at the unassigned exercises too, and bring up related questions in class or on the class listserv.)

First Week (April 5 and 7) - Study for the Second class meeting the "Syllabus," "Introduction" and "Exercise Practices." You can download these and print them to study in comfort or you can study them on line, but do read them carefully. Be sure to look over the next week's assignments so you can clarify any questions in advance. Subscribe to the class listserv by sending an email message from the email address you will be using to:

[<CTSymposium-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>](mailto:CTSymposium-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Download and Print a copy of the "Critical Thinking Diagram" from the Class Web page. You should keep this in front of you all term as you study so you come to understand it well, and understand how each of the processes we exercise fit into the diagram.

Also, send me an email message from the email account you will be regularly using for this class. In the message, tell me briefly about yourself. (How long you have attended De Anza, other colleges and high schools you have attended, what is your primary language, what do you expect from this class? If you have a major, what is it? What are your plans and goals, etc? If your phone number has changed since the one the college has, what is it?)

Second Week (April 12 and 14) - Study Chapter 1 of Moore and Parker - Do all* the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium.

Write out your responses to Writing Exercise #1, page 40, for the radio commentary in Selection #8, Hetero By Choice, and the story in Selection #9, Bonnie and Clyde. Turn it in on the last day of class this week.

Third Week (April. 19 and 21 - [23rd is the last day to drop with no record of grade]) - Study Chapter 2 - Also, read the webpage "Explanations and Arguments" from the class web site - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium.

Fourth Week (April 26 and 28) - Study Chapter 3 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium. **Stage I, Major Paper Project Due on the 28th.**

Fifth Week (May 3 and 5) - Study Chapter 4 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium. The MID-TERM EXAM will be during the last class of this week. Students will have the whole class period, and the exam will be comprehensive. Bring scratch paper and a ball point pen. Scantrons are not needed.

Sixth Week (May 10 and 12) - Study Chapter 5 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium. **Stage II, Major Paper Project Due on the 12th.**

Seventh Week (May 17 and 19) - Study Chapter 6 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium.

Eighth Week (May 24 and 26 - [27th - Drop with W deadline]) - Study Chapter 7 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium. **Stage III, Major Paper Project Due on the 26th.**

Ninth Week (May 31 and June 2) - Study Chapter 8 - Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium.

Tenth Week (June 7 and 9) - Study Chapters 10 and 11-Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium. **Stage IV, Major Paper Project Due on the 9th.**

Eleventh Week (June 14 and 16) - Study Chapter 12-Do all the black triangle marked exercises in the chapter. Write out your responses and compare them to the responses provided in the back of the text. Bring comments and questions to class and/or discuss them on CTSymposium.

Twelfth Week (June 21 and 22)

FINAL EXAM: Phil 03-03 - Wednesday, June 22nd, 1:45 - 3:45 p.m.

FINAL EXAM: Phil 03-04 - Tuesday, June 21, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Bring a long (9") envelope With your name on it, and scratch paper to the exam. Turn these in with your exam when finished. Your exam, and grade summary will be placed in the envelope and available in the Social Sciences Division Office as soon as possible. A Notice will be sent to CTSymposium when they are ready.

* If you find the early examples in a set easy, move to those nearer the end. The important thing is to find out if you understand the key concepts from the reading and can apply them skillfully to different types of problems. It will be worthwhile also to spend some time looking at exercises without the black triangle. If they raise questions in your mind, ask them on CTSymposium, or bring them to the open question period in class.

Phil 03 Major Paper Project

Major Paper (100 Points) (This is a preliminary description of the assignment. We will be adding to, clarifying, and/or modifying this as we move through the work. **Be sure to read the piece on “Writing, Composition, and Critical Thinking,” from the Critical Thinking Webpage on my faculty webpage.**)

Students will work on a 2000 to 3000 word argumentative essay throughout the term. The work will be completed in four stages. Each stage will be handed in (**with all previous work on the Project**) and graded separately (25 points each.) **Note that, while we are working toward the complete essay which will be due as Stage IV, near the end of the term, each stage is of equal importance. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you can put off the work to the end. Even if you were to get a good grade on Stage IV, poor work on the first three stages would impact your final course grade.**

Because this is to be an argumentative essay, there are the following minimum conditions.

1. The main point of the essay must be to resolve a **single focal issue** which is relevant to solving some **real problem** faced by you and your audience.
2. There must be a **real opposition** to your position on this focal issue. That is, there must be one or more people who have seriously proposed an opposed resolution to your focal issue and who have written arguments in support of their position.
3. Part of your essay must fairly present your opposition's key argument as relevant to your focal issue, and explain why it does not convince you that they are right and you are wrong.

Stage I (Due End of 4th week - 25 Points) - A determination of “**the problem**” with careful **analysis** and **description** to clarify the major issues involved, and a preliminary discussion of the projected focal issue of your paper. This description/discussion should attempt to remain purely objective. That is, you should make no claims with which your opposition will disagree. To accomplish this, you will need to research the problem and issues. This should include at least two significant references you have found that are relevant to the focal issue and your opposition. You should have skimmed over these enough to have a general idea of their authors’ positions on relevant subsidiary issues. **Note that this stage requires that you begin to seriously research the issue you plan to discuss. While articles from the popular press may provide a starting place, you should quickly move to more significant scholarly authors. At a minimum, you should have begun to read significant arguments from respected authors who disagree with each other.** Stage one should include a beginning bibliography.

Stage II (Due End of 6th week - 25 Points) - Part 1: A **description** of your primary audience (your opposition in respect to the focal issue), identifying who they are as specifically as possible, describing their values, interests and expectations, noting where there is relevant common ground between them and yourself, and clarifying where there is conflict and why. Also present a brief description of their primary argument(s) in support of their position on your focal issue.

Part 2: An Argument Outline of the projected body of your essay. The goal here is to clarify the skeleton which will provide a framework for the essay's structure. Since it is to be an argumentative essay, the outline must make visible the argument's structure. Arguments start with issues. Then information and knowledge are brought to bear as premises. These premises allow one to reasonably claim (to infer) the conclusion, a statement which resolves the issue we began with.

A significant part of the major paper involves responding to your opposition's arguments (at least 20%). You may choose to deal with your opposition's argument as an issue raised by the introductory analysis of problem, or it might be better dealt with in several places as subsidiary issues. But remember that **this assignment will not be complete unless you have presented at least one argument of your opposition as an issue, and outlined your counter argument.**

Stage III (Due End of 8th week - 25 Points) - An **Introduction** to your essay which presents to your audience the problem and an analysis of the issues while developing a focal issue in terms acceptable to them. Remember that the main purpose of an introduction is to communicate clearly to your audience (opposition) just how you understand the focal issue and why it is important. **The introduction to an argumentative essay is not the place to attack or disagree with your opposition. If you are going to enter into a dialogue with them, you must first establish a common ground. This is a place for objective description and analysis, not opinion and controversy. Your work on this Stage should fully respond to the comments and feedback you have received on Stages I and II.**

Stage IV (Due End of 10th week - 25 Points) - The complete argumentative essay that incorporates the feedback you have received on the previous work in an integrated and unified whole. The concluding paragraph may contain your conclusion (thesis) if it was not made clear at the end of the body, but the goal of the essay's concluding section is to discuss the thesis so that **its importance** as a resolution of the focal issue is clear, reminding the reader of the role of the focal issue as part of what must be understood to solve the problem you began with. Thus the reader should come away from your conclusion with a sense that, even if they still disagree with you, they at least understand how you have come to believe the way you do and why it is important; that is, they understand your ideas as a coherent whole in response to a common problem.