

# CRITICAL THINKING

## General Course Information:

CRTH 601DL.Vista Critical Thinking

## Instructor Information:

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## CRITICAL THINKING (CT601) SYLLABUS

UMASS, Boston - Fall 2007

BOB SCHOENBERG, INSTRUCTOR

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This is a 3 credit graduate course offered online via the University of Massachusetts at Boston. (UMB). UMB is accredited by the New England Council of Schools and Colleges.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offers guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from UMassBoston's Ross Center for Disability Services (<http://www.rosscenter.umb.edu/> 617-287-7430). The student must present and discuss these recommendations with each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

## OBJECTIVES:

To develop further the critical thinking skills and dispositions of the course participants

To help participants understand what critical thinking is and how to apply the skills and strategies of critical thinking in a wide variety of settings.

To help participants develop the capability of helping others become better critical thinkers.

To understand how stress impairs one's ability to think critically and to use stress management to promote critical thinking.

## REQUIRED TEXT:

Developing Minds. Edited by Arthur L. Costa. 3rd Edition. 2001. Publisher: ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher.

Call 1-800-933-2723. Website: [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org). (A limited number of books are at the campus bookstore at UMASS, Boston if you happen to be in the area).

Note: The text will be supplemented by additional articles on the web. Specific articles are listed in the Expanded Course Outline.

Recommended but not required: Critical Thinking in Business by Bob Schoenberg. 2007 Publisher: Science & Humanities Press. Website: [www.criticalthinkinginbusiness.com](http://www.criticalthinkinginbusiness.com).

## LIBRARY BARCODE:

Some reading assignments will be located in E-reserves at the UMB electronic library. Online students may access the UMB electronic library by means of a barcode. To obtain a barcode an online student must e-mail [library.circulation@umb.edu](mailto:library.circulation@umb.edu) and give:

- name as appears at registration
- semester and year
- course name and number
- student ID #
- e-mail address

You will receive an e-mail with barcode information. The barcode is good for the semester you are enrolled in an online UMB course.

The barcode enables you access e-reserves for his course, access electronic resources (books, articles,

journals, etc) and e-mail the library with reference questions

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 25% Participation and homework assignments - Completing class
  - 15% Posting to the Message Board (twice per week)
  - 10% Running the Discussion Board
  - 20% Completion of group project
  - 10% Three Applications – short description of how you are using a particular CT skill
  - 20% Final Project (individual) or Scenarios. This will not be a collaborative effort. (Guidelines for these assignments will be provided).
- Attendance at two online meetings is mandatory. Each meeting will count as one assignment.

**Time Requirements** – This course will require at least as much time as a regular face to face graduate course in Critical Thinking and probably more. However, you do not have to travel to the campus or hunt for a parking space or actually sit through a class.

**A Typical Class** - Each week there will be a new class posted. The "class" will consist of some statement(s) written by me usually focusing on a specific topic or theme and will have some activities and assignments for you to do. Much of the learning that will take place will be among each other as you will be working and collaborating with other participants in the class. You will need to check into the classroom at least once a week and Post on the Message Board twice a week. You should check your email several times a week. Much more time will be spent communicating and collaborating with other participants in the course, particularly in regards to projects. You can check into the classroom and post messages any time of the day or night.

## COLLABORATIVE NATURE:

This course is based upon collaborative learning. This means that you will be working together with other participants in this class. Using various technologies, including chat, message boards, email and collaborative files. You will actually have more contact with other participants in this class than you would in a regular face to face class. Much of the learning that will take place will occur as you collaborate and work with each other. My role is more of a facilitator, providing the structure and learning activities. As we embark upon this exciting endeavor in Distance Learning, I suspect that we will all learn from each other, myself included.

To encourage collaboration, each participant in the class will select a "buddy" about the second week of the course. You will be expected to contact each other once a week and/or more often as needed, using either email, chat or even Instant Messaging, if you prefer. This is one of several ways that we will develop a sense of community and connection to each other.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

All participants must have experience using the Internet and know some basic word processing skills. In addition, you will need to become familiar with WebCT - the software we use to run this course. Tutorials and a student handbook are available.. Go to <http://www.lms.umb.edu>. for more information.

## Technical Specifications

PLEASE Check your browser as advised by WebCT.

A 56k Internet Service Provider (ISP) is the 'minimum' recommended for connection optimization. Consult with Tech Support for information about hardware and software requirements, specifically regarding Java software which you will need.

You may need to download the following software if you do not have it. All of these downloads are free.

Shockwave Player

This free software is required to utilize Chat

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/shockwaveplayer>

#### Real Player

This software may be required to view streaming media. Look for the free 'FREE Real Player' link.

<http://www.real.com/realone>

#### Adobe Acrobat Reader

Some course files may also require Adobe Acrobat Reader-(.PDF format)

<http://www.adobe.com>

#### Microsoft Office Viewers

Users that do not have MS Office installed on their machines will need to download MSWord Viewer (.DOC format), MSPowerPoint Viewer, MS Excel Viewer. (Look for free Microsoft Viewers)

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads>

#### QUESTIONS? CONTACTS:

For more technical information or Tech Support email: [bostonsupport@umb.edu](mailto:bostonsupport@umb.edu)

**Registration Questions?** Contact Kitty Galaitsis. Telephone 617-287-7910 or email [katherine.galaitis@umb.edu](mailto:katherine.galaitis@umb.edu).

Academic Questions? Contact your instructor - Bob Schoenberg. [Bobsch3@gmail.com](mailto:Bobsch3@gmail.com)

#### GRADES & EVALUATION:

The criteria used to evaluate your papers and projects will be contained in the guidelines which be provided to you. Written papers and other assignments turned in on time will automatically be given a grade of B, unless the assignment is really below par. Assignments which are not of this minimal standard will be returned to you as a "redo". If you "redo" the assignment, you will be guaranteed a higher grade on that assignment, but not necessarily an "A". If you choose not to do the assignment again, the current grade will stand. For example, if you receive the grade of a "B" and do not do the assignment again as a "redo", you will receive the grade of a "B" for that assignment.

Sometimes you will be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit an assignment. This doesn't mean that your work is unacceptable or that you did anything wrong (as in the case of a "redo"). It is an opportunity to do more in-depth, critical thinking . If you revise and resubmit, it will assure you of a higher grade. However, the emphasis must be on learning. This is a graduate course and it is expected that your work will be at least worthy of a B. To earn a higher grade than a B, you will need to revise and resubmit some assignments. You will **not** have the option to revise or redo the Final Project or Scenarios.

**Grading:** Grades in the graduate programs at UMass Boston can be A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, or F. There is no A+ grade. Students must maintain a grade point average of B to remain in good standing and graduate. Grades of A, the highest allowable grade, are awarded for demonstration of superior and excellent work and are taken seriously by faculty. A's are not universally awarded.

#### **Postings on the Discussion Board are graded as follows:**

√ (check) = credit for Posting

√ - (check minus) = substandard

0 (zero) no credit (Late posting will receive a zero)

√ + (check plus) = exceeded requirements

You get extra credit for doing extra posts – provided they are of quality.

#### **ABOUT LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late posting to the Message Board (Discussion Board) will NOT be accepted due to the time-sensitive

nature of these discussions.

### **Policy Regarding Late Classwork and Paper**

The following policy applies only if you have turned in 2 late assignments or have an assignment that is outstanding for more than 10 days. If either of these conditions apply, future late class assignments will be accepted, but you will lose points for each day the assignment is late. For late papers/projects you will lose a 1/2 letter grade for each day the paper is late. Extension of deadlines will be provided for extenuating circumstance, on a case by case basis, solely at the discretion of the instructor.

**Extra Credit** - an optional extra credit assignment may be done with the instructor's approval.

### **AVAILABILITY of INSTRUCTOR:**

I do not keep "virtual office hours". You can email me anytime of the day or night. However, I am NOT available on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis. Usually, you can expect a reply to your email within 24 hours or less. If you have a general question, you should post it on the DISCUSSION BOARD. Otherwise, please do email me. I check my email, regularly and frequently. However, please be advised that I take one day off a week. From Friday evening until Saturday evening, I do not use my computer or check email. So, if you write to me late Friday afternoon, it's possible I won't respond to your message until Sat. night or even Sunday.

Rather than offer specific office hours, I prefer to work by appointments, realizing that many of you are busy during the day. I am quite flexible and can often schedule evening and weekend appointments. (Appointments can consist of the use of the chatroom, Wimba). In addition to scheduled appointments and email, I will be hosting some chatroom discussions and discussions using Wimba (live voice communication) where anyone in the class will be able to "chat" with me - exact time to be announced. You'll actually have more access to talk with me than you would in a regular face-to-face classroom where instructors usually keep office hours during the day.

If you have an urgent problem or some type of an emergency, you can call me. However, such a phone call should really be reserved for an urgent matter or an emergency situation. If you know you will be away for a few days or you will be offline (computer failure) you would be well advised to call me and let me know. If I know you're having some sort of problem, I may be able to accommodate you.

For technical problems, **always** contact Technical Support at: [bostonsupport@umb.edu](mailto:bostonsupport@umb.edu).

**Conferences** - I plan to have a conference with each of you at least once during the semester. This will probably take place in a restricted chat room or possibly with "live voice communication". You will need a microphone and need to download and test some software (Wimba) before we do this. The software is free. You may also use the chatroom of Webct.

**Town Meeting** - at least twice a semester, we will all get on line at the same time and using Wimba software (which is free), we will be able to talk to each other live, via a microphone and headset hooked up to your computer. If you have a web camera (optional), we will be able to see each other as well. (You will need to purchase a microphone and a headset to participate in this town meeting unless you already have such equipment). Most computers come with a built in mic and speakers. A headset is preferred as the sound quality is better. PLEASE test your equipment in advance of this.

Please note that our first "Town Meeting" using WIMBA software will take place during the 3rd week of classes. Wimba is Mac compatible! You will need to have access to a PC/Mac for the Wimba Meetings. A headset with mic attached is also necessary to participate in Wimba. (Wimba provides live voice communication via your computer. You will be able to talk with me and other students in the class, regardless of their physical location. This software is free for students of this course).

### **COMPONENTS of the COURSE:**

**Discussion Board** - You can post a message or respond to one. This is a threaded discussion. Whatever you say should reflect critical thinking. Use of Message Boards is restricted to academic topics. "Flaming" or verbally attacking someone, is not allowed. While you certainly can disagree with someone, if you wish to have a personal discussion with someone, take it off line and either use email or the phone. Note that the Messages you post will be archived (saved).

**Chat** - Unlike the Message Board where you post a message, chat allows you to instantly type

something and immediately, everyone in the chatroom will see your message and can instantly respond to it. Certain Chatroom discussions will be archived (saved).

**Project Area** - this is where various projects, papers and other completed assignments will be posted for the entire class to see.

**Email** is the primary way that we will communicate with each other. It is essential that we have each other's email addresses and that they are correct.

There may be other areas of the website made available for your use. In addition, you will be able to create your own personal blog as well.

**Secured Website** - Access to the WebCt Website - the website that will actually house our class is restricted. Only people who are authorized and have a proper password will be allowed to enter. Students in other online classes will NOT have access to this site. The general public can NOT access this site, either. So, there is a degree of confidentiality.

It may be necessary to make some modifications to this syllabus as it is not possible to anticipate every situation that might arise. Distance Education, using a collaborative model, is an exciting development in education, especially with the technology we have available. I look forward to learning and working with you in what I consider to be a new frontier in education.

Bob Schoenberg

### **Critical Thinking Course Outline Condensed Format**

Week One: Introduction.

Week Two: What is Critical Thinking? History and Definitions

Week Three: Developing Critical Thinking

Week Four: Some Critical Thinking Skills -- Metacognition and Frame of Reference

Week Five: Stress and Critical Thinking

Week Six: Stress Management & Critical Thinking

Week Seven: Strong Sense Critical Thinking & Infusion

Week Eight: Methodological Believing

Week Nine: Causal Reasoning

Week Ten: Problem Based Learning

Week Eleven: Transfer & Critical Thinking in Education, Business and Other Professions

Week Twelve: Critical & Creative Thinking

Week Thirteen: Assessment. Evaluation of Course. Next Step