CRITICAL THINKING

IPFW
Fall Semester 2005
Syllabus for Philosophy 120-01
WF 12:00 – 1:15 PM
Kettler Hall Room 242

Jennifer Caseldine-Bracht

Office: KT 257
Office Hours: 1:30-2:00 PM WF, 12:00-12:30 PM Saturday
Or by appointment
Voice mail: 481-6366
E-mail: caseldij@ipfw.edu
Website: http://users.ipfw.edu/caseldij

"Broadly speaking, critical thinking is concerned with reason, intellectual honesty, and open-mindedness, as opposed too emotionalism, intellectual laziness, and closed-mindedness. Thus, critical thinking involves: following evidence where it leads; considering all possibilities; relying on reason rather than emotion; being precise; considering a variety of possible viewpoints and explanations; weighing the effects of motives and biases; being concerned more with finding the truth than with being right; not rejecting unpopular views out of hand; being aware of one's own prejudices and biases, and not allowing them to sway one's judgment."

Kurland, Daniel J. I Know What It Says . . . What does it Mean?

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of critical thinking. Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

- Develop and improve upon the ability to formulate categories, distinctions, or frameworks to organize information in such a manner to aid comprehension.
- Develop the ability to detect indirect persuasion techniques.
- Develop the ability to recognize confusing, vague or ambiguous language that requires clarification to increase comprehension.
- Say what constitutes an argument and how to distinguish deductive from inductive arguments.
- Appreciate the similarities and differences between reasoning in different fields such as politics, advertising and the law.
- Appreciate the similarities and differences between reasoning in different disciplines.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE. Class attendance is optional but is highly recommended. Bonus points will be given for regular attendance.
Miss 0-1 classes = 10 bonus points
Miss 2-3 classes = 5 bonus points
Miss over 3 classes = 0 bonus points
Tests and homework will cover material introduced in class, or presented in the text. Attendance will be considered in determining borderline grades.
*** All cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class. No talking or any disturbances of any kind during lecturing will be tolerated.

READINGS. All assigned readings should be read prior to coming to class. You may be tested on assigned material that is not covered in class.

HOMEWORK (1/4th of the semester grade). Various written homework assignments will be due during the semester.
NOTE: Late homework is subject to a penalty. As a general rule, the penalty will be 10% per day for each day beyond the day on which the homework is due.

TESTING DURING THE SEMESTER. There will be two tests during the term on dates to be determined during the term. Each test will count for 25% of the final grade. Thus both tests will count for 50% of the final grade. The dates that tests will be given depends upon the amount of time it takes to cover the material. Test dates will be announced in class at least a week before the test is given. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of when a test is scheduled or rescheduled. If you are unable to take a test, please contact the instructor before the test. Make up tests will be at the discretion of the instructor. Students may be penalized for taking a make up test. The standard penalty is 10%.

FINAL EXAM. There will be a final exam for the course. The final exam grade will be 1/4th of the student’s grade. The extent to which the final exam covers previously untested material, and the extent to which the final exam covers material of earlier tests, will depend on how much of the scheduled material is covered. The student will be apprised of what the final will cover by the first day of the last week of class, but should anticipate that the final will be comprehensive. The final exam for this class will be on Monday, December 12th 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM in Kettler 242.

Class is not scheduled on the following dates:
Wednesday, November 23rd.
Friday, November 25th.
GRADING SCALE:

90-100 = A = Excellent
80-89 = B = Very good
70-79 = C = Average
60-69 = D = Below average
Below 60 = F = Failure

COURSE MATERIALS:

Texts


*The Thinking Reader*, James Koobatian.

The text for the course is available in the campus bookstore or the Bookmark on N. Anthony Blvd. and should be brought to class.

ORDER OF ASSIGNED READINGS FOR LECTURES AND TESTS:

It is the responsibility of the student to know where we are in the course both in reference to lectures and testing. The course is concerned with the following subjects in the following order, and is grouped according to testing which will occur during the semester.

1. Critical Thinking (pages 1-20), Porter
2. The Way Words Work (pages 23-42), Porter
3. Organ Sales (pages 1-29), Koobatian
4. Languages and Definition (pages 43-63), Porter
6. Ben & Jerry’s and Corporate Philanthropy (pages 69-78), Koobatian
7. Common Mistakes in Thinking (pages 93-113), Porter
8. More Subtle Errors of Thought (pages 114-133), Porter
9. Reasoning in a Formal Way (pages 134-152), Porter
11. Inductive Thinking: Identifying Causes, Drawing Analogies (pages 178 - 206) , Porter
12. Deriving Generalizations, Forming Hypotheses (pages 207-230), Porter
13. Discourse Communities (pages 233-282), Porter
14. Chapter of choice, Koobatian