



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Approved

I. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Subject and Number: Psychology 103
Descriptive Title: Critical Thinking and Psychology
Course Disciplines: Psychology
Division: Behavioral and Social Sciences

Catalog Description:

This course focuses on the development of critical thinking skills related to psychology. In addition to learning basic skills of logic, students will also learn about the logic of the scientific method and the common errors of human cognition that impede critical thinking. Emphasis is placed on the application of critical thinking skills to writing effective arguments, analyzing the writings of others, and understanding contemporary controversies in psychology.

Conditions of Enrollment:

Prerequisite: English 1A or English 1AH with a minimum grade of C

Course Length:	X Full Term	Other (Specify number of weeks):
Hours Lecture:	3.00 hours per week	TBA
Hours Laboratory:	0 hours per week	TBA
Course Units:	3.00	

Grading Method: Letter
Credit Status: Associate Degree Credit

Transfer CSU: X Effective Date: Prior to July 1992
Transfer UC: X Effective Date: Prior to July 1992

General Education:

El Camino College:

4B – Language and Rationality – Communication and Analytical Thinking

Term: Other: Approved

CSU GE:

A3 - Critical Thinking

Term: Other: Approved

IGETC:

1B - Critical Thinking-English Composition

Term: Fall 1992 Other:

II. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

A. COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (The course student learning outcomes are listed below, along with a representative assessment method for each. Student learning outcomes are not subject to review, revision or approval by the College Curriculum Committee)

1. Logic of the Scientific Method:
On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to describe the hallmark characteristics of the scientific method and contrast it with other forms of inquiry.
2. Fundamental Principles:
On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to differentiate and compare fundamental critical thinking concepts (e.g., premises, conclusions, and qualifiers; inductive versus deductive, valid versus sound arguments).
3. Everyday Application:
On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to apply principles of critical thinking (e.g., logical fallacies, rhetorical devices) in their daily decision-making (product purchase, school selection, medical treatment).

B. Course Student Learning Objectives (The major learning objective for students enrolled in this course are listed below)

1. Differentiate between the characteristics of critical and usual thinking.
2. Identify and analyze the structure and components of arguments.
3. Compose and evaluate arguments, applying critical thinking skills.
4. Differentiate between deductive and inductive arguments, and evaluate various forms of each.
5. Describe the components of credibility and assess the credibility of sources and claims.
6. Recognize logical fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and distinguish between fallacious, non-argumentative, and argumentative reasoning in persuasion.
7. Describe the hallmark characteristics of the scientific method and contrast it with other forms of inquiry.
8. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs in psychology.
9. Evaluate issues of causal inference by differentiating between correlation and causation.
10. Analyze the influence of language ambiguity, vagueness, and other linguistic factors on reasoning.
11. Identify characteristics of human cognition that interfere with critical thinking.
12. Use critical thinking skills to assess controversial issues in psychology.

III. OUTLINE OF SUBJECT MATTER (Topics are detailed enough to enable a qualified instructor to determine the major areas that should be covered as well as ensure consistency from instructor to instructor and semester to semester.)

Lecture or Lab	Approximate Hours	Topic Number	Major Topic
Lecture	4	I	I. Introduction (4 hours, lecture) A. Definitions of Critical and Usual Thinking B. Common Misconceptions About Psychology C. The Importance of Thinking Critically About Psychology
Lecture	7	II	II. Arguments (7 hours, lecture) A. Components of Arguments 1. Premises and Conclusions 2. Assumptions and Qualifiers B. Diagramming Arguments C. Analyzing Arguments D. Composing Arguments
Lecture	6	III	III. Inductive and Deductive Reasoning (6 hours, lecture) A. Inductive Reasoning 1. Characteristics of Inductive Arguments 2. Strong Versus Weak Inductive Arguments B. Deductive Reasoning 1. Characteristics of Deductive Arguments 2. Valid and Sound Deductive Arguments
Lecture	5	IV	IV. Credibility (5 hours, lecture) A. Assessing the Content of a Claim B. Assessing the Source of a Claim C. Credibility and the News Media D. Credibility and Advertising
Lecture	7	V	V. Persuasion (7 hours, lecture) A. Fallacies B. Other Rhetorical Devices C. The Impact of Fallacies and Other Rhetorical Devices on Reasoning D. Fallacious, Non-Argumentative, and Argumentative Reasoning
Lecture	7	VI	VI. Scientific Reasoning (7 hours, lecture) A. The Logic of the Scientific Method B. Research Designs 1. Case Studies 2. Correlational Designs 3. Experiments C. Common Challenges of Scientific Reasoning 1. Differentiating Correlation and Causation 2. Proper Use of Case Study Information 3. Understanding Probability 4. Identifying Pseudoscience
Lecture	5	VII	VII. Thought and Language (5 hours, lecture) A. Ambiguity B. Vagueness C. Emotional Tone

			D. Undefined Terms E. Other Linguistic Factors
Lecture	6	VIII	VIII. Characteristics of Cognition that Impact Critical Thinking (6 hours, lecture) A. Memory Errors B. Perceptual Errors C. Heuristics
Lecture	7	IX	IX. Critical Thinking and Controversial Issues in Psychology (7 hours, lecture) A. Parapsychology B. Pseudoscience and Self Help C. Psychology and the Law D. Psychology and Politics E. Other Controversial Issues
Total Lecture Hours		54	
Total Laboratory Hours		0	
Total Hours		54	

IV. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION AND SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

A. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Substantial writing assignments

B. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENT USING PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION:

After viewing a video of a political debate between presidential candidates, analyze the quality of argumentation provided by each candidate in a two- to three-page essay, focusing on the use of fallacies and other rhetorical devices.

C. COLLEGE-LEVEL CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Based on assigned readings, class lecture, and discussion, write a four- to six-page argumentative essay putting forth your own position on the following issue: Can experiments using animals be justified? In your essay, focus on constructing strong argument structure, avoiding fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and applying knowledge of scientific methodology in research.
2. In a four- to six-page essay, analyze the argumentation presented in articles written on opposing sides of the following issue: Can involuntary commitment to mental hospitals be justified? In your essay, evaluate expert credibility, acceptability and consistency of premises, use of fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and overall strength of the arguments presented.

D. OTHER TYPICAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION METHODS:

Essay exams
Written homework
Term or other papers
Multiple Choice
Completion
Matching Items
True/False

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Discussion
Group Activities
Lecture
Multimedia presentations

Note: In compliance with Board Policies 1600 and 3410, Title 5 California Code of Regulations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, instruction delivery shall provide access, full inclusion, and effective communication for students with disabilities.

VI. WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Study
Answer questions
Required reading
Written work

Estimated Independent Study Hours per Week: 6

VII. TEXTS AND MATERIALS

A. UP-TO-DATE REPRESENTATIVE TEXTBOOKS

Brooke Noel Moore, Richard Parker. Critical Thinking. McGraw Hill Humanities, 2017.
Judith Boss. Think: Why You Think the Way You Do. McGraw Hill, 2017.

B. ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOKS

C. REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age, Theodore Schick, Lewis Vaughn, McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2010
Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Psychological Issues, Edwin Gantt, McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2017
How to Think Straight About Psychology, Keith Stanovich, Pearson, 2012

D. OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

VIII. CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT

A. Requisites (Course and Non-Course Prerequisites and Corequisites)

Requisites	Category and Justification
Course Prerequisite English-1A	Computational/Communication Skills
Course Prerequisite English 1AH	Computational/Communication Skills

B. Requisite Skills

Requisite Skills
<p>The student should be able to locate and correct grammatical errors (e.g., sentence fragments, misused commas, incorrect pronoun case, subject-verb disagreement, and incorrect tense) in the own essays or in other written works.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1A</u> Recognize and revise sentence-level grammar and usage errors.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1AH</u> Recognize and revise sentence-level grammar and usage errors.</p>
<p>The student should be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in the reading of essays, fiction, and nonfiction. These skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to locate key components in written materials (e.g., the thesis statement, the central theme), summarize and paraphrase written material, evaluate support and evidence, and compare and contrast two written works or different portions of one written work.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1A</u> Read and apply critical-thinking skills to numerous published articles and to college-level, book-length works for the purpose of writing and discussion.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1AH</u> Read and apply critical-thinking skills to numerous published articles and to college-level, book-length works for the purpose of writing and discussion.</p>
<p><u>ENGL 1A</u> Demonstrate ability to locate and utilize a variety of academic databases, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly websites.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1AH</u> Demonstrate ability to locate and utilize a variety of academic databases, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly websites.</p>
<p>The student should be able to compose essays and research papers. Composition includes, but is not limited to, composing thesis and topic statements, composing paragraphs, organizing compositions, using support, and performing research techniques to write a research paper.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1A</u> Apply appropriate strategies in the writing process including prewriting, composing, revising, and editing techniques.</p> <p><u>ENGL 1AH</u> Apply appropriate strategies in the writing process including prewriting, composing, revising, and editing techniques.</p>
<p><u>ENGL 1A</u> Compose multi-paragraph, thesis-driven essays with logical and appropriate supporting ideas, and</p>

with unity and coherence.

ENGL 1AH

Compose multi-paragraph, thesis-driven essays with logical and appropriate supporting ideas, and with unity and coherence.

ENGL 1A

Utilize MLA guidelines to format essays, cite sources in the texts of essays, and compile Works Cited lists.

ENGL 1AH

Utilize MLA guidelines to format essays, cite sources in the texts of essays, and compile Works Cited lists.

C. Recommended Preparations (Course and Non-Course)

Recommended Preparation	Category and Justification
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D. Recommended Skills

Recommended Skills

E. Enrollment Limitations

Enrollment Limitations and Category	Enrollment Limitations Impact
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Course created by Ron Wood on 10/01/1987.

BOARD APPROVAL DATE:

LAST BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 03/23/2020

Last Reviewed and/or Revised by Amy Himsel on 12/10/2020

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