

University of Massachusetts at Boston
College of Education and Human Development
(formerly the Graduate College of Education)
Critical and Creative Thinking Program

Critical Thinking

CrCrTh 601 **Summer 2010 Syllabus**

July 19-August 5, 2010, 1:00pm-4:00pm, Monday through Thursday.
Wheatley Hall, Room W-1-019

Instructor: Jeremy Szteiter, Critical & Creative Thinking Program
Email: Jeremy.Szteiter@umb.edu
Phone: (781) 696-4898
Office: Wheatley 2nd floor, room 157
Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 11:00-12:00 or by appt.

Course description and overview

This course explores issues about the nature and techniques of critical thought, viewed as a way to establish a reliable basis for our claims, beliefs, and attitudes about the world. We explore multiple perspectives, placing established facts, theories, and practices in tension with alternatives to see how things could be otherwise. Views about observation and interpretation, reasoning and inference, valuing and judging, and the production of knowledge in its social context are considered. Special attention is given to translating what is learned into strategies, materials, and interventions for use in students' own educational and professional settings.

SECTIONS TO FOLLOW IN SYLLABUS

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

- (1) To develop further the critical thinking skills and dispositions of the course participants, and in particular, to make connections between critical thinking and your own practices in life and work.
- (2) 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, while appreciating a variety of ways of understanding .
- (3) To help participants develop the capability of helping others become better critical thinkers in a wide variety of settings, while modeling a supportive critical thinking community through our in-class experience.


TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required Texts:

- Shari Tishman, David N. Perkins, and Eileen Jay, *The Thinking Classroom: Learning and Teaching in a Culture of Thinking* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995) Arthur L. Costa (ed.)
- *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, 3rd edition (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001)

Some additional required readings will be distributed in class.

REQUIREMENTS

 1) Active participation in class, including completing assigned readings between classes, being engaged with in-class activities, and participating in discussion. Readings will be assigned for each day of class. [15%]

2) Micro-journal of critical thinking observations, questions, and ideas based on daily life and work. [10%] (Due Thursday, August 5th - the last day of the course)

3) Three written Reflection Papers (about 700-800 words each) on readings and issues discussed in class. [25%] (due on the Monday following each of the three weeks - July 26th, August 2nd, August 9th)

4) Small group project: As part of a small group, you will design and conduct an in-class learning experience that reflects and applies your developing understanding of critical thinking. [10%] (to be discussed at the end of the first week and presented to the rest of the class during the third week)

5) Critical Thinking Manifesto: (no more than 2 pages) synthesizing your view of ideas about critical thinking. [10%] (Due Thursday, August 5th)

6) Final paper (about 2000 words, plus references as needed). [30%] (Due Friday, August 13th, with a proposal paragraph due Monday, August 2nd)

ACCOMMODATIONS: Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in their personal files.

This syllabus is subject to change, but workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts. A more detailed list of reading assignments will be distributed by the start of the course.



SCHEDULE of CLASSES

General schedule: Classes held on the UMass-Boston campus, Wheatley Hall room W-1-019 (first floor just off of the main lobby). July 19-August 5, Mondays through Thursdays, 1:00-4:00pm. We'll have a short break in the middle of each class session.

WEEK 1: CRITICAL THINKING CONCEPTS

Readings from the 2 required texts, along with some others to be handed out in class, will be assigned for each day of class. Amount of reading will not increase from the schedule shown below, although some required readings may be substituted for others listed here depending upon interests and directions of the class.

1) Monday, July 19th:

What is Critical Thinking? Introductions, orientation to the course, and an exploration of what critical thinking is, what critical thinkers do, and the development of a perspective on critical thinking for one's own practice.

- Brookfield, "What It Means to Think Critically" (from "Developing Critical Thinkers")
- Kida, "Introduction: A Six Pack of Problems" (from "Don't Believe Everything You Think: The 6 Basic Mistakes We Make in Thinking")

2) Tuesday, July 20th:

The language and culture of critical thinking. Dimensions of critical thinking and the idea of enculturating critical thinking in schools, workplaces, and lives.

Readings:

- Tishman et al., pp. 1-15 (Chapter 1 "Introduction" & Chapter 2 "The Language of Thinking") [*optional: skim pp. 17-36 (Chapter 3) for more examples*]
- DM, pp. 7-10 (Hay, "Thinking Skills for the Information Age")
- DM, pp. 11-17 (Berman, "Thinking in Context: Teaching for Open-Mindedness and Critical Understanding")
- DM, pp. 216-221 (Brenner & Perks, "Cultural Influences on Critical Thinking and Problem Solving")
- DM, pp. 379-383 (Costa & Marzano, "Teaching the Language of Thinking")

3) Wednesday, July 21st:

Developing critical thinking skills and dispositions. Ways that we as learners, can develop our critical thinking dispositions, and establish environments that promote critical thinking.

- Tishman et al., pp. 37-44 (Chapter 4 "Thinking Dispositions") [*optional: skim pp. 45-64 (Chapter 5) for examples*]
- DM, pp. 72-75 (Tishman, "Added Value: A Dispositional Perspective on Thinking")
- DM, pp. 76-79 (Baron, "Actively Open-Minded Thinking")
- DM, pp. 80-86 (Costa, "Habits of Mind")
- DM, pp. 106-110 (Barell, "Designing the Invitational Environment")
- DM, pp. 135-141 (Costa, "Mediative Environments")
- DM, pp. 158-163 (Perkins, "The Social Side of Thinking")

4) Thursday, July 22nd:

Applying and assessing critical thinking. Metacognition as a way of thinking about thinking. Frames of reference.

- Tishman et al., pp. 65-72 (Chapter 6 "Mental Management") [*optional: skim pp. 73-96 (Chapter 7) for examples*]
- DM, pp. 497-510 (Asp, "To Think or Not to Think...")

- DM, pp. 517-524 (Costa & Kallick, "Building a System for Assessing Thinking")
- DM, pp. 533-540 (Beyer, "A Format for Assessing Thinking Skills")
- DM, pp. 541-546 (Fisher, "Assessing Thinking Skills")
- DM, pp. 408-412 (Costa, "Mediating the Metacognitive")

WEEK 2: METHODS AND TOOLS OF CRITICAL THINKING

5) Monday, July 26th:

Multiple perspectives and strong-sense critical thinking. Dialogical and dialectical thinking and discussion.

- Tishman et al., pp. 97-104 (Chapter 8 "The Strategic Spirit") [*optional: skim pp. 105-124 (Chapter 9) for examples*]
- DM, pp. 427-436 (Paul, "Dialogical and Dialectical Thinking")
- Paul, "Teaching Critical Thinking in the Strong Sense: A Focus on Self-Deception, World Views, and a Dialectical Mode of Analysis" (*handout*)

6) Tuesday, July 27th:

Methodological believing and doubting as part of critical thinking. Higher-order knowledge and teaching for transfer of thinking skills.

- Elbow, "The Believing Game - Methodological Believing" (*handout*)
- Tishman et al., pp. 125-132 (Chapter 10 "Higher Order Knowledge") [*optional: skim pp. 133-154 (Chapter 11) for examples*]
- Tishman et al., pp. 155-162 (Chapter 12 "Teaching for Transfer") [*optional: skim pp. 163-184 (Chapter 13) for examples*]
- DM, pp. 370-378 (Perkins & Salomon, "Teaching for Transfer")

7) Wednesday, July 28th:

Listening, empathy, and voice. Socratic inquiry.

- Gallo, "Educating for Empathy, Reason, and Imagination" (*handout*)
- DM, pp. 455-458 (Johnson, D & Johnson, R, "Cooperation and Conflict: Effects on Cognition and Metacognition")
- DM, pp. 459-465 (Jackson, "The Art and Craft of 'Gently Socratic' Inquiry")
- DM, pp. 164-169 (Swartz, "In the Grips of Emotion")

8) Thursday, July 29th:

Thinking through writing, and more on the teaching of thinking.

- Elbow, "Teaching Two Kinds of Thinking by Teaching Writing" (*handout*)
- DM, pp. 35-40 (Beyer, "Teaching Thinking Skills - Defining the Problem")
- DM, pp. 248-252 (Beyer, "Developing a Scope and Sequence for Thinking Skills Instruction")
- DM, pp. 253-255 (Kallick & Leibowitz, "Teacher as a 'Thought-Full' Designer")
- DM, pp. 354-358 (Costa, "Teaching For, Of, and About Thinking")
- Choose 1 of these 3:
 - DM, pp. 266-274 (Swartz, "Infusing Critical and Creative Thinking into Content Instruction")
 - DM, pp. 275-283 (Beyer, "What Research Says about Teaching Thinking Skills")
 - DM, pp. 393-400 (Beyer, "Practical Strategies for Direct Instruction in Thinking Skills")

- *OPTIONAL: DM, pp. 359-369 (Costa, "Teaching Behaviors that Enable Student Thinking")*
- *OPTIONAL: DM, pp. 401-407 (Hyerle, "Visual Tools for Mapping Minds")*
- *OPTIONAL: DM, pp. 298-302 (Whimbey et al., "What is Write for Thinking")*

WEEK 3: CRITICAL THINKING IN PRACTICE

9) Monday, August 2nd:

Domain-specific critical thinking.

- DM, any 3 articles from Section VII ("Thinking in School Subjects")
- DM, any 1 article from Section X ("Teaching Thinking Through Technology")
- DM, pp. 54-57 (Lochhead & Zietsman, "What is Problem Solving?")
- DM, pp. 58-66 (Swartz, "Thinking About Decisions")

10) Tuesday, August 3rd:

Multiple intelligences and thinking styles.

- DM, pp. 144-149 (Fogarty, "Our Changing Perspective of Intelligence: Master Architects of the Intellect")
- DM, pp. 192-196 (Lozano, "A Survey of Thinking and Learning Styles")
- DM, pp. 197-201 (Sternberg, "Thinking Skills")
- DM, pp. 202-210 (Lazear, "Teaching For, With, and About Multiple Intelligences")
- Choose 2 of these 3:
 - DM, pp. 442-445 (Treffinger & Isaksen, "Teaching for Creative Learning and Problem Solving")
 - DM, pp. 446-450 (Perkins, "Thinking for Understanding")
 - DM, pp. 451-454 (Sternberg, "Teaching Problem Solving as a Way of Life")

11) Wednesday, August 4th:

Critical thinking and gender. Critical thinking in social contexts.

- Phelan & Garrison, "Toward a Gender-Sensitive Ideal of Critical Thinking: A Feminist Poetic" (*handout*)
- DM, pp. 101-105 (Dickinson, "Thoughtful Parenting")
- DM, pp. 158-163 (Perkins, "The Social Side of Thinking")
- DM, pp. 229-233 (Payne, "Thinking in a Culture of Poverty")

12) Thursday, August 5th:

Course review. Final reflections, recent developments, and future directions.

DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS, SCHEDULE, AND GRADING

Class Participation (3 points per day x 12 days, + 9 points for general class contribution = 45 total points)

Students are expected to attend class each day and participate in discussions and activities, having read the assigned readings for that day. Please read all items under each class session unless indicated as optional.

Micro-Journal (2 points per item x 15 items = 30 total points)

Over the 3 weeks of the course, keep a list of observations that relate to critical thinking (at least 15 separate entries). Each observation should refer to some situation that you have encountered in professional or personal life, where either some aspect of critical thinking is *demonstrated well* or some aspect of critical thinking is *needed* to improve the situation. Each observation should be only a few sentences - enough to explain the situation

briefly (without naming individuals) and establish the link to critical thinking. Also, these should be situations that you encounter personally ("I found a new way to avoid traffic when I recognized my assumption that...") rather than more global situations ("There was another failed attempt at stopping the oil pipeline leak...").

Reflection Papers (25 points per paper x 3 papers = 75 total points)

Length: 700-800 words each

Each reflection paper is a way for you to examine and present your thoughts on each week of the course, with respect to some of the following questions:

- What has been particularly meaningful or helpful to you? What challenged you? What insights are most important?
- What remaining questions do you have?
- What connections do you see between different ideas presented in the course?
- What connections have you found between the ideas from the course and your own work and life?

Group Project (30 total points)

The group project will be discussed after the first week of the course, and additional details will be provided. This will involve the design of a short activity that can be shared with the others in class and makes use of a concept of critical thinking.

Credit for this project will depend upon a few items:

1. the group will collectively choose an idea to use as a focus for the project and develop a brief written description
2. the group will present an activity to the others in class by the third week of the course (to be presented by Tuesday, August 3rd)
3. each member of the group will individually write a short description of the thinking processes involved in this project (referring to both the nature of working together on this project, and the nature of the concept being examined) (about 200 words)

Critical Thinking Manifesto (30 total points)

Length: up to 2 pages

In the context of our course, a manifesto is a very brief synthesis of elements related to critical thinking that are organized to give you some orientation to critical thinking as you move beyond the course. This can involve the range of perspectives on critical thinking that you have learned in the course along with your own developing idea of what critical thinking means. You might have a sense of many layers of critical thinking and "orders of magnitude", from the everyday specific situations to the broader ideas surrounding thinking of cultures. Don't try to cover all of this; instead, find the "center of gravity" of critical thinking for you - something that represents your current worldview of critical thinking, and the area of focus that has the most meaning for you now and can be a foundation for how you explore critical thinking later.

Final Paper (10 points for proposal + 80 points for completed work = 90 total points)

Length: about 2000 words (this might vary depending upon the nature of the work)

Your final paper (or alternate project as listed below) is a way for you to make a deeper exploration of some connection between critical thinking and another area. This might be something related to your personal or professional life or an area of interest or concern about the world. You might be addressing some of these questions:

- Why am I interested in connecting critical thinking to this topic?
- Who would benefit from understanding and using these connections, besides myself?
- How do the critical thinking concepts from class apply to this topic?
- What are examples of how critical thinking is present or absent from more specific areas within my topic?
- What does it mean to be a "critical thinking practitioner" within this topic?
- What problems might be addressed if critical thinking was to be more effectively applied?
- What am I going to do about this, now that I have further explored a wider range of perspectives on critical thinking?

Alternate projects:

Although some writing is necessary to explain your conclusions and insights about connecting critical thinking to your topic, the paper does not need to be a straightforward research paper or an essay, although you may certainly work with these formats. You may also think about other formats:

- a multimedia project
- an exhibition of materials
- a curriculum
- or others that come to mind

You will have a chance to think this through further by the time that you submit your initial proposal. Because of the intensive schedule and short timing of this course, you may have to scale what you do to the time allowed.

GRADING

You are welcome to submit any assignment early for feedback on a draft before the due date. Due dates refer to the end of the day indicated. You may submit assignments on paper during class or over email.

Late assignment policy: Assignments turned in after the due date and up to two days late will receive %50 credit. After two days, no credit will be given.

Assignment	Due Date	Total Points
Reflection Paper 1	7/26/10	25
Final Paper proposal	7/29/10	10
Reflection Paper 2	8/2/10	25
Group Project presented	8/3/10	20
Micro-journal	8/5/10	30
Group Project write-up	8/5/10	10
Manifesto	8/5/10	30
Reflection Paper 3	8/9/10	25
Final Paper completed	8/13/10	80

Class Participation	each class session	45
TOTALS		300

Final grade: Add up your total points, and divide by 3. The following scale shows the final letter grade:

93-100 = A

87-92 = A-

83-86 = B+

76-82 = B

72-75 = B-

69-71 = C+

65-68 = C