

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS
NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

PROGRAM AREA: HUMANITIES

1. Catalog Description of the Course

UNIV 101 CRITICAL THINKING AND THE UNIVERSITY (3)

Two hours lecture and one hour seminar per week.

This course explores the language and logic of academic disciplines and teaches critical thinking skills. The heuristics of logic, including inductive and deductive reasoning, form a major part of the course content. Professors from each discipline will participate in lectures and discussions to provide exposure to methods and ways of knowing across the curriculum. Through lecture and class discussion, students learn to form various types of argument, apply rhetorical methodologies, and comprehend the relationship of language to logic. Through written assignments, oral presentations, and group work, students learn to express their ideas and accept constructive criticism from peers. The class exercises and lectures will also provide students with means to acquire or improve their academic and professional skills.

GenEd: A3.

2. Mode of Instruction.

	Units	Hours per Unit	Benchmark Enrollment
Lecture	2	1	200
Seminar	1	1	25
Laboratory	_____	_____	_____
Activity	_____	_____	_____

3. Justification and Learning Objectives for the Course.

Justification: This course provides a freshman-level course in critical thinking to meet the GE requirement in Category A3.

The course will teach critical thinking skills including the use of inductive and deductive logic, the ability to recognize formal and informal fallacies found in language and thought, and the ability to distinguish fact from opinion. Through lecture and discussion, the students learn different kinds of arguments, rhetorical usage, and the relationship of language to logic. Through written assignments, oral presentations, and group work, the students learn to express their ideas and accept constructive criticism from peers. The proposed text for the course is by Steven P. Lee, 2002, *What is the Argument? Critical Thinking in the Real World*. The table of contents for that text follows:

Chapter	Contents
1. What Is Critical Thinking?	What is Critical Thinking? / The Importance of Critical Thinking / Critical Thinking in the Real World
2. What Is An Argument?	The Support Relationship / Argumentative Texts / Persuasion and the Social Nature of Argument
3. Explanations and Value Arguments	Explanation / Facts, Values, and Opinions
4. What Is the Argument? Conclusion and Premises	Argument Structure / Identifying the Conclusion / Identifying the Premises
5. Reformulation and Complex Arguments	General Statements / Conditional Statements / The Idea of Reformulation / Complex Arguments
6. Evaluating Argument Form	Argument Evaluation / Deductive Arguments and Validity / Implicit Premises / Nondeductive Arguments and Formal Strength / The Idea of a Fallacy / Irrelevant Reason and Hasty Conclusion / Some Specific Formal Fallacies
7. Deductive Arguments	Formal Logic and Logical Form / Categorical Logic / Immediate Inference / Testing for Validity in Categorical Logic / Statement Logic
8. Evaluating Argument Content	Premises and their Assessment / The Fallacies of Problematic Premise and False Premise / Appeals to Authority / Some Specific Content Fallacies
9. Language and Meaning	Concepts and Their Role in Arguments / Definition / Some Specific Fallacies of Language Use
10. Induction and Causal Arguments	Inductive Arguments / Evaluating Inductive Arguments / Causal Arguments
11. All-Things-Considered Arguments and Analogies	All-Things-Considered Arguments / Arguments from Analogy / Evaluation-the Fallacy of Faulty Analogy

The A3 Criteria require:

- “A minimum of one-third of the course content needs to focus on the *acquisition* of Critical Thinking/Reasoning skills as evidenced by sufficient assigned texts and assignments dedicated to Critical Thinking/Reasoning and theory, and

- A minimum of at least five weeks of the 15-week semester scheduled for instruction in *how to do* Critical Thinking/Reasoning. The other 10 weeks may be used in *applying* Critical Thinking/Reasoning to a discipline or disciplines or across disciplines.”

This course will adhere to those standards, as evidenced by the assigned text above.

The critical thinking skills will be learned through an exploration of the university itself. Why is the study of knowledge divided into academic disciplines in a university? What is lost or gained by the division of knowledge into disciplines? What can be gained by using multiple perspectives from different disciplines? What is the difference between interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary? Does one discipline have the truth or can truth only be found through many ways of knowing? The course is designed to help facilitate the transition to university study and to introduce the student to the CSUCI core values and culture. While an important aspect will be to help ensure that every CSUCI student possesses a minimal set of skills (e.g., information literacy, library skills, research methods, time management, study habits, etc.), the main thrust of the course is to develop the students so they can maximize their university learning experience and to prepare their journey as lifelong learners.

Some of the questions to be explored follow:

- What is logic?
- How is an argument made?
- What is a fallacy?
- What is a concept?
- What is documentation?
- What is objectivity?
- What is a problem?
- What is a research method?
- What is a discipline?
- What is interdisciplinary problem solving?
- What is collaboration?
- What is self-expression?

While the course’s main purpose is to develop critical thinking skills, it has broader goals as well. One goal is to accelerate and to ensure the intellectual transition from high school acceptance of authority to university questioning of ideas and the development of students’ own identities and autonomous thinking. Another goal is to “even the playing field” for all students to compensate for varying adequacies of intellectual preparation in the high schools. Yet another goal is to establish the importance of peer support networks like study groups and learning communities. Another goal is to expose students to multiple career options from various disciplines so that their career path decisions (and accompanying change in majors) are made from an informed perspective at the *earliest point possible*. On average students change majors several times throughout their academic careers.

To summarize and expand on these broader goals, we plan to achieve the following:

- Understand the purpose of higher education itself;
- Develop analytical and critical thinking skills;
- Encourage the value of interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Foster personal development;
- Improve communication skills;
- Develop an appreciation for lifelong learning;
- Facilitate transition to the university environment;
- Introduce the student to the CSUCI culture early;
- Orient the student to the university academic structure, disciplines, programs, degrees;
- Develop essential academic skills;
- Assist in career planning;
- Establish peer support networks and friendships;
- Identify needs for remedial work;
- Identify learning disabilities;
- Assist in academic advising;
- Improve retention rates.¹

In years to come, most CSUCI students will be commuting to campus instead of residing here. This can result in a reduced sense of belonging and reduced participation in the potential breadth of the university experience. To counteract this, the university must be

¹ Adapted from *National Survey of First-Year Seminar Programming*. 2000. National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. NEWCRSFR 9/30/02

proactive in establishing each student's place in the university community at the earliest moment. This requires *coordinated* efforts from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The goal is to create that sense of full participation in the university community. This effort is urgently needed to ensure a student-centered university, to assist in student retention, and to achieve the larger goal of a quality education. The time to do this is the first week students arrive on campus, rather than the next 2-4 years in haphazard, unstructured, remedial help by individual instructors. Being proactive means each student has a better chance for success.

Learning Objectives. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Discuss the major problems of language as they apply to Critical Thinking/ Reasoning;
- Discuss the major problems inherent in definition and control of meaning;
- Identify and define common types of material, psychological, and logical fallacies in argumentation;
- Assess the weighing of evidence, as it is basic to the development of logical arguments;
- Distinguish formal fallacies in logic;
- Distinguish fact from judgment or opinion;
- Explain the value of multiple ways of knowing;
- Demonstrate the uses of inductive and deductive reasoning.

4. **Is this a General Education Course** **YES** **NO**
If Yes, indicate GE category:

A (English Language, Communication, Critical Thinking)	A3
B (Mathematics & Sciences)	
C (Fine Arts, Literature, Languages & Cultures)	
D (Social Perspectives)	
E (Human Psychological and Physiological Perspectives)	

5. Course Content in Outline Form.

- What is higher education?
- What is knowledge? What is learning? How do we do this?
- What is a discipline?
- What is logic? What is a fallacy? How do you make a cogent argument?
- Interdisciplinary perspectives on knowledge and thinking
- Ethics
- Forms of argumentation, critique of flaws in arguments
- Communication skills: writing, speaking, debating, thinking
- Essential academic skills
 - Library skills
 - Information literacy & technology
 - Research methods
 - Study habits
 - Reading skills in humanities
 - Reading skills in sciences
 - Reading skills in social sciences
 - Debate and discourse

6. References. [Provide 3 - 5 references on which this course is based and/or support it.]

BAREFOOT, B.
 1992 *Helping First-Year College Students Climb the Academic Ladder: Report of a National Survey of Freshman Seminar Programming in American Higher Education.* Unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

BASSHAM, GREGORY, WILLIAM IRWIN, HENRY NARDONE, JAMES M. WALLACE
 2002 *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction.* McGraw-Hill, NY.

CHICKERING, ARTHUR W. AND ASSOCIATES
 1981 *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society.* Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

ELLIS, DAVE
 2000 *Becoming a Master Student.* Houghton Mifflin, New York.

LEE, STEVEN P.

2002 *What is the Argument? Critical Thinking in the Real World*. McGraw-Hill, NY.

MILLER, BETH MERRITT

n.d. Freshman Seminar System-Wide Survey. Freshman Programs, CSU Sacramento.

7. List Faculty Qualified to Teach This Course.

William H. Adams

Renny Christopher

other faculty and new faculty being hired.

8. Frequency.

a. Projected semesters to be offered: Fall **X** Spring **X** Summer _____

9. New Resources Required.

A survey of facilities and library resources will need to be conducted to determine additional resource needs. These resource needs are anticipated to be minimal.

10. Consultation.

Attach consultation sheet from all program areas, Library, and others (if necessary)

11. If this new course will alter any degree, credential, certificate, or minor in your program, attach a program modification.

William H. Adams

02/21/2003

Renny Christopher

02/21/2003

Proposer of Course

Date