

COLLEGE OF THE SISKIYOU ONLINE

COURSE SYLLABUS (version 6/14)

COURSE NUMBER: **PHIL 4**

COURSE TITLE: **CRITICAL REASONING**

COURSE START DATE: **7/06/09**

COURSE END DATE: **8/14/09**

COURSE #: **5079**

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Boss, J. (2010). *Think*, McGraw Hill. ISBN 0-07-313490-2

It is important that you acquire the book *before* the class starts.

Additional Materials to be found in the Modules Folder online:

"Study Group Fallacy Journal Instruction Sheet."

"Critical-Thinking Assumptions Scenarios."

"List of Logical Fallacies."

INSTRUCTOR: Daniel Kealey, Ph.D.

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Instructor Availability: 11am-9pm Pacific Standard Time, everyday

## WORDS OF WELCOME

Critical thinking is a set of skills that are fun and exciting to study because they have so much potential to, not only increase our effectiveness in dealing with the various challenges that life presents us, but also to develop our intelligence (yes, IQ scores can be raised!). So I have every reason to expect we will all enjoy this course and learn skills that we will remember and use the rest of our lives (there is no limited shelf life to the content matter of this course!). I find the online format an ideal way to learn from each other. Teaching this course is all the more rewarding because I know I will be learning from you. I look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions for improving this course. I strongly suggest that you print out this syllabus to have as a ready reference.

## GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will study the processes of effective thinking and various obstacles to its realization. Cultural, linguistic, psychological and belief factors that condition the effectiveness of thinking will be identified and remedies for the improvement of our thinking skills will be examined. There will be an overview of deductive and inductive argumentation. It intends to improve the student's ability to think analytically and to recognize fallacious forms of argumentation. Learning to identify logical fallacies is a major focus of this course. Application of critical thinking to professional, personal, relational, and other areas of real life will be an important focus of the course.

## CLASS BIOGRAPHIES

Your first assignment will be to post a biography to the Discussion Board (Student Lounge forum) so we can get to know each other. You will find my Bio there as well. Tell where you are from, what work you do, what you are studying at COS and a little about your interests. Etudes also allows you to post a picture of yourself that will automatically accompany your forum posts, through utilizing the Avatar wizard in your Profile, which is found on the top of the Discussions page. While setting up your website, make sure to input your email address, needed for urgent announcements, and as a way of keeping in touch in case Etudes goes down. Go to My Workspace>>Account>>Modify details.

## PARTICIPATION

You will be expected to contribute to the class discussion in a substantive way four out of seven days each week. I will consider both quantity and quality when evaluating student participation. Learning team participation is evaluated separately and will not be counted as class participation. Only relevant postings to the DQ newsgroups count for participation purposes. The course is heavily weighted towards participation. This means you must post frequently: three posts (including the main reply) per Discussion Question to be eligible for full points. You lose points for insufficient quantity and quality of posts

and for failure to participate 4 out of 7 days per week. Only your DQ posts that fall in the week for which they assigned will be counted--not those that are posted after the end of the course week (late DQ responses are not accepted). Post your replies to their appropriate threads.

## FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS

I will send feedback on all graded assignments to your personal mailboxes within seven days of the end of the week in which they were due.

## DUE DATES

Unless otherwise noted, weekly assignments are to be completed and turned in by midnight on the last day of our course week, which runs Monday through Sunday (i.e., **Sunday**). Some assignments will be due earlier in the week. Take note when things are due.

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments turned in late will be penalized one grade per day and will not be accepted after three days beyond the due date. Technical problems do not excuse you from your assignment and participation responsibilities (unless it is COS's fault, such as the Etudes server being down on due night). That means you should have backup plans in case your regular computer/ISP has problems. **Libraries, Internet cafés, COS computer lab, friends, work--know where to run to when your computer acts up.**

## LENGTH OF RESPONSES

Assignment instructions will stipulate about how long they are expected to be. The Discussion Questions require one main response of about 150 words and at least two substantive replies to others' posts. There is no minimum limit of words for the replies to newsgroup postings, where the expectation is more that they be substantive than they be lengthy, but a 100 words or more is suggested. Avoid posting time-wasting messages such as "I agree" (in so many words, unless you add new *reasons* why you agree). *Superficial responses will **not** count* for participation points. Make it a point to think *philosophically* in this course, which means backing up what you say with reasons, supporting data, and/or references. Asking questions about your opinions is even better than merely expressing them.

### **What counts as "substantive?"**

If you were told you were just going through the motions, you would understand that it means that you are merely feigning appearance of doing the job, not doing the real work of the job. Insubstantive posting to the discussion board is just "going through the motions" in so far as the posts are not contributing anything new to the discussion at hand. Substantive messages, then, contribute to the discussion. "What counts as

contributive?" you ask. Posts that add new information, provide a different view, critically analyzes previous posts, illustrates with personal experience, answers questions, asks new questions, supplies reasons, updates, reconsiders, synthesizes different views, reframes a problem, etc., are ways that contribute to the discussion in a substantive way. Posts that merely say "I agree" (without providing reasons why), "That's interesting," etc., state an opinion without backing it up with reasons, or something similar, are insubstantive and do not fulfill the requirement for substantive posting. You are certainly post comments that fall short of these substantive criteria, but you must still make substantive posts that further the discussion. Netiquette requires that you consider the time your fellow students have to spend opening up your messages--our messages should count and not merely take up people's time.

Netiquette here at COS also expects that we respect each other and not attack one another. If you disagree with another's opinion, be matter-of-fact about it and explain your reasons why without making a personal attack. We must also abide by the code of conduct described in the Student Handbook and keep our cyber environment one that is safe from harassment.

## GROUP WORK

Your learning team will be graded as a group. Insufficient participation in your learning team will result in deduction of points (individually, from the grade given to your team). Report any difficulties to Dr. Kealey regarding under-performing or non-performing team members. Under/non performing members will get 0 points for the team project. You will be assigned to a group following the first week.

## SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

You can post your assignments in the Assignments Folder, where you have the option to post the assignment inline or as an attachment. When sending your assignments as attachments, use MS Word (version 2003 or 2007) or save in Rich Text Format (.rtf), or GoogleDoc or OpenOffice (these last 2 word processing programs are free on the Internet) [**any other format cannot be opened**] and save your document as Yourlastnameassignmentinitial.doc (for example, smithpa1.doc). Also make sure to type your name (and LT members' names on Learning Team assignments) on the document itself. If you send it as a Word attachment, save your document as Smithpa2.doc, smithfq5.doc, smithft4.doc, smithfx.doc (final exam), A1.doc (for group assignment), Afj, etc. Failure to submit work in one of the acceptable formats will result in late penalty, or zero, if not corrected immediately.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is highly valued at Online just as it is at the College of the Siskiyou campus. A student must always submit work that represents his or her original words or ideas. If any words or ideas are used that do not represent the student's original words or ideas, the student must cite all relevant sources. The student should also make clear the

extent to which such sources were used. Words or ideas that require citations include, but are not limited to, all hardcopy or electronic publications, whether copyrighted or not, and all verbal or visual communication when the content of such communication clearly originates from an identifiable source. At the Online campus, all submissions to any public meeting or private mailbox fall within the scope of words and ideas that require citations if used by someone other than the original author. Failure to abide by the standards of academic honesty will result in an F in the assignment, and possibly the course.

Academic dishonesty in an Online learning environment could involve:

- Having a tutor or friend complete a portion of your assignments
- Having a reviewer make extensive revisions to an assignment;
- Copying work submitted by another student to a public class meeting
- Using information from Online information services without proper citation.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

The Learning Services Office (Eddy Hall 1) provides resources and information to accommodate students with special needs. If you feel that tutorial assistance would benefit you with the course material, please see <http://www.siskiyous.edu/dsps/tutor.html>. We will be happy to recommend any student for tutoring, by signing the application, if requested.

**Library Resources:** Library resources include, but are not limited to:

- Access 24 hours a day to a wide array of subscription databases including full-text articles from thousands of magazines, journals, and newspapers and reference sources.
- Access 24 hours a day to the library's online catalog
- Access to thousands of current ebooks on a broad range of topics
- Expert help from library staff
- Distance students can apply on-line for their library card and it will be mailed to you.  
Go to <http://www.siskiyous.edu/library/libraryform.htm>. If you need a netlibrary account, call the librarian at 530-938-5331.

The Library can be assessed at <http://www.siskiyous.edu/library>

**Online Requirements**

This class meets entirely online, using the ETUDES online classroom. Enter the ETUDES online class <http://etudes-ng.fhda.edu/portal> portal here. You will need a

user id to access the class. This login is generated automatically by the COS registration system the day after you register.

Your user id is: **the first 2 letters of your first name (lowercase) + the first 2 letters of your last name (lowercase) + the last 5 digits of your Social Security number**

Be sure to use all lower case letters and make sure you are using the name that is in the COS registration system (check your class receipt.) EXAMPLE: John Smith's User ID would be **josm45678** (if his SS# was 123-45-678)

**Your initial password is: MonthDay** of birth in school records Example: Birthday is April 11th, 1982 ( **04 / 11 /82**) Password = **0411** Note: If you have taken an ETUDES-NG class before, use your current password.

You may **change the default password upon login**. Once you log on, click on "Account" (under My Workspace on the upper left menu), scroll down a bit, and click on "Modify Settings ." Type a new password in the "Create new password" box and then repeat it again in the "Verify new password" then click "Update Details". Set the password to something you can remember. REMEMBER TO WRITE IT DOWN! This account will give you access to all your ETUDES-NG courses, which will be added to your Workspace automatically. Once you log in, all the classes you are currently registered for will display at the top in different tabs. To access this course, click on the correct tab. You can reorder your tabs by going to MyWorkspace >> Preferences >> Customize Tabs.

### **Support Hour Requirement**

The support hour provides COS students, including online students, with access to professional assistance, supplemental instruction and remediation opportunities to help improve student success. Supervised support, via the COS Critical Skills Center, is offered for reading, writing, information technology, computer competency, and other skills outside of web publishing specific content. The support hour allows you to go to the computer labs on either campus, obtain a computer account, and get the one-on-one help you need. Some of the personal support you may utilize relating to this course include:

- help with basic computer competencies (saving files, attaching files, finding and organizing files), questions about Etudes.
- help with formatting the paper
- help with writing

The instructor advises that all students take advantage of the resources available in the computer labs on campus. The staff is knowledgeable and can provide immediate assistance as problems arise. Computer lab accounts will be set up for you the first time you access either campus lab. Be sure to allow extra time for this on your first visit. It would be best to set up your account and get to know the lab assistants *before* you need desperate last-minute help. You'll find the Weed computer lab schedule

at [www.siskiyous.edu/computerlab/](http://www.siskiyous.edu/computerlab/), and the Yreka lab at [www.siskiyous.edu/yreka/ComptrLab](http://www.siskiyous.edu/yreka/ComptrLab). Be sure to call the Yreka campus at 842-1245 to check computer lab availability. Since this is an online only course, physical visits to the writing or computer Labs are not required. You may email them at [asc@siskiyous.edu](mailto:asc@siskiyous.edu), or call them at 530-938-5514. If there is no answer, and you need immediate assistance, please call 530-938-5325.

| GRADING FORMULA                            |             |        |
|--|-------------|--------|
| 90 - 100 = A                               |             |        |
| 80 - 89 = B                                |             |        |
| 70 - 79 = C                                |             |        |
| 60 - 69 = D                                |             |        |
| below 60 = F                               |             |        |
| Assignments and their point assessments    |             |        |
| Assignment                                 | Due         | Points |
| <b>Individual (65%):</b>                   |             |        |
| DQs & Participation                        | All weeks   | 18     |
| Life Plan Paper                            | W1 (week 1) | 7      |
| Critical Thinking & Cognitive Errors Paper | W2          | 10     |
| Indiv. Fallacy Quiz #1                     | W3          | 5      |
| Indiv. Fallacy Quiz #2                     | W4          | 5      |
| Fallacy test                               | W5          | 10     |
| Final Exam                                 | W6          | 15     |

|                             |    |     |
|-----------------------------|----|-----|
| <b>Learning Team (30%):</b> |    |     |
| Assumptions Scenarios       | W3 | 10  |
| LT Fallacy Quiz             | W3 | 5   |
| Media Fallacy Journal       | W6 | 15  |
| Total Points                |    | 100 |

## THE ONLINE WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 July 6- July 12

1. Required **Reading**. Read Chapters 1, 2, & 3 in the text *Think*.
2. Critical Thinking and Barriers to it for Actualizing One's Life Plan **Paper**.

In a 700-800 word, typewritten paper, develop a "Rational Life Plan" as detailed in ch. 1 of *Think*. Then discuss which of the barriers to critical thinking have limited your ability to grow in the past, including areas of emotional intelligence, and which ones you will possibly have to work on in order to realize your rational life plan.

Begin the essay with an introductory paragraph. An introductory paragraph must contain 1) a thesis statement (what a life plan is), 2) a brief explanation of the reasons for developing a life plan, and 3) a succinct preview of what will follow in the essay body. The essay body is the main part of the paper, in which you specify and elaborate the elements of your life plan (use subheadings) followed by a theoretical explanation of the relationship between critical thinking, the barriers to critical thinking, and emotional intelligence, based on the readings as you understand it. Finish the paper with a conclusion of one paragraph in which you explain what is to be learned from the material presented in the essay body.

Due Sunday, July 12. Name the file according to the following protocol: "lastnamepa1" where instead of "lastname" you type in your own last name (smithpa1, for example). Papers should be saved in MS Word or as a Rich Text Format if you are using another word processor (GoogleDoc or OpenOffice also acceptable). If you are unable to save it in any of the above formats, write it or paste it into the Assignment 1 folder inline textbox. The Assignment folder has a button in the left side navigation bar of Etudes. Post your assignment to Assignment # 1 before midnight.

3. Weekly **Discussion** Questions.

Look in the Main Discussion Board for this week's DQs. Post your answers in the Main

class newsgroup. Post one 150 word main reply plus at least 2 other substantial replies.

4. You will be assigned to a Learning Team (LT) later this week. When the groups are formed, log onto your newsgroup and discuss future assignments.

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## WEEK 2 July 13 – July 19

### 1. Required **Reading**:

- a. Read Chapters 4 & 5 in the text *Think*.
- b. Read and study the List of Logical Fallacies.

### 2. Critical Thinking & Cognitive Errors **Paper**.

Write a paragraph that *illustrates* each of **seven** of the following cognitive errors, drawing from your personal life (yourself, family, friends):

Inaccurate memories; Unreliable hearsay & anecdotal evidence; Uncritical faith in experts; Confirmation bias; Perceptual error; Probability errors; Self-serving biases; Self-fulfilling prophecy; Us vs. them; Societal expectations; Groupthink; Diffusion of responsibility.

Conclude with how you might avoid such errors in the future. 800-1200 words. Due 7/19.

### 3. Weekly **Discussion** Questions.

Submit your responses to the DQs in the Main newsgroup.

### **Study Group Assignments.**

- a. The Critical Thinking Assumptions **Analysis** is due next week. Provide responses and answers to Scenarios 2-5, using the example of Scenario One. Remember to focus on the three questions given in the introduction. This is a group, not an individual assignment.
- b. Study groups should start to collect examples of fallacies for the Fallacy Journal, due in Week Five. Refer to the instructions for the journal examples in Modules.

## WEEK 3 July 20-July 26

### 1. Required **Reading**.

Read Chapters 6 & 7 in the text *Think*.

2. Weekly **Discussion** Questions.

At the beginning of this week, Dr. Kealey will post various discussion questions for you to answer.

5. Complete the Individual Fallacy Quiz #1. Due Sunday, July 26.

**Study Group Assignments.**

1. Complete and submit the assumptions **analysis** scenarios. Due **Friday**, July 24.

2. Read and complete the “LT Fallacy **Quiz**” posted in your LT Folder at the beginning of week 3. In the subject line, write “Final Copy for Grading.” Due **Saturday**, July 25.

Continue assembling your Fallacy Journals. Review the requirements and suggestions for this assignment.

WEEK 4 July 27 – August 2

1. Required **Reading**.

a. Read Chapters 8 & 9 in the text *Think*.

b. Review the List of Logical Fallacies.

2. Take the Fallacy **Quiz #2**. Post it to the Assignment folder by Sunday, Aug 2.

3. Weekly **Discussion** Questions.

At the beginning of this week, Dr. Kealey will post various discussion questions for you to answer. Submit your responses to these questions as directed.

**Learning Team Assignment.**

Continue work on the Study Group Fallacy Journal, due in Week Five.

WEEK 5 Aug. 3 – Aug. 9

1. Required **Reading**:

Read Chapters 10 & 11 in the text, *Think*.

2. Take the Fallacies **Test**. Post it to the Assignment folder. **Due Friday**, Aug 7.

3. Weekly Discussion Questions.

At the beginning of this week, Dr. Kealey will post various discussion questions for you to answer. Submit your responses to these questions on the day indicated by the instructor.

### **Learning Team Assignment.**

Complete the Study Group Fallacy Journal and submit it. Due Sunday, Aug 9.

## WEEK 6 Aug. 10 – Aug. 14

1. Required **reading**: chapters 12 in *Think*.

2. Participate in the **Discussion** Questions for the week. Note that this is a short week. The course ends Friday. Late work after midnight on Friday will not be accepted.

3. Take the Final **Exam**. **Due Friday, August 14**.

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