

PSYC G130: CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	12/01/2020
Top Code	200100 - Psychology, General
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S)
Local General Education (GE)	• GWC Critical Thinking (GA3)
California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC)	• Cal-GETC 1B Critical Thinking (1B)
Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)	• IGETC 1B Critical Thinking (1B)
California State University General Education Breadth (CSU GE-Breadth)	• CSU A3 Critical Thinking (A3)

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of critical thinking skills through written argumentation, and analysis of complex issues in the field of psychology. Students will learn about the common fallacies of reasoning, analyzing arguments, questioning opinion versus facts, effective problem solving, and the common errors of human cognition which impede critical thinking. Emphasis is placed on using critical thinking skills to examine contemporary issues involving human behavior, and writing effective logical arguments. PREREQUISITE: ENGL C1000 or ENGL C1000E. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC. C-ID: ENGL 105. C-ID: ENGL 105.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Course Outcomes
2. Examine personal assumptions and biases to recognize cognitive errors that impede critical thought.
3. Apply critical thinking skills to analyze issues in the field of psychology and daily decision making.
4. Produce written work free of formal and informal fallacies, which demonstrates the ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and advocate ideas on important psychological issues.

Course Objectives

- 1. Define the scientific method, and differentiate between science and pseudoscience as well as between fact and opinion.
- 2. Identify common errors in human cognition which interfere with critical thinking.
- 3. Evaluate the credibility of sources and claims, including statistical evidence and correlational versus experimental studies.
- 4. Evaluate and construct effective arguments using appropriate argument components.

- 5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of an argument.
- 6. Analyze human decision making systems and problem solving strategies, including heuristics and biases in memory.
- 7. Develop critical arguments through the synthesis of credible evidence from various sources.
- 8. Compose essays with advanced structure, coherence, and style which demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize supporting information.

Lecture Content

Understanding Critical Thinking Knowledge vs beliefs Critical thinking in psychology Analysis Perspective change Authors purpose and effectiveness Evaluating credibility of sources Composing an effective analysis Argumentation The scientific method vs pseudoscience Correlational vs experimental studies Effective argument components Constructing sound arguments Identifying and avoiding Fallacies Cognitive Errors in Reasoning Biases Social influence Fallacies Human Decision Making Systems Decision making styles Benefits and risks of heuristics Evaluating comparative, reflective, and ideological reasoning Problem solving Applying Critical Thinking to Issues in Psychology The individual in context Group think Conformity Obedience Eyewitness testimony Recovered memory Hypnosis Conspiracy theories The paranormal and other such head scratchers

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

Instructional Techniques

Lecture and Discussion Small group work Presentations

Reading Assignments

Assigned Textbook Reading Analysis of Current Events and Contemporary Issues in Psychology Verbal/Reading Reasoning Exercises Analysis of Written Arguments Evaluation of Faulty and Persuasive Information Presented in the Media

Writing Assignments

A series of substantial essays demonstrating an increasingly sophisticated structure, coherence, and style with control of documentation style, APA. Essays which develop effective and sound arguments through a synthesis of credible evidence from various sources that avoid fallacies. Essays analyzing the writings of others, demonstrating the ability to evaluate an authors effectiveness of purpose. Research based essays, written in APA format, which evaluate the credibility of sources and claims to use as supporting evidence.

Reflective essays that examine personal assumptions and biases, demonstrating an ability to recognize cognitive errors which interfere with critical thought. Essay questions on exams, requiring the application of critical thinking skills to the analysis of psychological issues. A total of 6,000 to 8,000 words in substantial essay assignments (not including revisions) will be required of each student. Written work will be evaluated for both content and form.

Out-of-class Assignments

Research for course writing assignments, class presentations, and projects.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Assignments critiquing the arguments of others, demonstrating an ability to analyze the argumentation presented on all opposing sides of an issue in psychology. Assignments requiring the analysis of human decision making systems and problem solving strategies. Writing assignments free of formal and informal fallacies, demonstrating the ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and advocate ideas on important psychological issues. Reflective writing assignments examining personal assumptions and biases, demonstrating an ability to recognize cognitive errors which impede critical thought. Substantial research-based essay assignments, evaluating the credibility of sources and claims. Small group work and discussions of topics in Psychology where students demonstrate the abilities of argument creation and support.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Essay assignments including analysis, arguments, and research projects. Assignments that demonstrate an understanding of problem solving strategies.

Eligible Disciplines

Psychology: Masters degree in psychology OR bachelors degree in psychology AND masters degree in counseling, sociology, statistics, neuroscience, or social work OR the equivalent. Masters degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required Ruscio. Critical Thinking in Psychology: Separating sense from nonsense , 2nd ed. Wadsworth, 2007 Rationale: Newest edition
2. Required Stanovich. How to Think Straight About Psychology , 11th ed. Pearson, 2019
3. Required Halpern. Thought and Knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking, 5th ed. Psychology Press, 2014 Rationale: Newest edition
4. Required Facione Gittens. Think Critically: Evaluate the Quality of Arguments, 3rd ed. Pearson, 2016
5. Required Slife. Taking Sides: Clashing views on psychological issues, 18th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2013
6. Required Barnett Bedau. Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A brief guide to argument, 10th ed. Bedford/St. Martin, 2020
7. Required APA. Concise Guide to APA Style, 7th ed., 1st ed. DW Publishing, 2019 Rationale: May be used only as a secondary supplemental text