

COR165e Thinking Critically

Level: 1

Credit Units: 2.5 Credit Units

Language: ENGLISH

Presentation Pattern: EVERY SEMESTER

E-Learning: BLENDED - Learning is done MAINLY online using interactive study materials in Canvas. Students receive guidance and support from online instructors via discussion forums and emails. This is supplemented with SOME face-to-face sessions. If the course has an exam component, this will be administered on-campus.

Synopsis:

The ability to reason soundly is prized across academic and vocational settings. Every worthwhile academic enterprise attempts, in its chosen area, to uncover truths that are the conclusions of good arguments. Similarly, the degree to which one is professionally successful is founded on one's capacity for judicious decision-making and powers of persuasion, which necessarily demand the skill to think correctly and critically. This natural selection argument aside, developing the faculty to reason well is an indispensable step towards fulfilling our uniquely human potential, given that it is the propensity for sophistication in reasoning that distinguishes us from other species.

In this context, this course attempts to equip students with a tool kit that enables them to distinguish between truths and falsehoods, justified and unjustified beliefs, coherent and incoherent claims, and good and bad decisions. In addition, this course provides students with the rigour, restraint and discipline required for a self-directed understanding of, and learning about, the world.

All the principles of reasoning presented in this course are developed keeping in mind how we speak, write and communicate with each other on an everyday basis. There are two primary advantages of this approach. Firstly, the reasoning skills acquired become transferable across our students' academic, professional and personal roles. In addition, it emphasises that the capacity for and the commitment to critical thought is an indispensable life skill. This is perhaps the central precept of this course.

Topics:

- Course Overview
- Statements: 'Simple' and 'Compound'
- Arguments: Basic Structure and Types
- The Quality of Arguments
- The Basic Arrow Arrangements
- Combining Arrow Arrangements
- Assessing the Quality of an Argument
- Categorical Syllogisms
- Propositional Logic
- The Nature of Induction
- Basic Forms of Inductive Arguments
- The General Nature of Informal Fallacies
- Types of Informal Fallacies
- The Importance of Definitions
- Providing Definitions
- Writing Evaluative Essays
- Writing Argumentative Essays

Textbooks:

T. Brian Mooney, John N. Williams, Steven Burik, 2016: An Introduction to Critical and Creative Thinking
ISBN-13: 9781307342826

T. Brian Mooney, John N. Williams, Steven Burik, 2016: An Introduction to Critical and Creative Thinking
ISBN-13: 9781307342826-AA

Learning Outcome:

- Identify the principles that underpin critical thinking and writing.
- Explain the rules of legitimate inference.
- Demonstrate the universal applicability of critical thinking skills, across academic disciplines and across contexts.
- Distinguish speech or writing that is ‘argumentative’ from that which is descriptive.
- Illustrate the structure of any given argument.
- Use established principles of inference to evaluate the quality of given arguments.
- Recognise, and therefore avoid, common forms of reasoning, which, in spite of their appeal and popularity, are ultimately fallacious.
- Critically develop their own positions on a wide range of issues.
- Defend those positions through arguments of their own and at length.

Assessment Strategies:

Continuous Assessment Component	Weightage (%)
PRE-CLASS QUIZ	20
TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT	40
TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT	40
Sub-Total	100

Examinable Component	Weightage (%)
Sub-Total	

Weightage Total **100**