

Graduate Program in
**Critical and Creative
Thinking**

Student Handbook

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Critical and Creative Thinking Program
College of Education and Human Development
University of Massachusetts Boston
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Boston, MA 02125-3393
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Section 1: About CCT

Contact Information and Office Location

The Graduate Program in Critical and Creative Thinking is part of the College of Education and Human Development.

Mail:
Graduate Program in Critical and Creative Thinking
College of Education and Human Development
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393

CCT Program Office:
Phone: (617) 287-7636 (messages only)
Email: cct@umb.edu
Wheatley Hall, 4th Floor
Room W-04-170
Parking: Campus lots, or Bayside Lot
(free shuttle to the Campus Center)
Subway: MBTA red line to JFK/UMass
stop, then take free shuttle to the
Campus Center

Official CCT Site:

https://education.umb.edu/academics/graduate_program/critical_and_creative_thinking_ma

CCT Public Community Site: <http://blogs.umb.edu/cct/>

Email newsletter signup: <http://eepurl.com/w1Ayn>

Campus map: https://www.umb.edu/the_university/getting_here/parking/map

A Very Brief History of the CCT Program

The Graduate Program in Critical and Creative Thinking began at UMass Boston in 1979 as a collaboration between the Philosophy and Psychology departments and their faculty and was one of the first of its kind, along with a few other graduate programs emphasizing development of creativity around that same time. The original target audience for the program was primarily teachers who were interested in a scholarly approach to developing critical and creative thinking in curriculum and teaching practice. In the many years since then, the program has continued to appeal to educators of many types as well as practitioners in all fields and the way that critical and creative thinking is relevant to many environments and purposes. Today, the CCT program continues to serve students globally across many interests, such as social justice, school and community improvement, organizational leadership, media and information literacy, innovation in arts and sciences, and many other areas.

Welcome to Critical and Creative Thinking

Welcome to the Critical and Creative Thinking Program, a unique and innovative interdisciplinary graduate program, one of just a few with an explicit focus on both creative and critical thinking. The CCT Handbook provides a step-by-step guide to joining and moving through the Program. Additional information about CCT courses, events and other announcements can be accessed via the CCT website (www.cct.umb.edu).

As an interdisciplinary, cross-college program, CCT looks to support "horizontal" exchanges and support among students and "vertical" exchanges between students and the larger community of CCT alums and associates. These have coalesced into events of the CCT network and other offerings open to the wider community of CCT current and prospective students, graduates, faculty, and all others.

Each matriculated student has the CCT Program Director as their general CCT advisor but should feel free to ask other faculty members for advice (see Appendix C). We want the time students spent consulting with faculty to focus as much as possible on issues of personal, professional, and intellectual development, so we have designed this handbook to enable students to handle most administrative matters on their own.

While the name of the program conveys the idea that critical and creative thinking are foundational to the program, this includes an essential focus on *reflective practice*. This involves reflecting on our experiences, making meaning of those experiences, recognizing our assumptions, and making decisions about our practices. In short, reflective practice helps us to turn understanding of our experiences into practical action. In that sense, this idea of reflective practice helps to convey how a program in critical and creative thinking is not simply about the theoretical issues of what makes good thinking; it connects theory to practice by engaging us in processes and tools for thinking so that we can bring change to our organizations, fields, and communities.

Finally, we view the (40+ years old) CCT program as continuing to be a work-in-progress, which means that we encourage members of the CCT community to find opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development. It helps our spirits to know that others are thinking about how the program can move ahead.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Szteiter, CCT Program Assistant Director

Why a graduate program in Critical and Creative Thinking?

Rationale

The Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) program at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides its students with knowledge, tools, experience, and support so they can become constructive, reflective agents of change in education, work, social movements, science, and creative arts.

Critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice are valued, of course, in all fields. In critical thinking we seek to scrutinize the assumptions, reasoning, and evidence brought to bear on an issue — by others and by oneself; such scrutiny is enhanced by placing ideas and practices in tension with alternatives. Key functions of creative thinking include generating alternative ideas, practices, and solutions that are unique and effective, and exploring ways to confront complex, messy, ambiguous problems, make new connections, and see how things could be otherwise. In reflective practice we take risks and experiment in putting ideas into practice, then take stock of the outcomes and revise our approaches accordingly.

The rationale for a master's program of study in CCT is that an explicit and sustained focus on learning and applying ideas and tools in critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice allows students involved in a wide array of professions and endeavors to develop clarity and confidence to make deep changes in their learning, teaching, work, activism, research, and artistry. By the time CCT students finish their studies they are prepared to teach or guide others in ways that often depart markedly from their previous schooling and experience. In these processes of transformation and transfer, CCT students have to select and adapt the ideas and tools presented by faculty with diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary concerns. Students matriculated in the CCT program benefit from extended relationships with CCT faculty and fellow students that support their processes of learning — experimenting and taking risks in applying what they are learning, reflecting on the outcomes and revising accordingly, and building up a set of tools, practices, and perspectives that work in their specific professional or personal endeavors.

Impact of Studies

The CCT Program appeals to students looking for professional and personal development who are interested in learning from and with others of diverse backgrounds and interests. Many are mid-career educators or administrators across diverse environments. Others are policy makers, facilitators, or organizational leaders/program managers in government, corporate, scientific, or nonprofit settings. Still others are artists, musicians, writers, journalists, and community activists. Through course projects, pre-capstone research courses, and the capstone synthesis projects, CCT students explore issues they have not had much chance to address before and translate what they learn into strategies, materials, and interventions for use in diverse educational, professional, and social settings. Graduates leave CCT well equipped for ongoing

learning, addressing the needs of their schools, workplaces, and communities, adapting and contributing to social changes, and collaborating with others to these ends. Abstracts and full-text versions of theses and capstone syntheses culminating from the MA program can be viewed at http://scholarworks.umb.edu/cct_capstone/.

Degrees and Tracks

Degrees offered: Master of Arts; Graduate Certificate

Students may be admitted for a Master of Arts or Graduate Certificate in Critical and Creative Thinking. Current Certificate students who wish to continue to the MA program must reapply with a new full application.

Tracks:

- Regular Critical and Creative Thinking Track
- Science in a Changing World Track (SICW) (*as of November 2019: currently not accepting new applications for this track*). The choice of the Science in a Changing World track previously allowed students to substitute science-themed courses for the typical required courses in the regular track. See Appendix D for full descriptions of all required and elective courses.

The entire program can be completed at a distance. Some courses are available in a hybrid format, where class meetings are held on campus, but those at a distance join the meetings through video conference, participating live in all activities and discussions along with those who are attending in person. A few electives are offered only in fully online format, and so local students may end up having to take some courses this way.

The CCT program is located in the College of Education and Human Development. Many administrative details about registration, costs, and college policies can be found here: https://education.umb.edu/academics/graduate_program/critical_and_creative_thinking_ma

Course Requirements: Master of Arts in Critical and Creative Thinking

Students complete 11 courses (33 credits):

Core courses (from multiple curricular areas):

1. Curriculum Organization and Innovation (2 required courses)
 - a. CrCrTh 601 **Critical Thinking**
 - b. CrCrTh 602 **Creative Thinking**
2. Mediation, Dialogue, and Collaboration (1 required course; choose one of the following recommended courses OR identify another to substitute, with program director permission)
 - a. Either CrCrTh 616 **Dialogue Processes**, or CrCrth 618 **Creative Thinking, Collaboration, and Organizational Change**
3. Urban and Social Justice Education (1 required course; choose one of the following recommended courses OR identify another to substitute with program director permission)
 - a. Either CrCrTh 615 **Holistic and Transformative Teaching**, or CrCrTh 627 **Issues and Controversies in Antiracist and Multicultural Education**
4. Research and Writing for Reflective Practice (2 required courses)
 - a. CrCrTh 692 **Processes of Research and Engagement**
 - b. CrCrTh 693 **Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change**
5. Final Capstone Course (1 required course)
 - a. CrCrTh 694 **Synthesis of Theory and Practice** (this course is only offered in the spring term and must be taken last; exception: one final elective may be taken in the summer following this course with program director permission)

Elective requirements:

Students must take 4 additional courses from any other offerings across CCT. Some electives may come from other programs but must be approved in advance by the program director.

Additional Requirements

- All students attend a one-on-one mid-program conference with their advisor to discuss possible capstone topics and start to prepare for the final research/writing courses.
- The capstone project involves submission of a paper and a public presentation on the project. Although this project is carried out through course CrCrTh 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice, the submission of the capstone is a distinct requirement from the completion of the course (that is, the course can be completed without having the final capstone paper approved, which might then extend a student's formal study until the paper is finished).

- MA students complete additional requirements outside of course completion and the capstone – the program Exit Self-Assessment, and the Reflective Practitioner’s Portfolio. See the upcoming section in this handbook called Additional Notes on Program Requirements.

Course Requirements: Graduate Certificate in Critical and Creative Thinking

Students complete 5 courses (15 credits):

Core courses (2 required courses):

- a. CrCrTh 601 **Critical Thinking**
- b. CrCrTh 602 **Creative Thinking**

Elective requirements:

Students must take 3 additional courses from any other offerings across CCT.

Course Sequence, Substitutions, and Exceptions

Note that most required courses are offered once per year, and most electives are offered once every two years (pending instructor availability). Some electives are only offered very occasionally in recent years.

The sequence is flexible; core courses do not need to be completed before other courses, and courses can be taken in any order, except that:

- CrCrTh 692 and CrCrTh 693 are best taken when some other courses have been completed; these are not appropriate for a student's first semester in the program.
- CrCrTh 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice is offered only in the spring, and it must be taken last (exception: because of scheduling needs, it is allowable to have one final elective remaining after 694 and take it in the following summer and then get an August graduation).
- CrCrTh 692 must be completed before starting CrCrTh 694 (it is ok to take any other courses concurrently with CrCrTh 694)

Certain courses may be taken twice (up to 6 credits). These are:

- CrCrTh 611 Seminar in Critical Thinking (as long as it is taken with two different instructors, since the course theme varies based on instructor area of expertise; both times count as electives)
- CrCrTh 612 Seminar in Creativity (as long as it is taken with two different instructors, since the course theme varies based on instructor area of expertise; both times count as electives)
- CrCrTh 688 Reflective Practice
- CrCrTh 692 Processes of Research and Engagement (the first time counts as the requirement, and the second counts as an elective)

Substitutions for core courses may be allowed but must be approved by the program director in advance and only when a core course cannot be offered on schedule as needed by the student for graduation:

- CrCrTh 611 Seminar in Critical Thinking may substitute for CrCrTh 601 Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh 612 Seminar in Creativity may substitute for CrCrTh 602 Creative Thinking
- CrCrTh 688 Reflective Practice may substitute for CrCrTh 693 Action Research

Course Formats

CCT courses are offered in either fully online or hybrid formats, although every course is not offered every semester, and the format is subject to confirmation and instructor availability. Hybrid format involves regular class meetings (typically once per week), where local students may attend on campus in a classroom with the instructor, and those at a distance join by web video conference so that both on-campus and online students participate together in all discussions and activities. In such cases, the registration system may list multiple class sections for the course, so students should register for the section that corresponds to how they will attend.

Some courses use a fully online format, where no on-campus attendance is possible – all students join meetings by web conference (“*synchronous online*”). All online courses are instructor-led (not self-paced) and meet according to a predetermined schedule (typically once per week, but some courses meet less frequently). A few online courses have few or no regular meetings; most work is completed independently (“*asynchronous*”).

Attendance at scheduled meetings is mandatory in most cases, although individual instructors determine final requirements. Students are expected to attend every session and participate for the entire session, so it is important to be able to commit to the meeting time, and if online, be in an environment that allows participating without distractions.

Students who prefer face-to-face interaction can register for the on-campus sections of hybrid courses as often as they are available but should note that in recent years, local students are choosing more and more to attend hybrid courses by web conference even when on-campus participation is possible, in order to reduce commuting time or transportation costs, or for other personal reasons. As a result, on-campus cohorts are likely to be quite small in number. Additionally, local students who prefer on-campus participation should still expect to take some courses fully online along the way, in order to complete the program within their intended timeline and with their preferred electives.

Additional Notes on Program Requirements

Students must complete all of the following items to be awarded the MA degree:

Course Completion

Most CCT courses are 3 credits. Courses are graded with standard letters, with a lowest possible passing grade of C for graduate courses. Coursework that does not reach the minimum qualifications for a C will be given an F. An overall average grade of B (Grade Point Average = 3.0) or above is required for graduation.

Reflective Practice Portfolio

The Reflective Practice Portfolio is an electronic portfolio of academic work completed over the course of the program. The two main components of the portfolio are the exhibits and the narrative. For the exhibits, students choose one assignment from each course (or a selection from a longer assignment) that best represents how their thinking developed through that course. For each assignment, students then write a narrative (about one page of double-spaced text) that describes how the chosen assignment shows a shift of thinking (between an earlier time in life and the point of that assignment, or between the beginning and end of the course). This description is written as a critical reflection – that is, it doesn't only say what was accomplished through the selected assignment but also shows how the student is reflecting on their own assumptions and biases and the development that has happened as they were challenged to bring new thinking into their lives or work.

The Reflective Practice Portfolio requirement extends outside of the individual courses; effort needs to be made independently and throughout a student's CCT career to select the exhibits from one's coursework and write the narrative pieces. It is strongly recommended that students work on the portfolio at the end of each term to more easily recall the context in which each selected assignment was completed.

For more information, explanation of the rationale, and examples of Reflective Practice Portfolios, please see the web site: <https://blogs.umb.edu/cct/home/overview/reflective-practice-portfolio/>

Mid-Program Check-in

A brief interview with the Graduate Program Director is held at the mid-point of one's progress through the MA program. This is explained further in the later section titled, "Moving Through the Program".

Capstone Synthesis

The capstone project (for the MA only) is a synthesis of one's insight, learning, and preparedness for change and ongoing development as a result of the program. This project is completed through participation in the CRCRTH 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice seminar, which is taken at the end of the program (typically, this course is taken last, although some courses, such as late electives, may be taken simultaneously).

Exit Self-Assessment

A written self-assessment is completed by each student, typically in conjunction with the end of the CRCRTH 694 Synthesis course. This assessment asks students to document the broad impact of the program on their personal, professional, and educational development by identifying areas of achievement and challenges in relation to two sets of goals: 1) completion of the synthesis project itself, and 2) developing as a reflective practitioner. See Appendix E for full text of the goals. Students may wish to review these goals periodically throughout the program as a prompt in thinking about how to approach upcoming courses as well as reflect upon recent ones. The exit self-assessment goals also provide some framework for thinking about how to write the narrative parts of the Reflective Practice Portfolio.

Additional Requirements and Expectations of Students

In addition to the coursework, check-ins, and portfolio requirements, students are requested to address the following on a regular basis:

- Students taking courses in the hybrid format will have registered for either an online section or a face-to-face section. Students are generally expected to attend the course consistently with how they registered, because this affects instructor planning when counting face-to-face and online participants. It is not permissible to choose week-to-week how you will attend. Having said so, instructors may develop an individual policy that overrides this default policy and allows for greater flexibility, so it is important to be aware of the case for each course. Likewise, students who normally participate online but wish to attend a particular class meeting in person must contact the instructor to make arrangements ahead of time so that the instructor can plan properly.
- Students who initially apply to the Graduate Certificate program may continue on to the MA by submitting a new, separate application to Graduate Admissions for the MA program. This means that an application fee, application form, and supporting materials must be resubmitted (although previous transcripts already received for the Graduate Certificate application would be reused for the MA application with no need to have them resent). Coursework taken toward the Certificate will count toward MA requirements.

- Students are expected to be aware of the academic calendar for the given semester, including course start and end dates, the deadlines for Adding, Changing, Dropping, or Withdrawing from a course, and the class meeting times.
- Keep the CCT program and the university informed of any changes to your contact information, including email address, residential address, and phone number; confirm that the email address listed for you in WISER is your preferred one, and submit personal information change request to the university when a change is needed. Also, please make sure that you have fulfilled the university's requirement for vaccination (local students) and emergency contact updates; a hold may be placed on your student account if these are not addressed, and registration for courses will be prevented until these issues are cleared.
- Please inform the program of any change in academic plans, especially those that involve shifting when you expect to complete required courses, or situations where you may need skip taking courses in a given semester. We fully understand that students occasionally have life and work issues that can affect your progress through your studies, but note that dropping out of contact will eventually have financial consequences, usually in the form of late fees or extra expenses. The program faculty and staff may be able to help you avoid or minimize those if possible, if you keep us in the loop. Students are also expected to finish the MA within 5 years of matriculating.
- The university's Graduate Studies policy requires that all students maintain continuous enrollment. This means that if you decide that you can't take any courses in a given fall or spring term, you may still remain an active student by paying the Program Fee (currently \$225 per semester). You do this by "registering" for the Program Fee "course" in WISER (search for CAS 600). If you don't pay this fee and are not registered for at least one course during a semester, the university will discontinue your enrollment, requiring you to re-enroll in the program by paying back Program fees as well as additional administrative and late fees before you can register for courses again. This also applies if you initially register for one course in a semester but then Drop or Withdraw from the course, leaving you with no registrations left for that semester; in this case, contact the university Bursar's office to pay the Program Fee. NOTE: no Program Fee is required for the short summer and winter terms; continuous enrollment is automatically maintained then whether you take a course or not. Also, if your student account becomes inactive for the reasons stated above, your university email account may be suspended as well, and/or you may not receive communications from the university or program. Please stay in touch with CCT to make sure that you have information about courses and registration.
- Take initiative in addressing any Incomplete grades by finishing missing work as agreed in the completion contracts that you have established with your instructors. Incomplete grades are allowed only in rare cases, and when there is documented illness or hardship, and instructors have final say on whether an Incomplete is appropriate. After one year,

an Incomplete grade automatically turns into an “IF” (“Incomplete-Fail”), which means that the course must be retaken from the beginning, at full cost to you (which also means that you may have to wait until it is offered again). Please keep on schedule in finishing the work in a timely way, rather than expect instructors to pursue you and make exceptions for continued extensions, etc. In order to issue an Incomplete in the first place, prepare to submit to your instructor your documentation of need and a plan for completion *before* the end of the course.

- Actively develop your research and study competencies (see Appendix A). Both face-to-face and online courses are enhanced through a process of continual improvement in these areas. Workshops, university student services offices, and other resources can provide directed assistance in these areas. While most courses do not require students to have any specialized technological expertise, familiarity with computer-based tools is helpful and support your ongoing development as a student and professional.
- Beyond the tools of research and study competencies, developing healthy academic habits are also expected. Consider your progress as a Reflective Practitioner and observe how your own thinking is evolving as you seek to use critical and creative thinking to bring change to your work, schools, organizations, and life.

CCT Academic Location: College of Education and Human Development

The Critical and Creative Thinking graduate program is located within the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). This college contains the various graduate programs that help pre-service teachers achieve state teaching licensure as well as several other non-licensure programs. CCT students are welcome to seek electives from within the college’s programs, such as Global Inclusion and Social Development, Instructional Design, Counseling, School Psychology, Special Education, and Educational Leadership. CCT students have also sought electives from additional UMB programs such as Applied Linguistics, American Studies, and Public Policy.

Academic Policies and Procedures

For the complete listing of academic policies related to graduate students, please see the Graduate Studies Catalog at <http://catalog.umb.edu>. Students are encouraged to be familiar with the sections on Student Rights & Responsibilities, and Academic & Administrative Policies.

Students are expected to maintain all aspects of the Code of Student Conduct at UMass Boston. These guidelines describe student behavior that is free from plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, deception, forgery, harassment, violence, and other such violations.

Key policies are summarized below.

Satisfactory Academic Progress is considered to be made when:

- Student has no more than 3 Incomplete grades still outstanding
- Student maintains cumulative Grade Point Average of at least 3.0
- Student is on track to finish the program in under 5 years (this is the formal statute of limitations on program completion)
- Student maintains continuous registration by enrolling in courses or paying the Program Fee every semester; this keeps your student status active and ensures that the university continues to regard you as a current student, for all intents and purposes (such as keeping your student email account available to you, including you in university announcements/communications, and allowing access to other campus services).

Failing to meet these standards creates the possibility that a student may be placed on academic probation, which then may have implications on the student's general progress, financial aid, and finances.

Transfer credits

Students may transfer up to 6 credits to be counted toward their UMass Boston program, as long as a minimum grade of B was achieved in those courses, and as long as those courses have not been used toward another degree. The credits must have been earned no more than seven years earlier than the matriculation date into UMass Boston. Transfer credits can be applied to both the MA and Graduate Certificate programs, but they must be approved by the program director and align with the academic focus of the rest of the student's plan of studies.

Pre-matriculation credits:

Students may take up to 6 credits of CCT coursework (typically 2 courses) before matriculating. If the student applies to the program (M.A. or Certificate) and is later admitted, these 6 credits will count toward the required coursework in the program. Any credits over 6 will not be automatically transferred onto the student's record toward completion of the degree, but a prematriculation waiver can be used to do so with approval of the Graduate Program Director.

Changing programs

A student wishing to move from a certificate to a degree program must submit a new, full application for the degree program. The university will be able to use transcripts that had been received when the student originally applied for the Certificate. Separately, if a student already in the MA program wishes to add a Graduate Certificate, only a brief form is needed, not a full application. This would be appropriate in cases where a student is not able to continue toward the MA but has already achieved the credits necessary for the Certificate by that point.

Full-time Status

A student is considered:

full-time=9 or more credits per semester; part-time=7 or 8 credits per semester; half-time=6 credits per semester

Students wishing to take more than 12 credits in a semester must get permission from the Graduate Program Director.

Course Enrollment Changes

Students should note the academic calendar for Drop, Add, and Withdraw dates. Dropping a course removes it from the student's registration entirely and allows for a full or partial refund of the fee. After the Drop period ends, the Withdraw period allows the student to leave the course, but no refund is given on the fee. The course name *will appear* on the student's transcript but shows a "W" grade and does not factor in to any grade point average calculations or count for any credits. After the Withdraw deadline, it is not permissible to leave the course; you must finish it and receive a grade.

Other Resources and Support for Students

CCT Monthly Newsletter

All CCT students should subscribe to the program's occasional newsletter (sent by email about once per month) for announcements, reminders, and news of interest. Sign up here: <http://eepurl.com/w1Ayn>. This newsletter is also open to prospective students and all others.

CCT Writing Workshop

The CCT Writing Workshop is a non-credit weekly writing group for students in any CCT courses who wish to develop their writing in a supportive environment. The workshop schedule varies; it is offered some semesters but not others. It may be combined with the meeting time of one of the final research and writing courses in the program. Check with CCT staff about the schedule for the current semester.

Graduate Student Assembly (GSA)

This organization sponsors events and provides other resources to graduate students, as well as helps to fund student-run clubs. The Critical and Creative Thinking Forum, supported by the GSA, is the student club of the CCT program and open to all current graduate students:

<https://gsaumb.wordpress.com/>. (Note: the CCT Forum may be inactive in periods when the CCT program has not been allocated with a Graduate Assistantship, since part of this person's role involves maintaining the CCT Forum).

Healey Library

Staff members at the library provide extensive assistance in many areas of research and access to books, journals, and media. Services such as workshops and online guides are offered to students as well. Distance students can also access many library resources, including online help from librarians and a large collection of online research databases that offer many full-text journal articles. See <https://www.umb.edu/library>

IT Training

Workshops in many areas of technology and campus systems are available free for students. While many of these are held on campus, other resources are available online in the form of tutorials and help guides. See <https://www.umb.edu/it/training>

IT Services

The IT Service Desk is the main point of contact for all help with campus technology, including online systems, student accounts/passwords for email/WISER, and software and hardware. Assistance can be found by contacting the IT Service Desk at ITServiceDesk@umb.edu or 617-287-5220, or by visiting the IT Service Desk on the third floor of the Healey Library.

Main IT web site: <https://www.umb.edu/it>

Student Email: <https://www.umb.edu/webmail>

WISER: <https://www.umb.edu/it/wiser>

Disability Services

Disability services at UMass Boston are coordinated through the Ross Center. Staff can assist students with all aspects of access both around campus and in coursework. Students are invited to contact the Ross Center to request accommodations, which may also include working with faculty of courses to accommodate special needs in the access to course materials.

Accommodations should be established before the semester begins.

<http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/>

International Students

The Office of Global Programs offers services to international students who attend UMass Boston on-campus and need assistance with residency paperwork, locating funding, and finding other local resources.

<https://www.umb.edu/academics/global>

Graduate Writing Center/Academic Support

The Graduate Writing Center, within the department of Academic Support Programs, provides resources to help students developing in their writing and research. Sign up early in the semester.

<http://blogs.umb.edu/gwc/>

Health Services

The Health Services office on campus assists students with all medical and counseling needs (especially if you purchase the student health plan).

<http://www.umb.edu/healthservices/>

Social and Traditional Media at UMB

Several media channels are available to help the UMass community keep current with university news, opportunities, events, and special announcements.

http://www.umb.edu/news_events_media/

Public Safety

The Department of Public Safety provides all security-related services on campus and includes the campus police. The department also assists with issues such as office or classroom lockout.

Main phone number: (617) 287-7799

http://www.umb.edu/public_safety/

One Stop

All issues related to billing, student accounts, registration, financial aid, and other administrative issues for students may be addressed at the One Stop office for students on campus.

http://www.umb.edu/campus_center/services/one_stop/

Bookstore

A campus book store is located near the front entrance of the Campus Center for purchases of both textbooks and office supplies. While some CCT courses may stock required textbooks in the Bookstore, most encourage students to seek used or inexpensive copies from online vendors. Check with the instructor for any required books.

Section 2: Applying and Admissions

Before You Apply

Most Critical and Creative Thinking courses can be taken without joining the program. These might be used for professional development or personal interest. If you are not enrolled in any UMass Boston program at the time, the university recognizes you as a “non-degree” student. If you eventually matriculate into the program (M.A. or Certificate), up to two courses that you have taken as a non-degree student can be transferred in at that time and count toward your graduation credits. Many students make use of this rule to take a course or two before entering the program in order to get to know the program and its faculty and students as well as the university before finalizing their applications.

Application Procedures

The application procedures determined by Graduate Admissions are described here:

<http://www.umb.edu/admissions/grad/apply/>

Application deadlines: July 1 (for fall admission); December 1 (for spring admission)

There are only two formal matriculation periods: spring and fall. This means that you only become a recognized student in the university program upon admission at these points. If you are admitted for the upcoming fall but wish to take a summer course prior to matriculation, this is permitted, but just note that during the summer you would still be regarded as a non-degree student by the university. Non-degree students cannot access financial aid, graduate assistantships, or certain other benefits of matriculated students.

Applicants may contact Graduate Admissions at graduate.admissions@umb.edu for general inquiry about procedures. Once the main application information form has been received, applicants also receive login information to check their application status in the automated online system. Please check there first before emailing Graduate Admissions to confirm receipt of materials.

Generally, the application requirements for the CCT program match those indicated by Graduate Admissions. One exception is that submission of test scores (e.g., the GRE) is not required for the CCT program.

When all of the application materials are received by the Graduate Admissions office, the program faculty committee reviews the materials and makes a decision about admissions. This can be to admit the applicant, deny the admission, or allow a provisional admission. Provisional admission usually requires that a student receives a grade of B or higher in all first-semester courses to remain a matriculated student.

Additional Notes for International Applicants

International applicants need to fulfill additional requirements to the standard ones for admissions. See <https://admissions.umb.edu/international-students> for more information about applying and visas.

In particular, note that if your transcript is in a language other than English, each page must be accompanied by an official, certified English translation, validated by an official public translator as a translation of an original official transcript, and arrive at Graduate Admissions in a sealed envelope (unopened by the applicant). This means that there needs to be proof that the translator viewed an official copy of the transcript and that the translation is official as well.

Costs

See the following page for costs, based on enrollment type (subject to change):
https://www.umb.edu/bursar/tuition_and_fees

Financial Aid

Please refer to the web site of the Office of Financial Aid for a description of aid possibilities:
http://www.umb.edu/admissions/financial_aid_scholarships/grad_aid

It is usually best to visit with or speak directly with a Financial Aid representative, who will help you to evaluate financial aid opportunities based on your specific circumstances, usually after you complete the FAFSA (federal financial aid application).

CCT Graduate Assistantships

The Critical and Creative Thinking Program is occasionally granted a Graduate Assistantship, which may be equivalent to 1/4th time (4.5 hours/week) or more and includes a stipend and partial tuition waiver. As of this edition of the handbook, no assistantship is currently available in the CCT program, but campus-wide positions are managed through the Graduate Studies office, and current opportunities in other programs can be found through the web site:
https://www.umb.edu/academics/graduate/info_for_graduate_students

Section 3: Getting Started - Newly Admitted Students

Accepting Admission

Once the admissions decision is finalized and you have been accepted into the program, the Graduate Admissions office will notify you, and you'll be asked to submit the New Student Fee for graduate students. Submitting this fee confirms that you will join the program and initiates your matriculation.

Checklist of First Steps for Newly Matriculated Students

Once you have confirmed that you are now a matriculated student, complete the following steps:

1. Review the Welcome Letter for new students:
<https://blogs.umb.edu/cct/home/overview/welcome-new-students/>
2. Become familiar with other reference links on the program web site:
<http://www.cct.umb.edu/>
3. Review the Student Handbook in its entirety (this document).

Online Communication Notes

Courses in the CCT program may make use of Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, or Google Meet as (audio/video) conferencing methods for certain online meetings, discussions, and other communications. Note that you may need to establish non-university login accounts and the installation of software on your own computer.

Please contact the program for additional help getting started with these. At a minimum, you'll need a computer with a microphone or headphone-microphone device that you can plug in to your computer, and basic system requirements mentioned on the sites above. It is strongly recommended that for such online events you use a computer with a wired Internet connection, as wireless connections sometimes do not allow a clear and consistent connection.

Entrance Interview

The entrance interview is a way for the Program Director and other faculty to help you get started with your studies and learn about your interests so that you may be advised around course planning and other opportunities. At this time we would encourage you to:

1. Learn about resources available to students, including use of our web sites and social media sites that extend interactions beyond the program of studies.

2. Establish and/or confirm your provisional plan for taking courses through completion of the program, including a term-by-term breakdown of courses that you expect to take.
3. Start your Reflective Practitioner's Portfolio and start to see how you will make connections between ideas and courses throughout your student career.
4. Learn about upcoming events, such as the CCT Community Open Houses (designed for current students as well as a way for prospective students to visit the program).
5. Start reviewing research / writing competencies that you will develop throughout the program (Appendix A).
6. Ask any other questions that have not been answered yet for you.

Student Advising

A general advisor is assigned to each student upon entering the program. Often, this advisor is the same as the Program Director, unless otherwise specified or unless you have made a special arrangement with another faculty member. Your advisor is available to assist you in adjusting your course plans, registering for courses, and finding the support that you need to succeed in your studies.

Guidelines to Help Faculty Serve Students

1. For advice on your studies, consult this CCT handbook before contacting your advisor. Submit a course plan as soon as you are admitted and use this as a basis for discussions with your advisor.
2. Make explicit written contracts for Incomplete grades, which may be allowed by instructors if you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing a course before grades are due. You and the instructor should work out an explicit contract that states clearly what work is to be done, and by what dates, in order for a grade to replace the Incomplete. It is the student's responsibility to complete the work and confirm with the instructor that the final grade can be submitted.
3. Know the important dates of the academic calendar. Once you have matriculated you should register for the following semester's courses during the official registration period in November/December and April/May. Late fees may be charged to matriculated students who register after the registration deadline (this doesn't apply to new students). Also, each semester, note the deadlines to Add, Drop, Change, and Withdraw from courses.
4. Before the start of the Synthesis course (CRCRTH 694), make sure that you have finished the Processes of Research & Engagement course (CRCRTH 692) and have gotten a proposal approved, or else postpone taking the Synthesis course for another semester.
5. As a complementary system of support, seek to develop peer and other horizontal relationships (other students, alums) and to give support and advice to them when asked for.

Section 4: Moving Through the Program

Registering for Courses

Registration happens through the WISER online system. A login account is created for each new student (or may have already been created if you took a course as a non-degree student before applying).

WISER web site: <http://wiser.umb.edu/>

When searching for CCT courses in the online catalog, the Course Subject code is CRCRTH. Some courses in the CCT program are cross-listed in other programs as well, so these might be used also (for example, the course Foundations of Philosophical Thought is cross-listed with the Philosophy department and is course PHIL 501 as well as CRCRTH 603). Note that when you register for a course, your student account will reflect the registration, and you will be billed accordingly. Questions about course charges should be directed to the Bursar's Office.

Occasionally, WISER prevents a course registration and displays an error message, which may refer to needing permission to take the course or some discrepancy with a student's program plan. CCT courses usually do not require instructor or program permission, so this should not be a reason to be denied enrollment to a course. If you receive this message, make sure that it is within the registration period for the term that the course is being offered, and also, make sure that there are no "holds" on your student account. A hold on your account prevents registration and can happen for several reasons – an unpaid past due balance on your bill, some critical personal information is missing or out of date in the university records, or other academic situations may need to be addressed. If you are not sure how to resolve the problem, contact the program for help.

Mid-program/End-of-Semester Check-in

After the end of each semester, or at least at the mid-point in your studies, the CCT faculty will meet with you and review your progress in the program. Before this meeting, update your current Reflective Practice Portfolio, and submit notes on your development of the Research and Study competencies. At the Check-in meeting, the faculty will make recommendations about staying on track (which may include suggesting that you put a hold on taking courses in order to finish Incomplete grades and/or spend a semester improving writing skills and working toward the competencies).

At the mid-program check-in meeting, you may also start to consider early ideas about your approach to the pre-capstone courses and capstone Synthesis.

Pre-capstone Courses

Two courses focus on research and writing and help to prepare you for the capstone experience. These courses are:

CRCRTH 692 Processes of Research and Engagement

CRCRTH 693 Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

Processes of Research and Engagement provides an opportunity for students to research, design, and pilot an application of your learning to your own professional or personal needs. This course helps you to develop your research in a way that can lead to many forms, such as a workshop series, a curriculum unit, a creative product, or a business plan. This course must be completed (you must have a final grade, not just an Incomplete) before you start the capstone synthesis.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change addresses practices of evaluating and facilitating growth in critical and creative thinking in oneself and others. Permission may be granted to take this course at the same time as the Synthesis seminar.

While it is not required that the two pre-capstone courses be taken in the sequence above and immediately before the CRCRTH 694 Synthesis seminar, please check with your advisor about recommendations for taking these courses earlier in your studies. CRCRTH 692 and 693 work best when taken after many other courses have been completed.

Section 5: The Capstone Synthesis

Capstone Synthesis Course and General Requirements

Students enroll in **CRCRTH 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice Seminar** (commonly called “Synthesis”) to undertake a supervised synthesis project and exit self-assessment, through which you review and reflect on the integration into your professional lives of critical and creative thinking skills and strategies and demonstrate competencies appropriate and relevant to your disciplines. The synthesis project has two parts: a written essay and an oral presentation. The synthesis project essay is expected to incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework and references to relevant scholarly work in its field. The oral presentation (typically 45 minutes) is given before members of the CCT faculty and is open to the CCT and university community and general public. Both the essay and the oral presentation are evaluated by at least two members of the CCT faculty.

The essay/paper (20-40+ pages) may integrate exhibits from the student's work during the program, which may take a variety of forms, such as, Original Curriculum Materials, a Professional Development Workshop series, a Video case study, a Practitioner's Portfolio, or a Prospectus for future research and engagement. The form and length of the essay depends on the particular nature of the project. For example, an extended essay that reviews and critiques relevant literatures would be expected with the Prospectus, but a shorter essay may accompany a Video case study. See Appendix B, “Capstone Options”, for a more complete description of the options for completing the capstone project.

There are two required pre-capstone courses, CRCRTH 692 and CRCRTH693. Before CRCRTH 694 can be undertaken, CRCRTH 692 must be completed and a 500-1000 word proposal by the student must be approved by the advisor and Program Director. All Capstone Projects must demonstrate knowledge and integration of critical and creative thinking skills, processes and strategies. There are many specific options for these projects, listed below, from the development of a traditional theoretical paper to a curriculum or professional development series, to the creation of a web site.

Assessment of Capstone Synthesis

Although the focus of the CRCRTH 694 course is the completion of the capstone project, they are not literally one and the same. Completing the course and completing the capstone are related and yet differentiated in the way that each is assessed. A letter grade is awarded for the course in the standard format of graduate course grading. The grade is given based on both processes and outcomes of the course, such as the quality and quantity of written work done throughout the course, class participation, peer support, and other project achievements. Course grading may vary somewhat based on the individual Instructor but will be made available to students through the syllabus supplied before the beginning of the semester.

The formal assessment of the capstone itself is based on a standard rubric that addresses three specific required products:

- the written synthesis project
- the formal presentation of the project (to the CCT and wider community near the end of the semester in which CRCRTH 694 is taken)
- the exit self-assessment

Several elements of the whole project are scored, and averages between the Instructor and Reader are translated into a final assessment level:

- Pass with distinction
- Pass
- Low pass
- Needs to be revised

All students who have received a passing grade for the course and a final assessment other than “needs to be revised” may finish the course. See below, “Notes on Completing the Capstone Synthesis”. The capstone assessment is completed by both the 694 course instructor and one other faculty.

Notes on Preparation for Synthesis Project

- Students preparing to take CRCRTH 694 should have no more than one outstanding Incomplete grade to address and should not be on academic probation.
- The Synthesis project should begin well before the synthesis seminar semester. During the semester before the synthesis seminar semester, either a semester of research/independent study or the Processes of Research and Engagement course should be taken. The deadlines for writing the synthesis product make it next to impossible to do any new research during the synthesis seminar semester, beyond what is needed to complete the literature review and subsequent write-up. The time between semesters should also be used to complete research prior to the synthesis seminar.
- The main advisor for the synthesis project will be the Instructor for the Synthesis course. The Instructor both awards the grade for the Synthesis course and completes one of the two assessments on the student’s written project, presentation, and exit self-assessment.
- In rare cases, the Reader may be someone other than CCT core faculty. If neither the Instructor nor the Reader are specialists in the area of interest of the student’s project, and the student has a specific person in mind who is such a specialist and comes from outside of CCT, the student may request this person as the Reader. This arrangement must be approved by the Graduate Program Director. Formally, the Reader is involved

only at the end of the semester when the project assessment is done. Readers may agree and arrange to have more contact with students but are under no obligation to do so. These might involve periodic meetings or phone calls to review progress or help finding literature relevant to the project in the early stages. For a list of potential Readers outside of the regular teaching faculty, please contact the program.

- Students are encouraged to seek additional assistance from outside specialists as appropriate, although such individuals have no formal role from the point of view of the CCT program. Students are also encouraged to seek the services of an editor to review work for grammatical style and mechanics. Such copyediting work should not be expected of the Instructor or Reader, which gets in the way of the dialogue around work that most enhances the student's project experience. In the past, Readers had a more involved ongoing role throughout the semester of the student's project, but this is no longer the case.

Notes on Completing the Capstone Synthesis

- In cases where a student has done enough work to receive a passing grade in the course but has not completed the Synthesis project, the Instructor may initially allow an Incomplete or 'Y' grade to be given and arrange a Completion Contract with the student to finish the work. This option may only be used at the discretion of the Instructor and if the Synthesis is very close to being finished. The original Instructor continues as advisor during this period.
- Students who do not come close to finishing the Synthesis in one semester are urged to retake the course the following year. (It really stretches CCT resources for faculty to be asked to advise students with incomplete Syntheses outside of being in a current course and hasn't worked well for many students.)
- Students are encouraged to attend ongoing program writing workshops, and the end-of-semester "Marathon Day" when offered, typically one day in which students and faculty dedicate several hours to finishing long writing projects and offering mutual support and review for each other.
- The abstracts of pass or pass with distinction syntheses are submitted to ScholarWorks. A Committee of the Program faculty decides which students to be honored by submission of the full text pdf of their syntheses to ScholarWorks as examples of engaged scholarship from the CCT program.

Section 6: Graduating

Graduation from the CCT program is an exciting accomplishment, and several steps are needed to ensure that this happens smoothly.

First, make sure that you've completed all of the required courses and activities related to your track of study. See the section on "Program Requirements" near the beginning of this handbook.

Once all of the program requirements are met, students will prepare to graduate (in December, May, or August). In March or September before the expected graduation, students need to complete the Application to Graduate, available on the Registrar's web site. See this page for steps to follow:

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/applying#panel-stg-2>

Announcements referring to graduation details may also come by postal mail or email throughout the semester. Look to these for details about attendance at Convocation and Commencement, caps and gowns, and other logistics. The hood for CCT and SICW students is white in color, since the degree is an M.A.

Section 7: Beyond CCT: Opportunities and Resources for Graduates and the Wider Community

Program graduates form a crucial part of the ongoing success and life of the CCT community. Refer to the web site for [ways that alums can continue to extend connections and impact](#) from their studies after graduation.

Publicity

Because of the unique qualities and interdisciplinary nature of the program, graduates play an important part in helping the outside world to appreciate the value of CCT alumni. Alumni play an important role in helping prospective students to learn about the M.A. degree and Graduate Certificate. The Program can sometimes supply publicity bookmarks, information sheets, and some other materials to alumni to draw attention to CCT when making public presentations or engaging with others who might be interested.

CCT Community Open Houses

The CCT program hosts open house gatherings throughout the fall and spring semesters. Alumni are always welcomed to attend and are frequently invited to come to these events (in person or online) and share their work with current students and others in the CCT and university community. The Open Houses are always free and open to all in the CCT and university community, including prospective students and guests. The Open Houses are formally organized as part of the program's vision for the "CCT Network", the name that we give to our wider community. The principles of this community lie in the following goals:

- Organizing, in a sustainable fashion, personal & professional development, community building, and educational-innovation activities beyond the formal CCT program of studies.
- Supplementing students' education through the involvement of alums.
- Continuing alums' education by their involvement in the education of students and each other.

Program alums are encouraged to participate in these events and bring their ongoing work back to the program, as we encourage students to get to know the range of possible outcomes of the critical and creative thinking experience.

Collaborative Explorations

A Collaborative Explorations (CE) is a free, online, non-credit “mini-course” offered through the CCT program for both the CCT community and wider public. The CEs involve a problem-based learning approach involving the exploration of some special topic related to critical and creative thinking and reflective practice. These experiences are open to anyone interested in that topic. Each CE involves four 1-hour online meetings, spaced one week apart. During these online meetings, those present participate in dialogue that helps to clarify their interest in the topic, share learnings and questions, and work together as co-inquirers. Participants each have their own perspective and motivations for exploring the topic, and so the group benefits from the diversity of what is shared. In between the online meetings, participants then each spend some time in independent exploration of the topic in directions that interest them most. The online meetings are often scheduled to be held on a day and time that is best for those who register ahead of time. All students are encouraged to participate as often as you wish.

Examples of past topics are listed here:

- Creative and Transformative Education
- Design for Living Complexities
- Preparing People to be Informed Participants in Political Debates about Science, Technology, and Social Change
- Scaffolding Creative Learning

Appendix A: Research and Study Competencies

CCT expects students early in their program of study to develop competencies in the areas below. Make use of self-study guides and workshops to assist your development. Use the left margin to take stock of what you already do well and what your priorities are for next steps.

- Computer use
 - Establish how you'll use email, so that you can keep school work separate from personal and work emails (including deciding if you'll regularly check your [UMB student email account](#), or have messages sent to it automatically forwarded to a personal email account)
 - Establish a filing system for email and attachments downloaded to your own computer
 - Establish a system on your computer of folders/directories and folders/directories inside folders/directories, so that all files are inside folders/directories and can be easily backed up or synchronized (Examples: Courses; Email; Bibliographic records; Work/Organizations; Correspondence;...)
 - Establish an account on Google and understand how to use Google+ Hangouts, Google Drive for sharing files, and other tools to help with collaboration and communication.
 - Establish a system using flash drives/online file-sharing/online backup services to synchronize files from one computer to the next
 - Use of email mailing lists and online discussion boards in support of your academic work
 - Use of social network sites (to extend the experiences that we value in face-to-face and person-to-person interactions and to spark other kinds of generative interactions that hadn't been happening off-line, e.g., those listed in Section 7)
 - Become familiar with the facilities and professional development opportunities provided by [Information Technology](#)
 - Install an up-to-date internet browser and set your preferences on it
- Library use and Research
 - Access to on-line reference material and internet searching via on-line tutorials or workshops
 - Establish a bibliography database for references (using software such as Endnote or RefWorks)
 - Understand that using material you did not write without citing the source is plagiarism and unacceptable (see the library's [Research Guide](#) on this topic).
 - Establish a system of files to organize research materials that you have on paper (complementing the electronic filing system).
- Writing and Editing
 - Arrange peer and/or professional editorial assistance (which frees professors to interact with you around your ideas)

- Explore writing assistance if needed (e.g., [Graduate Writing Center/Academic Support](#))
- Establish preferred citation style and prepare a guide for yourself to use it consistently
- Spelling and grammar check using a word processing program
- Standard, consistent use of commas and other punctuation (use Turabian or other reference to create a checklist)
- Formatting documents, using your word processor's ruler, table layout, page breaks, indents (minimize the use of tabs/spaces to align and position text)
- Phases of developing research writing, which are adaptable to any project.
- Reflective Practice
 - Personal/professional workbook, including notes, journaling, information you want to refer back to
 - Reflective Practice (or Metacognitive) Portfolio
 - Use of social network sites to extend the experiences that we value in face-to-face and person-to-person interactions and to spark other kinds of generative interactions that hadn't been happening off-line
 - Hidden diversity ("underlying differences that shape who we are in unique ways...allow[ing] us the opportunity to contribute to society in very individual and productive ways")

Appendix B: Capstone Options

1. A **Paper or Long Essay** addressing a question or set of questions through scholarly review and critique of the appropriate literatures, and concluding with a set of recommendations or reframed/reinterpreted questions. (E.g., How is transfer of learning currently understood? How can transfer of learning be facilitated in middle school math classes?) This type of capstone typically starts with a topical research question or governing question. Students are encouraged to write the paper to help prepare for future academic work or to be published in a professional or academic journal or industry-specific forum.

2. A **Case Study/Practitioner's Narrative** in which teachers or other practitioners describe and reflect on the implementation of a change process in their setting, as informed by your learning of critical and creative thinking. Including an account of initiatives, consequences, obstacles, problem solving, and project redesign, as well as reflections on the change process itself. Alternately, the reflective narrative may be written with respect to your development and allow you to think deeply about your own practice-its origin, dynamic nature, influences, commitments, and future directions-to yield useful insights and discoveries. This format can also lead to a practitioner's toolkit where aspects of the CCT experience are examined with respect to future application toward personal and professional goals.

3. An 18-20 lesson **Curriculum unit or Professional Development Workshop Series** reflecting the integration of recommendations from the CCT Program, including a rationale of its design and structure, detailed plans, and assessment procedures. Other forms of **Original Curriculum Materials** may be developed as well where the accompanying paper explains how and why the materials were developed, what need they meet, and specifically how they are to be used for instruction and assessment.

4. An **Arts option**, comprising a work of literature, visual or performing arts, or multimedia, for example, including both the artistic product and an accompanying essay that describes the work's evolution, and locates it in an appropriate theoretical framework. Examples: *Literature or visual product* -- a piece of fiction, poetry or drama of appropriate scope (e.g. a one act play, a poetry chapbook, a short story or 2-3 short, shorts) polished and publication ready; *Video Enactment* -- a vignette, extended dramatic monologue, poetry reading, dance, musical performance, recorded (edited) with reasonable professionalism.

5. **Original Products**, which exemplify the outcome of a creative process where you have developed something to be used to support change in an organization, community, or global setting, in ways that extend outside of the options described above. This includes a representation of the products in an archival format in addition to the accompanying essay in which you describe the theoretical framework, development of, and application of the products with reference to the role of critical and creative thinking in positioning the products for your intended audience.

Appendix C: CCT Faculty and Staff

Core Faculty and Staff

- [Arthur Millman](#), Associate Professor and Department Chair of Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts
- [Jeremy Szteiter](#), Critical and Creative Thinking Assistant Director, College of Education and Human Development

Part-time Faculty

- [Suzanne Clark](#), Associate Professor, Berklee College of Music
- Nina Greenwald, Professor of Critical and Creative Thinking, retired
- [Olen Gunnlaugson](#), Asst. Professor in Leadership and Organizational Development, Université Laval
- [David S. Martin](#), Dean Emeritus, Gallaudet University
- [Bobby Ricketts](#)
- Mark D. Robinson
- [Ben Schwendener](#)
- Christian Walkes
- [Luanne Witkowski](#)

Appendix D: Courses and Descriptions

For up-to-date information on course descriptions and planned offerings, refer to: <http://www.cct.umb.edu/Courses.html>. This page includes the most recent syllabus for many course sections, along with summaries of course evaluations from previous students.

Required Courses

1) Theme: Curriculum, Organization, and Innovation)

Both are required:

- CrCrTh 601 Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh 602 Creative Thinking

2) Theme: Research and Writing for Reflective Practice

Both are required (taken in the later stages of the degree):

- CrCrTh 692 Processes of Research and Engagement
- CrCrTh 693 Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

3) Theme: Mediation, Dialogue, and Collaboration

At least one of the following are required (substitutions possible, with program permission):

- CrCrTh 616 Dialogue Processes
- CrCrTh 618 Creative Thinking, Collaboration, and Organizational Change

4) Theme: Urban and Social Justice Education

At least one of the following are required (substitutions possible, with program permission):

- CrCrTh 615 Dialogue Processes
- CrCrTh 627 Creative Thinking, Collaboration, and Organizational Change

5) Theme: Capstone

The following is required as the last course in the program:

- CrCrTh 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice

Meeting the requirements above amounts to achieving 21 credits (7 courses). The MA requires an additional 12 credits (4 courses) from other selections throughout the program.

The Science in a Changing World track (not currently open for admission) requires the following 7 courses (plus four additional electives):

- CrCrTh640 Environment, Science and Society: Critical Thinking OR CrCrTh645L Biology in Society: Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh649L Scientific and Political Change
- CrCrTh650 Mathematical Thinking
- CrCrTh652 Conceptual Change

All Required and Elective Course Options

(* indicates not currently being offered, or not planned for upcoming terms)

- CrCrTh 601 Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh 602 Creative Thinking
- CrCrTh 603 (formerly called PHIL 501) Foundations of Philosophical Thought
- CrCrTh 611 Seminar In Critical Thinking (themes: Design for Living Complexities; Critical Thinking in Business)
- CrCrTh 612 Seminar In Creativity (themes: Exploring Creative Blocks; Creative Thinking at Work)
- CrCrTh 615 Holistic and Transformative Teaching
- CrCrTh 616 Dialogue Processes
- CrCrTh 618 Creative Thinking, Collaboration and Organizational Change
- CrCrTh 619 Biomedical Ethics
- CrCrTh 620* Moral Education
- CrCrTh 627 Issues In Antiracist And Multicultural Education
- CrCrTh 630* Creativity And Criticism In Literature And Art
- CrCrTh 640* Environment, Science and Society: Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh 645L* Biology in Society: Critical Thinking
- CrCrTh 646L* The Gifted and Talented Student
- CrCrTh 649L* Scientific and Political Change
- CrCrTh 650* Mathematical Thinking
- CrCrTh 651* (also offered as PSYCH 550) Advanced Cognitive Psychology
- CrCrTh 652* Conceptual Change and Learning (formerly called Children and Science)
- CrCrTh 653L* Epidemiological Thinking and Population Health
- CrCrTh 655 Metacognition
- CrCrTh 670 Thinking, Learning and Computers (fall on-line)
- CrCrTh 688 Reflective Practice (1-3 credits) (fall & spring)

Required Final Courses for M.A.

- CrCrTh 692 Processes of Research and Engagement
- CrCrTh 693 Action Research for Educational, Professional and Personal Change (formerly Evaluation Of Educational Change)
- CrCrTh 694 Synthesis Of Theory And Practice

CrCrTh 601 Critical Thinking

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.

CrCrTh 602 Creative Thinking

This course explores approaches to "How might we proceed when confronted by problems, situations too ambiguous, complex, or messy or impossible to be addressed directly through logical strategies?" It seeks to increase the participants' understanding of creativity, to improve their creative problem-solving skills and to enhance their ability to promote these skills in others, in a variety of educational settings. Students participate in activities designed to help develop their own creativity, and discuss the creative process from various theoretical perspectives. Readings are on such topics as creative individuals, environments that tend to enhance creative functioning, and related educational issues. Discussions with artists, scientists and others particularly involved in the creative process focus on their techniques, and on ways in which creativity can be nurtured.

CrCrTh 603/PHIL 501 Foundations of Philosophical Thought

By discussing four or five substantive problems in philosophy -- morality, the nature of knowledge, freedom of the will, the nature of mind, and social organization -- we will attempt to derive a common approach that philosophers bring to these problems when developing their own solutions to questions such as, "How do we know what we know?" or when criticizing the solutions of other philosophers. In the course of this discussion we will consider some of the ways that substantive issues and debates in philosophy relate to contemporary non-philosophical issues in our society and can be introduced into a broad range of educational environments outside standard philosophy courses. In connection with the latter, we will examine curriculum materials and discuss questions about the ability of children and adolescents to think philosophically.

CrCrTh 611 Seminar In Critical Thinking

Current Themes (varies by section): Design for Living Complexities; Critical Thinking in Business

Theme: Design for Living Complexities (hybrid)

Design is about intentionality in construction, which involves a range of materials, a sequence of steps, and principles that inform the choice of material and the steps. Design always involves putting people as well as materials into place, which may happen by working with the known properties of the people and materials, trying out new arrangements, or working around their constraints (at least temporarily). Critical thinking involves understanding ideas and practices better when we examine them in relation to alternatives. This course exposes and explores alternative designs through history (showing that things have by no means always been the way they are now), "archeology of the present" (shedding light on what we might have taken for granted or left as someone else's responsibility/specialty), comparison (looking at the ways things are arranged in different organizations and cultures), and ill-defined problems (in cases of real-world "living complexity" that invite a range of responses).

Each course session takes up an issue about design, introduced in a presentation (drawing on videos available online), followed by in-class work on a case related to that issue and, at the start of the next session, reports on students' design sketches to address the case. With each design sketch, students add to or revise a growing set of principles for critical thinking in design. The design sketches and principles will, with students' permission, be made accessible to a wider online audience and serve as part of an evolving online text for subsequent years.

CrCrTh 612 Seminar In Creativity

This course delves deeply into the theory and practice of promoting creativity, using a specific theme, such as invention and innovation, humor, realizing creative aspirations, building creative communities, as a focus for the readings, discussions, class activities, and semester-long student projects. The course materials, which are drawn from a variety of sources to match the instructor's specialty, student interests, and evolving trends in the literature, include biographies, intellectual histories, psychological studies, educational research, the popular media, guest speakers, and outside mentors. Details for the specific semester are publicized in advance by the Program.

CrCrTh 615 Holistic and Transformative Teaching

This course explores approaches which tap both teachers' and students' potential for learning, thinking, and creativity. Its primary focus is on integrative, holistic strategies to engage students creatively in literature, writing and the arts. Participants are actively involved in preparing practical applications and demonstrations of concepts emerging from the class.

CrCrTh 616 Dialogue Processes

Genuine dialogue provides a creative social space in which entirely new ways of thinking, learning, and relating to others may emerge. Dialogue involves a shared process of collective inquiry where people work together to understand the assumptions underlying their individual

and collective views that limit their thinking and responses to the world. Course participants learn and experience approaches to dialogue inspired by Bohm, Isaacs, Scharmer, Weissglass and others in the interest of bringing about significant educational, organizational, social, and personal change.

CrCrTh 618 Creative Thinking, Collaboration and Organizational Change

Through interactive, experiential sessions and structured assignments students learn critical and creative approaches to working in organizations. Skills addressed include: communication and team-building; facilitation of participation and collaboration in groups; promotion of learning from a diversity of perspectives; problem-finding and solving; and reflective practice. Students apply these skills to situations that arise in business, schools, social change groups, and other organizations with a view to taking initiative and generating constructive change.

CrCrTh 619 Biomedical Ethics

This course develops students' critical thinking about dilemmas in medicine and health care policy, such as those that arise around allocation of scarce resources, criteria for organ transplants, informed consent, experimentation on human subjects, AIDS research, embryo research and selective termination of pregnancy, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. Through such cases the course introduces methods in moral reasoning, rights-based reasoning, decision-making under uncertainty, and utilitarianism in classic and contemporary normative reasoning.

CrCrTh 620 Moral Education (*not current scheduled for upcoming semesters*)

A comprehensive analysis of the basic issues in moral education from an interdisciplinary perspective. Philosophical studies of the nature of morality and the moral life will be integrated with psychological studies of moral development and human motivation and brought to bear on issues in teaching morality. Topics covered will include: rationality, emotion, and the moral development of children; moral education. indoctrination; socialization, the "hidden curriculum," and moral education. Throughout this course theoretical insights will be applied to an examination of materials, programs, and practices in moral education, both in schools and the wider community.

CrCrTh 627 Issues In Antiracist And Multicultural Education

The course deals with complex and emotionally-charged issues of culture, religion, sexual orientation, and, especially, race, both in society generally and specifically in education. How do we teach against racism, homophobia, cultural and religious parochialism, while being respectful of the many points of view represented in most classrooms? The readings present these issues as many-sided, and the instructor strives to make the classroom a safe and respectful space to voice one's opinions and learn from others. This is not a "how to" course but rather helps people in various fields, including teaching, think and reflect on issues they will face with students, colleagues, and clients. The course is open, with permission of instructor, to one or two advanced undergraduates who are interested in going into the field of education. (Contact instructor if you think you fall into this category.) The course will explore two related forms of education -- (a) antiracist education, (b) multicultural education -- approaching them

as issues in moral and value education and exploring controversies in the theories and practices of antiracist and multicultural education. Some specific topics include: race and school achievement; ethnic identity and self-esteem; racial and ethnic stereotypes; Afrocentrism; religious pluralism; multiculturalism -- a unifying or divisive force?; antiracist and multicultural curricular approaches. Also, some attention will be paid to sexual orientation controversies.

CrCrTh 630 Criticism and Creativity In Literature and the Arts

Expression and evaluation, freedom and discipline, creative production and the critical response to it -- how do these dualities relate to visual and verbal imagination as they are demonstrated in literature and the arts? Specific strategies for eliciting imaginative work in these areas will be demonstrated, as will specific strategies for evaluating imaginative works. Finally, this course will focus on ways to help others (including children) develop critical and creative skills and on ways to effectively use strategies for eliciting and evaluating imaginative work.

CrCrTh 640 Environment, Science and Society: Critical Thinking

Current and historical cases are used to examine the diverse influences that shape environmental science and politics. This exploration, in turn, leads to new questions and alternative approaches for educators, environmental professionals, and concerned citizens.

CrCrTh 645 Biology in Society: Critical Thinking

Current and historical cases are used to examine the political, ethical, and other social dimensions of the life sciences. Close examination of developments in the life sciences can lead to questions about the social influences shaping scientists' work or its application. This, in turn, can lead to new questions and alternative approaches for educators, biologists, health professionals, and concerned citizens.

CrCrTh646L The Gifted and Talented Student

Gifted and talented students are one of our most underserved populations of learners. This state-of-the-art course is designed for teachers, and others (curriculum coordinators, administrators, parents) responsible for meeting the special needs of high potential learners in the regular and/or special classroom and at home. A broad spectrum of contemporary views on definition, identification, and characteristics of high potential learners are explored through lively critical and creative thinking activities and discussion. Included is examination of further individual differences such as ethnicity, gender, misdiagnoses and dual diagnoses, underachievement and learning disabilities.

Creation of learning environments and curriculum and instructional strategies that motivate and challenge high potential learners of any developmental age is also a major focus. This includes problem and inquiry-based learning, creative problem solving, invention, and humor and thinking which are specializations of the instructor. The course culminates with a unique opportunity for participants to practice what they learn with small groups of gifted students who join us in class for this purpose!

CrCrTh 649L Scientific and Political Change (formerly: Science, Technology and Public Policy)

Although relatively few Americans have backgrounds in science or engineering, they are

increasingly confronted with issues that are technically complex. This course explores the resulting tensions and asks how the needs for scientific expertise and democratic control of science and technology are reconciled. The first half of the course traces the historical development of American science policy and situates this development comparatively. The second half focuses on contemporary controversies, including those over the nature of university-industry relations, patent policy, and the cases of expert/lay disagreements over risk.

- Students outside UMass Boston can be brought into this course from a distance (requiring only a broadband internet connection).
- An innovative case-based learning approach in this course allows students to shape individualized directions of inquiry and develop their skills as investigators and prospective teachers.

CrCrTh 650 Mathematical Thinking

This course explores several types of mathematical thinking in the context of number theory, algebra, geometry, and introductory calculus, and relates them to critical and creative thinking skills. Developmental and experiential factors in learning and teaching mathematics are considered, as well as techniques for determining a learner's mathematical abilities and learning styles. Readings, discussion, research, and problem-solving are used to provide a historical context, and to suggest connections with other disciplines. Individual and small-group projects are adapted to student interests. No formal mathematical background beyond high school algebra and geometry is required.

CrCrTh 651/PSYCH 550 Advanced Cognitive Psychology

This course offers the most up-to-date knowledge on perception, memory, imagery, and problem solving to enhance one's approach to problem-solving. It provides a survey of the field of cognitive psychology from an information-processing viewpoint. This course will consider how people encode, organize, transform and output information. Emphasis will be placed on such topics as concept formulation, problem solving, and creative thinking.

Students who choose the Science in a Changing World track take alternative foundation courses: CrCrTh640 Environment, Science and Society: Critical Thinking **OR** CrCrTh645L Biology in Society: Critical Thinking; CrCrTh649L Scientific and Political Change; CrCrTh650 Mathematical Thinking; CrCrTh652 Children And Science

CrCrTh 652 Conceptual Change (formerly, Children and Science)

This course explores the ways children think about their natural and social world and how this affects their learning of science. We will be particularly concerned with identifying and describing the organized conceptual frameworks children have prior to instruction (which typically are different from the scientists' conceptualizations) and with understanding the general processes by which conceptual frameworks can be changed. One important question concerns in what ways children are fundamentally different learners and thinkers than adults and in what ways they are fundamentally similar.

CrCrTh 653L Epidemiological Thinking and Population Health

Introduction to the concepts, methods, and problems involved in analyzing the biological and social influences on behaviors and diseases and in translating such analyses into population health policy and practice. Special attention given to social inequalities, changes over the life course, and heterogeneous pathways. Case studies and course projects are shaped to accommodate students with interests in diverse fields related to health and public policy. Students are assumed to have a statistical background, but the course emphasizes epidemiological literacy with a view to collaborating thoughtfully with specialists, not technical expertise.

CRCRTH 655 Metacognition

This course considers various aspects of metacognition and how they influence behavior in children and adults. Topics include the individual's knowledge of his or her own cognition, self-awareness, the monitoring of conscious thought processes, inferences about unconscious thought processes, metacognition as a decision process, metacognitive strategies, the development of metacognition, and metacognition as a source of individual differences in children.

CrCrTh 670 Thinking, Learning and Computers

This course considers the consequences of using computers to aid our thinking, learning, communication and action in classrooms, organizations, and social interactions. Class activities acquaint students with specific computer-based tools, the ideas and research behind them, and themes for critical thinking about these ideas and tools.

CrCrTh 688 Reflective Practice

Reflective practitioners in any profession pilot new practices, take stock of outcomes and reflect on possible directions, and make plans to revise their practice accordingly. They also make connections with colleagues who model new practices and support the experimenting and practice of others. Students in this course gain experiences and up-to-date tools for reflective practice through presentations, interactive and experiential sessions, and, optionally, supervised pilot activities in schools, workplaces, and communities.

CrCrTh 692 Processes of Research and Engagement (previously CCT698, Practicum)

In this course students identify issues in educational or other professional settings on which to focus their critical and creative thinking skills. Each student works through the different stages of research and action—from defining a manageable project to communicating findings and plans for further work. Supervision is provided when the student's research centers on new teaching practices, workshops in the community, or other kinds of engagement as an intern or volunteer. The classes run as workshops, in which students are introduced to and then practice using tools for research, writing, communicating, and supporting the work of others. (Compared with CrCrTh 693, this course allows more exploration of your own direction and questions, especially through dialogue around written work and class presentations.)

CrCrTh 693 Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change (previously Evaluation of Educational Change)

This course covers techniques for and critical thinking about the evaluation of changes in educational practices and policies in schools, organizations, and informal contexts. Topics include quantitative and qualitative methods for design and analysis, participatory design of practices and policies in a framework of action research, institutional learning, the wider reception or discounting of evaluations, and selected case studies, including those arising from semester-long student projects.

"Evaluation" does not mean assessment of students' work, but systematic evaluation of the effect of changes in educational practices and policies in schools, organizations, and informal contexts. The course uses the discipline of evaluation as part of the practice of action research. The larger issues facing a practitioner as change-agent, over and above the evaluations, cannot help but enter class discussions and your projects. Unless the educational or professional engagement/change you're concerned about has already been instituted, you will spend time designing it in conjunction with designing how you will evaluate it.

CrCrTh 694 Synthesis Seminar (offered whenever we can get sections of six students)

The synthesis seminar is a structure within which to meet deadlines and get assistance in completing the written product of the synthesis project or thesis. There are many specific options for syntheses, from the development of a traditional theoretical paper, to a curriculum or professional development series, to writing a business plan, to the creation of a web page.

CrCrTh 696 Independent Study (1-3 Credits)

The comprehensive study of a particular topic or area of literature determined by the student's need; the study is pursued under the guidance, and subject to the examination, of the instructor. An application or outline of study should be agreed by the instructor and program director before you register.

Appendix E: Learning Outcomes

At the end of the Master's program students in the CCT graduate program are asked to assess themselves in relation to two sets of specific learning goals using a "Plus-Delta" format. These learning goals are introduced to new students as part of the requirement to assemble a Reflective Practitioner's Portfolio during their studies; the pre-capstone course, Processes of Research and Engagement, is structured explicitly around the goals.

The Exit Self-Assessment has been made part of the Capstone requirement given that reflective practice and lifelong learning are overarching goals of the Program. That is, students are led to experiment and take risks in applying what they are learning, reflect on the outcomes and revise accordingly, and build up a set of tools, practices, and perspectives that work in their specific professional or personal endeavors.

The Exit Self-Assessment centers on the student's experience in the capstone or "Synthesis" process, but it allows room to review the learning during the Program as a whole. The Plus-Delta format for Self-Assessment requires the student to describe for each goal:

- something that reflects what you have achieved well related to this goal, and
- something you have struggled with/ need more help on/ want to work further on.

"My Synthesis Product Shows That..."

1. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).
2. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.
3. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.
4. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.
5. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.
6. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.
7. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.
8. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I have led them to.
9. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

10. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

Developing as a Reflective Practitioner, Including Taking Initiatives in and Through Relationships

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.
2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.
3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.
4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.
5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.
6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.
7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.
8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).
9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work--criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.
10. I have approached the CCT synthesis course and the CCT program as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well in the synthesis course and program as a whole and to suggest directions for their further development.