

Philosophy 103 10
 Critical Thinking

Chaminade University
 Friday 5:30 - 9:40pm
 Schofield Barracks

Instructor: Andrew Colvin
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Course Description(s):

Designed to be more than a study of formal reasoning methods, this course includes but is not limited to the study of logical fallacies. Chaminade Undergraduate Catalogue 2002

Critical Thinking is the general term given to a wide range of *cognitive skills* and *intellectual dispositions* needed (1) to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims; (2) to discover and overcome personal prejudices and biases; (3) to formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions; (4) and to make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do. Gregory Bassham, Critical Thinking, 2002

Course Goals:

While students will be asked to learn numerous terms, concepts, theories, and facts, the general aim of this course is to assist students in (1) developing a set of basic cognitive skills and dispositions (see above), and in (2) applying these in the evaluation of arguments, advertisements, statistical information, news reports, and pseudoscientific claims.

Required Texts:

Bassham, Gregory. Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction. McGraw Hill

Recommended Texts:

Sagan, Carl. The Demon Haunted World. Ballentine Books
 Goldberg, Bernhard. Bias. Perennial Books

Requirements:

- Students must regularly attend class, arrive on time, and stay until class is dismissed.
- Attendance and participation will be taken into account in determining final grades: The highest grade any student who misses two classes can earn is a B. The highest grade any student who misses three classes can earn is a C. Any student who misses more than three classes will automatically receive an F.
- There will be no distinction made between excused and unexcused absences.
- Students who for some extraordinary reason happen to miss class are responsible for any information or assignments that they missed.
- Assigned readings and exercises are to be completed before the beginning of class.

Assessment:

Grades will be based on a midterm exam (30%), five two page critical analyses (5x10% = 50%), and attendance and participation (20%). The midterm exam will focus on outlining arguments and identifying logical fallacies. The five short writing assignments will consist of critical analyses of an editorial, an advertisement, a website, a news broadcast, and a pseudoscientific claim.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

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|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| Week One (7/11) | Basic Concepts, Outlining Arguments | Bassham I pp18-19 |
| Week Two (7/18) | Critical Thinking Standards and Barriers | Bassham I pp 1-25 |
| Week Three (7/25) | Fallacies of Relevance | Bassham V pp 149-162 |
| Week Four (8/1) | Fallacies of Insufficient Evidence | Bassham VI pp 162-189 |
| Week Five (8/8) | Inductive and Statistical Reasoning | Bassham XI pp 305-351 |
| Week Six (8/15) | News Media | Bassham XIV pp 453-483 |
| Week Seven (8/22) | News Media | Bassham XIV pp 453-483 |
| Week Eight (8/29) | Advertising | Bassham XIV pp 484-504 |
| Week Nine (9/5) | Science and Pseudoscience: | Bassham XV pp 504-524 |
| Week Ten (9/12) | Science and Pseudoscience | Bassham XV pp 524-541 |

Related Weblinks

Critical Thinking

Bassham's Critical Thinking: <http://www.mhhe.com/bassham>

Editorials and Commentary

Opinion Pages <http://www.opinion-pages.org/>

Washington Dispatch <http://www.washingtondispatch.com/>

Conservative Chronicle <http://conservativechronicle.com/columnists/>

Thomas Paine <http://www.tompaine.com/>

Working for a Change <http://www.workingforchange.com/>

Aljazeera (English version) <http://english.aljazeera.net/>

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/print/editorials/>

The Honolulu Advertiser <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/>

Ad and News Media

Adbusters <http://www.adbusters.org/home/>

Project Censored <http://www.projectcensored.org/>

Independent Media Center <http://www.indymedia.org/>

Center for Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting <http://www.fair.org/>

The Center for Public Integrity <http://www.publicintegrity.org/dtaweb/home.asp>

Skepticism and Pseudoscience

The Skeptic's Society <http://www.skeptic.com/>

James Randi Educational Foundation <http://www.randi.org/>