

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** PHIL 103 **TITLE:** Critical Thinking and Argumentative Writing
Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; 96.0-108.0 Homework hours; 144.0-162.0 Total Student Learning hours
Method of Grading: Letter Grade Only
Prerequisite: ENGL 100, with a minimum grade of C or ENGL 105 with a minimum grade of C

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
AA/AS Degree Requirements:
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E2b. Communication and Analytical Thinking
CSU GE:
 CSU GE Area A: ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL THINKING: A3 - Critical Thinking

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
 Development of critical thinking skills necessary for evaluating as well as formulating persuasive composition essays and inquiry-driven research. Critical thinking skills are applied to topics such as political rhetoric, advertisements, editorials, scientific claims, and social commentary. The course covers uses of language, distinguishing knowledge from belief and fact from judgment, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, evaluating information sources, and the identification of assumptions, common logical errors, and fallacies. The course emphasizes writing, with attention to audience, purpose, context, genre, and language conventions.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. Identify types of arguments and patterns of reasoning, including deductive arguments, inductive arguments, causal reasoning, analogical reasoning, explanatory reasoning, and fallacious reasoning.
 2. Outline, analyze, and evaluate an argument presented in an essay, showing how the supporting points contribute to the main point and considering factors which bear on the cogency and soundness of the argument, while demonstrating an understanding of diverse perspectives.
 3. Write an extended argumentative essay which outlines clear expectations, contains a sufficiently reasonable and explicit train of thought, effectively weaves together multiple strands of inquiry, uses style, diction, and tone appropriate for the academic community, and comes to a rationally supported conclusion.

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. Analyze, criticize, and generate complex ideas.
 2. Reason inductively and deductively.
 3. Identify the assumptions upon which particular conclusions depend.
 4. Reflect critically on one's own thought processes.
 5. Respond appropriately to texts, with attention to their intended audience, purpose, and social context.
 6. Distinguish knowledge from belief and fact from judgment.
 7. Recognize common logical errors or fallacies of language and thought.
 8. Evaluate sources with respect to their relevance, reliability, and appropriateness to the rhetorical context.

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**
Lecture Content:
 1. **Lecture Content:**

 Part One: Identifying and Reconstructing Arguments
 A. Identifying Arguments and Their Parts
 - a. Premises and Conclusions
 - b. Premise support
 - c. Unexpressed or missing premises

- B. Arguments versus explanations
 - C. Deductive versus inductive arguments
 - D. The language of arguments
 - a. Logical connectives
 - b. Assuring, guarding, and discounting
 - E. Diagramming arguments
- Part Two: Evaluating Arguments and Argumentative Contexts
- A. Validity and soundness
 - B. Cogency and strength
 - C. Types of definition and their purpose
 - a. Denotative definitions
 - b. Lexical definitions
 - c. Stipulative definitions
 - d. Persuasive definitions
 - D. Types of dispute
 - a. Verbal
 - b. Factual
 - c. Evaluative
 - d. Interpretative
 - E. Identifying common logical errors or fallacies of language and thought
 - a. Rhetorical slanting
 - b. Fallacies of ambiguity
 - c. Fallacies of relevance
 - d. Fallacies of weak induction
 - e. Other common fallacies
 - F. Key argument contexts
 - a. Political discourse
 - b. Advertising
 - c. Scientific claims
 - d. Common social forums
- Part Three: Basic Patterns for Developing Argumentative Essays
- A. Distinguishing between knowledge, belief, and value judgments
 - a. Evaluating and forming beliefs
 - i. Reliable and unreliable observations
 - ii. Beliefs of others: legitimate and illegitimate appeals to authority
 - iii. Uses and abuses of statistics
 - b. Distinguishing between facts and value judgments
 - c. Evaluating and forming value judgments
 - B. Analogical reasoning
 - C. Causal reasoning
- Part Four: Research Paper as Extended Argument
- A. Choosing a topic
 - B. Finding appropriate sources
 - C. Evaluating sources
 - D. Writing the research paper

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Critique
- C. Activity
- D. Discussion
- E. Guest Speakers
- F. Individualized Instruction
- G. Observation and Demonstration
- H. Other (Specify): Other methods may include: 1) Modeling: use models of student and professional writing to introduce, teach and reinforce effective writing and critical thinking strategies 2) Peer review workshops: students share and critique each other's writing 3) Project-based learning: find ways for students to write for a larger audience than just the teacher, such as through use of blogs, websites, e-portfolios, or

submission to academic journals.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Compose thesis-driven arguments to suit a variety of rhetorical situations, including interpretation, evaluation and analysis (based on application of key terms and evaluative criteria), and support them with a variety of appropriate textual evidence and examples.

Find, analyze, interpret, and evaluate primary and secondary sources, incorporating them into written essays using MLA documentation format without plagiarism.

Use style, diction, and tone appropriate to a diverse academic community and the purpose of the specific writing task; proofread, edit, and revise essays so English grammar, usage, or punctuation does not impede clarity.

Demonstrate understanding of critical thinking concepts and processes through the analysis and construction of arguments, especially in research and written work that attends appropriately to audience, purpose, context, genre, and language conventions.

A minimum of 5000 words of writing is required. This 5000-word requirement may include a combination of process drafts, written peer response, and other forms of informal writing which informs students' inquiry-driven research and writing process. Students should revise and receive feedback on at least three extended arguments from their instructors.

Texts chosen for critical analysis should reflect an awareness of cultural diversity and instructors should attend to fairness, equity, and access as guiding principles for assessment.

Reading Assignments:

Read approximately 300-500 pages of text to learn concepts, criteria, and techniques of critical thinking. Reading will include example and model arguments. Total reading for the semester translates to approximately 20-30 pages of reading per week.

Read diverse arguments from different genres: prose (both long and short), documentaries, advertising, and memes.

Develop and practice strategies for annotation and note-taking for comprehension and critical reading.

Compare and evaluate different arguments (valid, sound, strong, cogent, or weak) and differentiate argument from other modes of persuasion.

Use basic library research to investigate the cultural, social or political contexts of assigned texts and their authors.

Other Outside Assignments:

Students will do homework problems and lab work by arrangement to practice the techniques and develop critical thinking skills.

To be Arranged Assignments:

N/A

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Performance
- C. Class Work
- D. Exams/Tests
- E. Group Projects

- F. Homework
- G. Papers
- H. Projects
- I. Research Projects
- J. Written examination

10. **REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):**

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Levin, N., J. Sheley (eds.).. *Critical Reasoning and Writing: An Open Educational Resource*, ed. NGE Far Press, 2020
- B. Barnet, S., H. Bedau, J. O'Hara.. *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument, with Readings*, 13th ed. Macmillan, 2022
- C. Moore/Parker. *Critical Thinking*, 13 ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2020
- D. Vaughn, Lewis. *The Power of Critical Thinking*, 8 ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2024

Other:

- A. Examples gathered by the instructor and the class from the media and from texts currently used in various disciplines. Such readings are a perfect place to reflect a sensitivity to cultural diversity.
- B. Logic focused texts may be used as supplemental materials, such as: 1) Hurley, P. A Concise Introduction to Logic, Cengage, 14th edition, 2023. 2) Howard-Snyder, D., F. Howard-Snyder, and R. Wasserman. The Power of Logic, McGraw Hill, 6th edition 2019. 3) Kelley, D., D. Hutchins. The Art of Reasoning: An Introduction to Logic, 5th edition, 2020.
- C. Other Critical Thinking and Writing texts, such as: 1) Cavendar, N., H. Kahane, F. Boardman. Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric: The Use of Reason in Everyday Life. 13th edition, Cengage, 2017. 2) Cooper, S., R. Patton. Writing Logically, Thinking Critically. 8th edition. Pearson, 2014. 3) Pantuso, T., LeMire, S., Anders, K., Informed Arguments: A Guide to Writing and Research. Revised 2nd edition, CC-BY-NC-SA, 2019.

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Course Originator: Jeremy Ball