This course explores the diverse nature and techniques of critical thinking. Views about observation and interpretation, reasoning and inference, and valuing and judging will all be considered, giving special attention to how we can help others to develop the skills needed to do these things well, especially through our standard educational structures. We will consider central concepts of critical thinking, their applications in a variety of domains, and ways to assess the effectiveness of their applications. Working with diverse material, from political and scientific events occurring in the world to issues and dilemmas that characterize everyday life, we will examine and practice kinds of thinking that promote reasonable, reflective action and belief. We will also consider several current issues in the field of critical thinking such as the role of gender in critical thinking, relationships between critical and creative thinking, domain-specific critical thinking, and best practices for applying thinking skills and dispositions.

We understand our thoughts better when we express them. Your contributions to learning experiences in class will be sought and you will be encouraged to gain useful insights from others as well. All of us, the instructor included, can learn from each other and grow in our abilities to challenge and modify ideas in constructive ways. Through extensive interactions with each other, in a climate of enjoyment, this class is designed for us all to continue to develop our abilities to use careful thinking and sound judgment.

Course Goals:

(1) To develop further the critical thinking skills and dispositions of the course participants.

(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.

(3) To help participants develop the capability of helping others become better critical thinkers in a wide variety of settings.
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)


Some additional required readings will be distributed in class.

Requirements:

1) Participating actively in class [15% of grade]. This includes keeping up with the reading as well as writing 1-page reflections each week, except for days when there is another written assignment.

2) Writing three Reflection Papers (each about 3-4 typewritten pages) on readings and issues discussed in class [30%]. The reflection papers are due on Thursday June 30, Thursday July 7, and Wednesday, July 13. (This assignment relates to the program expectation that students will maintain a Reflective Practice and Metacognitive Portfolio throughout their experiences in the program as a whole.)

3) As part of a team, designing and conducting an in-class learning experience that applies critical thinking [10%]. A proposal from each team is due by Tuesday, July 2.

4) Writing a Manifesto (about 3 typewritten pages) synthesizing your view of ideas about critical thinking that you have found most important [15%]. The manifesto is due Thursday, July 14.

5) Writing a thoughtful Final Paper (about 10 double-spaced typed pages, plus references) [30%]. This paper is due on Friday, July 15 in the Curriculum and Instruction Office Department by 2pm. A paper proposal with outline is due by Tuesday, July 12. Students are encouraged to make connections in the paper with their other interests and projects.

Note: A rare professional opportunity is available in the period July 10-14 in 2011 in Boston with the annual international conference of the International Association of Cognition, Education, and Psychology. Class members are strongly encouraged to register for at least a one-day time period for that conference and attend sessions of their choice, with a summary provided to class members afterward. A program of sessions will be made available at the first day of the course.
The class will meet Monday through Thursday for the weeks of June 27, July 4, and July 11, from 5 to 8pm, with a short break in the middle of the session. A makeup time for the holiday of July 4 will be agreed upon at the first class session.

Completion of reading requirements must be done prior to the class session in which they are listed.


Lauren B. Resnick, “Making America Smarter: The Real Goal of School Reform” [DM, pp.3-6];
LeRoy Hay, “Thinking Skills for the Information Age” [DM, pp. 7-10];
Sheldon Berman, “Thinking in Context: Teaching for Open-mindedness and Critical Understanding” [DM, pp. 11-17];
John Edwards, “Learning and Thinking in the Workplace” [DM, pp. 23-28];
Dee Dickinson, “Thoughtful Parenting” [DM, pp. 101-105]


Readings: Shari Tishman et al., pp. 37-64 ("Thinking Dispositions" and "Thinking Dispositions: Pictures of Practice");
Shari Tishman, “Added Value: A Dispositional Perspective on Thinking”

First Reflection Paper Due


Team Proposals for In-Class Learning Experience Due


**Second Reflection Paper Due**


**Proposal for Final Paper Due**


Robert Stone, “How Teachers Can Assess the Thinking Skills They Are Teaching” [DM, pp. 525-527];
Kay Burke, “Performances to Assess Standards and Intellectual Growth [DM, pp. 528-532];


Third Reflection Paper Due.

Readings: Shari Tishman et al., pp. 185-199 (“Pulling It All Together”);
Barry K. Beyer, “Putting It All Together to Improve Student Thinking” [DM, pp. 417-424];
David S. Martin and Nicholas M. Michelli, “Preparing Teachers of Thinking” [DM, pp. 111-117];
Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, “From Staff Development to Professional Development: Supporting Thoughtful Adults for Thinking Schools” [DM, pp. 118-122]


Manifesto Due.

David S. Martin, “For Administrators: Keeping the Focus” [DM, pp. 123-125]
David S. Martin, Results of research on effects of Thinking Skill Programs on various populations—excerpts handout.
Reuven Feuerstein, “Instrumental Enrichment”—excerpts handout.

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY, JULY 15 by 2pm in Department of Curriculum and Instruction Office, 2nd floor, Wheatley Hall.
GRADING PLAN FOR CrCrTh 601, Summer 2011

Participation and Attendance 100 points

Reflection Papers, 1,2,3 (each)
  Use of concepts 40
  Reflectivity 40
  Writing 20

  100

Team Presentation
  Creativity 50
  Questioning 50
  Organization 50
  Cohesion 50

  200

Manifesto
  Organization 60
  Relevance 60
  Clarity 60
  Writing 20

  200

Final Paper
  Organization 40
  Use of concepts
    100
  Detail 100
  Writing 40
  References 20

  300

Total: 1100

A  1050-1100
A- 1025-1049
B+ 1000-1024
B  975-999
B- 950-974
C+ 925-949
Etc.