CRITICAL THINKING – PHIL 120

IPFW
Spring Semester 2008
Syllabus for Philosophy 120-04
MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM
Kettler Hall Room 150

Jennifer Caseldine-Bracht

Office hours: by appointment
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Man can alter his life by altering his thinking.
William James

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES:

Students who have completed the General Education requirements at IPFW are expected:

1. To be familiar with the important modes of human thought that are the foundations of science, philosophy, art and social behavior.

To possess effective foundation skills:

a. Read, write, and speak with comprehension, clarity, and precision.
b. Identify substantive knowledge and disciplinary methods.
c. Develop information literacy skills.
d. Reason quantitatively (as means of gaining and creating knowledge and drawing reliable conclusions)

To demonstrate the ability to think critically and to solve problems using the foundation skills:

a. Evaluate their ideas and the ideas of others based upon disciplined reasoning.
b. Understand the traditions that have formed one’s own and other cultures.
c. Be able to articulate their ideas in appropriate media.

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

CHEATING POLICY:

Please read the handout regarding the philosophy department’s policy on cheating.

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 classes = 5 bonus points
Miss over 2 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 1/4\textsuperscript{th} 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 Wednesday, May 7\textsuperscript{th} 10:30 AM– 12:30 PM in Kettler 150

Class is \textit{not scheduled} on the following dates:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Monday, January 21\textsuperscript{st}
  \item Monday, March 10\textsuperscript{th}
  \item Wednesday, March 12\textsuperscript{th}
  \item Friday, March 14\textsuperscript{th}
\end{itemize}

GRADING SCALE:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 90-100 = A = Excellent
  \item 80-89 = B = Very good
  \item 70-79 = C = Average
  \item 60-69 = D = Below average
  \item Below 60 = F = Failure
\end{itemize}

COURSE MATERIALS:

Texts

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{The Voice of Reason: Fundamentals of Critical Thinking}, Burton F. Porter.
  \item \textit{The Thinking Reader}, James Koobatian.
\end{itemize}

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

Contact information:

The most effective way to reach me is via e-mail. My e-mail address is: \texttt{caseldij@ipfw.edu}. If you would like to leave an office voice mail message, dial 481-5441, enter 19059, then push the # key. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, I will answer all e-mails and phone messages within 48 hours. Please contact me with any questions or concerns regarding the class. It is always a good idea to contact me \textit{as soon} as you have a concern or question, but please feel free to contact me \textit{anytime} throughout the semester. I look forward to working with you.
DISABILITY STATEMENT:

If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (Walb, room 113, telephone number 481-6658), as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for SSD at www.ipfw.edu/ssd.

WRITING CENTER:

Save time and write better papers for any class through free individual consultations in The Writing Center, Kettler G19. Bring assignments, questions, ideas, and a draft (if you have one). Consultants can help you get started, write more clearly, revise, edit, and cite sources responsibly. Come as you begin a paper and as you revise. Drop-ins are welcome if time is available, but appointments, made online through TutorTrac, receive preference. For TutorTrac, online consulting, and resources to make your writing process easier, go to www.ipfw.edu/casa/writing. Questions? Call 481-5740.

Hours for Writing Center:

Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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. Terminator Technology (pages 53-68), Koobatian
4. Languages and Definition (pages 43-63), Porter
6. Chess and Artificial Intelligence (pages 30-52), 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
10. Patterns of Deductive Thinking (pages 153-177), Porter  **Exam 2.**
11. Inductive Thinking: Identifying Causes, Drawing Analogies (pages 178 - 206), Porter
13. Discourse Communities (pages 233-282), Porter
14. Chapter of choice, Koobatian
15. Arguments in the Disciplines (pages 283-329), Porter.  **Final Exam.**