

Honors 101A—Seminar in Critical Thinking
California State University, Fullerton
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
University Hall 317

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4:30 and by appointment

Course Description:

This course focuses on critical thinking and its application in everyday reasoning. It is one of the most important courses you will take in your undergraduate career. Cultivating your critical thinking skills will improve your writing, your reading, your listening, and your thinking. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and analyze arguments.
2. Understand the distinctions between deductive and inductive reasoning.
3. Understand the distinctions among various types of claims.
4. Understand and be able to critically evaluate various elements of critical thinking, including evidence, reasoning, and fallacies.
5. Understand the role that language plays in critical thinking.
6. Effectively present both written and oral arguments.
7. Become a critical "decision maker."

Learning Goals:

This course meets the **General Education** learning goals for category **I.C.—Core Competencies-Critical Thinking**—in the following ways:

1. By developing the ability to think, read, and write critically.
2. By developing the ability to identify what is necessary for successful decision making and problem solving.
3. By developing the ability to clarify facts, concepts, and evidence involved in problem solving.
4. By developing the ability to critically evaluate evidence used to support a position.
5. By developing the ability to revise arguments and conclusions based on critical analysis.
6. By developing the ability to recognize implicit and explicit features of communication.
7. By developing the ability to assess critically similarities and differences in points of view.

8. By developing the ability for critical self-evaluation.

****A grade of C (2.0) or better is required to satisfy this General Education category.**

Texts:

Moore, Brooke Noel and Richard Parker. *Critical Thinking*, seventh edition (CT)
McGraw Hill, 1993.

Bordo, Susan. *Twilight Zones: The Hidden Life of Cultural Images from Plato to O.J.*
(TZ) University of California Press, 1997.

Selected Essays (available on reserve).

The books are available at the campus bookstore.

Films:

Braveheart

Babe

Top Gun

Pretty Woman

Assessment Procedures:

Assessment of student performance will be based on oral presentations, short papers, a midterm exam, and class participation, as follows:

- Response Paper #1 10%
- Response Paper #2 10%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Oral Presentation 10%
- Final Project 20%
- In-Class Assignments 10%
- Class Participation 20%

Response Paper #1 (10%)—A 2-3 page response paper on an assigned topic will be due in class on Thursday, February 17. Topics and paper guidelines will be distributed no later than February 10. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Response Paper #2 (10%)—A 2-3 page response paper on an assigned topic will be due in class on Tuesday, April 5. Paper guidelines will be distributed no later than March 15. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Midterm Exam (20%)—A midterm exam covering material from the first half of the course will be given in class on Tuesday, March 15. **There will be no make up exams unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the scheduled exam date.** If an unforeseen emergency arises on the day of the exam, the student must discuss the situation with the instructor within one week of the exam date. Proof documenting the emergency will be required. If a student does not take the exam and fails to follow these guidelines, he or she will receive a “0” for the exam.

Oral Presentation (10%)—Each student will give a 2-3 minute oral presentation on an assigned topic on either April 14 or April 19. Topics and guidelines will be distributed no later than April 5. **There will be no make up presentations unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the scheduled presentation date.** If an unforeseen emergency arises on the day of the presentation, the student must discuss the situation with the instructor within one week of the presentation date. Proof documenting the emergency will be required. If a student does not deliver a presentation and fails to follow these guidelines, he or she will receive a “0” for the presentation.

Final Project (20%)—For the final project, each student will write a 3-5 page critical paper and deliver a 4-6 minute oral presentation related to the paper. The paper will be due on Tuesday, May 17. Presentations will be given May 17 and May 19. If necessary, presentations will also be given during the time slot scheduled for the final exam, Tuesday, May 24 from 12:00-1:50 p.m.. Project topics and guidelines will be distributed no later than May 3. **There will be no make up presentations unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the scheduled presentation date.** If an unforeseen emergency arises on the day of the presentation, the student must discuss the situation with the instructor within one week of the presentation date. Proof documenting the emergency will be required. If a student does not deliver a presentation and fails to follow these guidelines, he or she will receive a “0” for the presentation.

In-Class Assignments (10%)—Throughout the course, there will be several in class exercises, assignments, and pop quizzes. In order to perform well on these, it will be necessary to complete all of the assigned reading for each class.

Class Participation (20%)—Since classes will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, regular attendance and participation are required. Although there is no official attendance policy, failure to attend class regularly will affect your participation grade (and your in-class assignments grade as well).

Grading Scale:

****Note Well—Beginning this semester, Spring 2005, instructors at Cal State Fullerton have the option of using a plus/minus grading scale in their courses. This plus/minus grading scale will be used in this course, as follows:**

A	94-100	C	72-76
A-	91-93	C-	69-71
B+	88-90	D+	66-68
B	83-87	D	60-65
B-	80-82	F	0-59
C+	77-79		

These grades are converted in the following ways in determining students' grade point averages:

A+	= 4.0	C	= 2.0
A	= 4.0	C-	= 1.7
A-	= 3.7	D+	= 1.3
B+	= 3.3	D	= 1.0
B	= 3.0	D-	= 0.7
B-	= 2.7	F	= 0.0
C+	= 2.3		

Academic Integrity and Classroom Behavior:

Students need to be familiar with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current student handbook. Students who violate university standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions. **Policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced.**

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is comprised of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means. Academic dishonesty also includes helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty. **Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty will fail the course.** Students with questions about how to cite others' work should see the teaching assistant or instructor.

Academic Accommodations:

Students with a documented disability who wish to discuss academic accommodations should contact the instructor and the Disabled Student Services Office (278.3117) immediately.

Students whose religious obligations will require them to miss class any time this semester should inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Schedule:

NB: The following assignments are subject to change. Any changes will be announced at least one week in advance.

Tues. Feb. 1	Introduction to the Course	
Thurs. Feb. 3	What is Critical Thinking?	CT, Ch. 1
Tues. Feb. 8	Thinking Critically about Culture	TZ, intro. & Plato handout
Thurs. Feb. 10	Critical Writing	CT, Ch. 2
Tues. Feb. 15	Critical Writing & Credibility	CT, Ch. 3
Thurs. Feb. 17	Credibility & PAPER DUE	CT, Ch. 3
Tues. Feb. 22	Arguments	CT, Ch. 7
Thurs. Feb. 24	Arguments	CT, Ch. 7 & <i>Braveheart</i>
Tues. March 1	Critical Analysis	TZ, Ch. 2 & <i>Babe</i>
Thurs. March 3	Critical Media Literacy	Kellner's "Intro to <i>Media Culture</i> " (on reserve) & <i>Pretty Woman</i>
Tues. March 8	Deductive Arguments	CT, Ch. 9
Thurs. March 10	Deductive Arguments	CT, Ch. 9
Tues. March 15	MIDTERM EXAM	
*Thurs. March 17	Philosophy Symposium (TSU Pavilion C)	
Tues. March 22	No Class	
Thurs. March 24	No Class	
Tues. March 29	Spring Break—No Class	
Thurs. March 31	Spring Break—No Class	
Tues. April 5	Inductive Arguments & PAPER DUE	CT, Ch. 10
Thurs. April 7	Causal Arguments	CT, Ch. 11
Tues. April 12	Causal Arguments	CT, Ch. 11
Thurs. April 14	Oral Presentations	
Tues. April 19	Oral Presentations	
Thurs. April 21	Media Culture & Ideology	Kellner essay "Media culture, politics, & ideology" (on reserve) & <i>Top Gun</i>
Tues. April 26	Media Culture & Ideology	Kellner essay "Media culture,

			politics, & ideology” (on reserve)
Thurs.	April 28	Fallacies	CT, Ch. 4-6
Tues.	May 3	Fallacies	CT, Ch. 4-6
Thurs.	May 5	Review	
Tues.	May 10	Cultural Imagery	TZ, Ch. 4
Thurs.	May 12	Cultural Imagery	TZ, Ch. 4
Tues.	May 17	Final Project Presentations	
Thurs.	May 19	Final Project Presentations	
Tues.	May 24	Final Project Presentations (if necessary) 12:00-1:50 p.m.	