Course Syllabus
School for New Learning
Course: LL 270, ID 005732, Critical Thinking
2016-2017 Winter Quarter, January 2 – March 18, 2017
Faculty: Chuck DiCola
E-Mail: cdicola@depaul.edu
Phone: (630) 989-2849
Office Hours: by appointment
O’Hare Campus, Room 304, Wednesdays, 6:15 PM – 9:30 PM

Course Description:
Socrates (c. 470 BC – 399 BC) is credited by his student Plato (c. 427 BC – 347 BC) as stating “The unexamined life is not worth living.” He also said, according to third century (BC) Greek author Diogenes Laertius, “I know nothing except the fact of my own ignorance.” Are we to suppose, then, that this acknowledged ignorance somehow renders the examined life a waste of time and effort? And if so, are we to believe poet Thomas Gray’s (1716 – 1771) contention that “where ignorance is bliss, ‘tis folly to be wise”? As a lifelong learner, and instructor of this course in critical thinking, I have a vested interest in answering a wholehearted “No” to both questions.

My ideas about learning (and teaching) are greatly influenced by the Socratic method of asking questions to initiate thinking and clarify ideas. Plato, Aristotle, and their followers through the ages applied it to large, amorphous concepts such as “justice,” “courage,” and the like – notions that are difficult to grasp with specificity. But without a basic comprehension of important ideas, we have no reference points for decision-making, no core beliefs with which to order our lives. Our effort to understand the world and our role in it requires critical thinking and questioning about weighty subjects. Critical thinkers aggressively asking questions and seeking answers arrive at the place that caused Socrates to declare that ignorance was the only thing he truly knew. I have that feeling myself, but I regard it as a constant reminder to strive for understanding. By the end of the term I hope you have the same feeling.
This quarter we will examine three of the “big” concepts – truth, goodness, and beauty – ideas that American psychologist and educator Howard Gardner (b. 1943) believes could serve as the foundation of a classical liberal education. In fact, he wrote a book, *The Disciplined Mind* (1999), in which he laid out a compelling argument for devoting the bulk of learners’ studies to three discrete topics, chosen because of their numerous entry points for examining issues of truth/falsity, beauty/ugliness, and goodness (right/wrong). Our course is inspired by his ideas and examples.

Our entry point for the study of **truth** is Darwinism, the name given to a school of thought based on Charles Darwin’s theory of the evolution of species by natural selection (introduced in 1858). His mid-1830s study of finches on the Galápagos Islands inspired him to question established dogma on the origin of life, and his findings spurred research by scientists in a wide range of disciplines in a continuing quest for understanding. While there are other equally accessible topics for our task, like physics (Isaac Newton) or astronomy (Galileo Galilei), evolution’s story is a compelling example of the scientific method and scientists’ search for understanding the material world.

Our guide to this unit is Jonathan Weiner’s *The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in our Time* (ISBN-13: 978-067973379). His book examines both Darwin’s groundbreaking Galápagos studies and the late-20th century work of Rosemary and Peter Grant at the same locale – a continuation of Darwin’s quest. Like science itself, the study of science is a valuable endeavor. The effort to grasp the concept of scientific truth reflected in “Darwin’s finches” will open your eyes to evolutionary processes taking place continuously, and will lead to an understanding of mankind’s amazing potential.

The second portion of the course is dedicated to its weightiest concept, the notion of **goodness** (good vs. evil). The focus of our investigation is the American Civil Rights Movement, the beginning of which could reasonably be dated to the early 17th century arrival of the first European colonists to the so-called “Free World.” Our emphasis here will be on the struggle endured by African-American and other victims of discrimination based on skin color, specifically in the years following World War II. We will employ two texts, the first, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968* (Steven F. Lawson, Charles Payne, James T. Patterson, editors ISBN-10: 0742551091), presents primary sources, interviews, and other materials in a spirited discussion of the merits of top-down, governmental remedies versus, bottom-up, grass-roots responses to the systemic
subjugation and mistreatment of people of color. The second required text, Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement (Margaret Earley Whitt, editor, ISBN-10: 01420019), contains moving tales of the struggle for equality. These stories add depth and personal context to our effort to understand how racism operated on both the victims and the perpetrators of man’s inhumanity to his fellow man.

The third unit of the course is, happily, concerned with a much more pleasant topic. Notions of beauty encompass a range of topics, including the natural world and the arts. We are going to take a diverse approach to this topic, with the main focus on the music of a truly unique talent – Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington. The title of the course text for this unit, Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington, by John Edward Hasse (ISBN-13:978-0306806148), refers to the multi-faceted nature of Ellington’s genius (a word I use sparingly when writing about or discussing musicians), for he was a pianist, composer, orchestrator, and band leader. His talents in each of those fields were prodigious, as John Edwards Hasse’s book will amply demonstrate.

In a career spanning fifty years – beginning at the dawn of the so-called “Jazz Age” on disc in the early 1920s – Duke Ellington’s orchestra recorded some of the greatest music of the twentieth century. Songs like “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got that Swing),” “Take the ‘A’ Train,” “Caravan,” “Mood Indigo,” and “Satin Doll” were only part of the Ellington legacy, for his composing abilities included extended musical ventures like “Creole Rhapsody,” “Reminiscing in Tempo,” and “Black, Brown, and Beige,” works that pushed the definition of jazz toward what he called “freedom of expression.”

Hasse’s book contains recommendations for listening at the conclusion of most of its chapters, suggestions that we will heed this quarter. In classroom listening sessions and weekly between-class assignments, the music of Duke Ellington will accompany his fascinating life story in print. With the help of YouTube – one of the best teaching tools ever invented – we will hear the Duke’s music and also view the master in action with and without the band. I am anticipating a terrific reaction on your part to music that is bound to expand your musical horizons and add another definition of the word “beauty” to your vocabulary.

In addition to the music of Duke Ellington we are going to broaden our examination of beauty by opening the topic to other manifestations of the concept, by me and you. This means that you will have the chance to bring to class sessions (and your portfolio of work), examples of what you consider
beautiful. For example, you might be a lover of the Impressionist school of painting – something for which Chicago is highly regarded due to the extensive collection of 19th century impressionist masterpieces housed at the Art Institute. You could build a PowerPoint presentation of some of your favorite paintings and conduct a short class session describing the works and the artists who created them.

**Learning Outcomes/Competencies, and Objectives:**
Demonstration of mastery of the L-5-14547 competence will derive from successful completion of reading and writing assignments, and informed participation in class discussions. The successful student will be able to:
1. read the course materials for comprehension and demonstrate competence through discussion and written work
2. ask questions about aspects of the topics that confuse, interest, or stimulate
3. engage in class discussions with courtesy and respect toward instructor and classmates
4. effectively prepare and present in-class demonstrations of competence use the critical thinking skills developed here to study other issues of truth, beauty, and goodness in their lives.

**Learning Strategies:**
Reading for understanding is the key to mastery of the material and demonstration of competence. Students who devote the requisite time for reading will be rewarded for their efforts far beyond the credit they will receive for passing the course. On the other hand, those who do not do the work will fail the course and miss an opportunity for personal growth.

As previously stated, questioning is very important in terms of attaining the expected goals and outcome of the course. Good questioning skills are developed through careful reading and listening. Those skills will be demonstrated in the weekly online discussion forums – an essential part of our in-class discussions.

Prejudices and preconceived ideas based on partial, faulty, or misunderstood evidence cannot be altered unless one’s mind is open to reason. However, this is not a course in indoctrination in which success depends upon rote agreement with me. Skepticism, as opposed to cynicism, is an attribute indicative of critical thinking. If at the end of the course, though, if one’s reason for believing (or
disbelieving) something is “Because I just do,” that student will not have learned
the fundamentals of critical thinking.

Some students may recognize Howard Gardner as the originator of a theory of
multiple intelligences. He believes that linguistic and logical/mathematical
intelligences are over-valued by educators and testers, to the detriment of those
equipped with other – equally esteemed – intellectual gifts. The following are
Gardner’s eight multiple intelligences:

**Visual-Spatial** - think in terms of physical space, as do architects and sailors.
Very aware of their environments. They like to draw, do jigsaw puzzles, read
maps, daydream. They can be taught through drawings, verbal and physical
imagery. Tools include models, graphics, charts, photographs, drawings, 3-D
modeling, video, video conferencing, television, multimedia, texts with
pictures/charts/graphs.

**Bodily-kinesthetic** - use the body effectively, like a dancer or a surgeon. Keen
sense of body awareness. They like movement, making things, touching. They
communicate well through body language and can be taught through physical
activity, hands-on learning, acting out, role playing. Tools include equipment
and real objects.

**Musical** - show sensitivity to rhythm and sound. They love music, but they are
also sensitive to sounds in their environments. They may study better with music
in the background. They can be taught by turning lessons into lyrics, speaking
rhythmically, tapping out time. Tools include musical instruments, music, radio,
stereo, CD-ROM, multimedia.

**Interpersonal** - understanding, interacting with others. These students learn
through interaction. They have many friends, empathy for others, street smarts.
They can be taught through group activities, seminars, dialogues. Tools include
the telephone, audio conferencing, time and attention from the instructor, video
conferencing, writing, computer conferencing, E-mail.

**Intrapersonal** - understanding one’s own interests, goals. These learners tend to
shy away from others. They’re in tune with their inner feelings; they have
wisdom, intuition and motivation, as well as a strong will, confidence and
opinions. They can be taught through independent study and introspection.
Tools include books, creative materials, diaries, privacy and time. They are the
most independent of the learners.
**Linguistic** - using words effectively. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and often think in words. They like reading, playing word games, making up poetry or stories. They can be taught by encouraging them to say and see words, read books together. Tools include computers, games, multimedia, books, tape recorders, and lecture.

**Logical-Mathematical** - reasoning, calculating. Think conceptually, abstractly and are able to see and explore patterns and relationships. They like to experiment, solve puzzles, ask cosmic questions. They can be taught through logic games, investigations, mysteries. They need to learn and form concepts before they can deal with details.

Quoting Gardner from *The Disciplined Mind* (p. 72):

[I]t is possible that human beings also exhibit a ninth, existential intelligence – the proclivity to pose (and ponder) questions about life, death, and ultimate realities. Each of these intelligences features its own distinctive form of mental representation; in fact, it is equally accurate to say that each intelligence is a form of mental representation.

**Learning Deliverables:**

**A Note on Weekly Reading Assignments:**
We have an ambitious schedule of weekly readings, video clips, and music during the quarter intended to educate, stimulate, and motivate you in the mastery of the L-5-14547 competence. Everything we do this quarter starts with the course texts. Your completion of each week’s reading assignment affects the quality of your written work and especially impacts our weekly classroom discussions, where informed and lively interaction greatly enhances every student’s understanding. I have scheduled the reading assignments to set up the following weeks’ classroom work. While there will be as even a distribution of pages assigned as practicable each week (with a considerably lightened load in the weeks preceding the two short-essay writing assignments), some weeks will be a bit heavier than others. In those weeks your writing obligation will also be lessened to give you more time for reading.

**Journal (7 @ 10 points each):**
From the outset, you will record responses to selected week’s reading assignments, class discussions, or questions related to our three course units in journal form. The format for you to follow in each of these responses will be
provided by me, depending on the nature of the particular assignment. The journal is the place to share connections made between our three course units and your personal responses to the broad concepts we will ponder. As we move through the quarter I will occasionally ask questions focused on your definitions of truth, morality, and beauty.

My goal is to have you describe any modification in your thinking based on what you learn from week to week. Generally speaking, two typed pages should adequately accommodate your responses to each journal’s submission. You are required to post your journal responses to our D2L course site by 11:00 PM on the Tuesday before the next class session. (Due dates for each journal are posted in each weekly module in D2L.

**Short Essay Writing Assignments (2 @ 60 points each):**
You will write short essay responses (1-2 pages each) to three questions – one for each of the course units – one due at the beginning of week six, the other due at the end of the quarter. These responses do not require research or study beyond the course texts but you are free to consult and use other scholarly material for your papers. The questions will come from me and are intended to elicit higher level thinking skills of analysis and evaluation. A grading rubric is posted to the course D2L site so you will know exactly how your work will be assessed.

**Class Participation: Discussion Questions (9 sets @ 5 points each):**
Each week you will post at least two questions to the course discussion site on D2L. These questions will come from that week’s reading, listening, or viewing assignments and are intended as prompts for our weekly class discussions. You are free to ask anything related to the material and are encouraged to take the learning into your own hands so to speak, by adding outside information you think might enhance the class’s learning. For example, you might come across an especially interesting interview with a veteran of the Civil Rights Movement on YouTube that sheds light on the relationship between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in the summer of 1963. You can post the link to the video to D2L, ask the class to view the video, and ask a question about the material aimed at better understanding the opinions of the interview’s subject. Or, you might be having difficulty understanding the connection between the El Niño of December, 1982 and the “rapid evolution” of small beaked finches on the island of Daphne Major in the Galapagos. If so, state your problem in a question, post it to the discussion board, and we will take a crack at it together in our next class. Each week’s questions should be posted by 11:00 PM on Tuesdays. (Deadline dates are posted in the D2L course site.)
Class Participation: In-Class Contribution (50 points):
The participation portion of your grade will be a cumulative mark, instead of a week-by-week tally. That way, an absence or “off night” in which you contribute less than usual will not affect your overall mark as much as a weekly score would. Your voice is important to the success of the class. My advice is to come to class prepared to contribute. That means reading, writing, and thinking about the material. Your weekly submission of at least two thoughtfully prepared questions to the D2L discussion forum guarantees a solid foundation for you to build upon in class. I trust that you will contribute to discussions when you have something to say, not because of some arbitrary timetable of responses aimed at minimal adherence to a participation policy. I expect that you will also treat your classmates and me with respect.

Assessment of Student Learning:
Your grade for the course will be based on the quality of your portfolio and class participation. Instead of letter or percentages grades I will use a plus/minus system and written comments to evaluate your portfolio work. Since the portfolio will be a work in progress you will be free to re-do assignments that do not measure up to my (or your) standards before you turn in the portfolio at the end of the quarter. This option does not apply to the ongoing journal, since entries are expected weekly and aimed at reflecting real-time progress in the course. And since the final project and in-class description/demonstration happen at the end of the quarter, aside from minor, cosmetic changes you won’t have time to do a major overhaul of your work. (Note that your weekly project progress reports will alert me to potential flaws that you will have time to correct.)

The participation portion of your grade will also be a cumulative mark, instead of a week-by-week tally. That way, an absence or “off night” in which you contribute less than usual will not affect your overall mark as much as a weekly score would. Your voice is important to the success of the class. My advice is to come to class prepared to contribute. That means reading, writing, and thinking about the material. I trust that you will contribute to discussions when you have something to say, not because of some arbitrary timetable of responses aimed at minimal adherence to a participation policy. I expect that you will also treat your classmates and me with respect.

Grading Criteria & Scale:
Your grade for the course will be based on the points earned for your written assignments and class participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journals (7 x 10 points each)</td>
<td>70 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essays (2 x 60 points each)</td>
<td>120 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions (9 x 5 points each)</td>
<td>45 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>285 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grading scale is based on 100 percent of the required assignments. Thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91 to 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 to 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85 to 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81 to 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 to 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69 to 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65 to 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61 to 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 or below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: Grades lower than a C- do not earn credit or competence in the School for New Learning.

Schedule of Classes/Itineraries (subject to changes posted to D2L and emailed to students at least 1 week in advance of the applicable class session):

**Week One, January 4**

1. Attendance, introduction
2. Course overview/ syllabus review
3. Unit overview – Truth
4. Reading assignment & discussion: Feynman: “The Value of Science”
5. Break
6. Unit overview – Beauty
7. Unit overview – Goodness
8. For Week 2:
Read and be prepared to discuss in class on January 11:

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part One: Evolution in the Flesh”:

Chapter 1: Daphne Major, pp. 3-16, and


*Beyond Category*

Forward, pp. 13 & 14

Preface, pp. 15-19

Chapter 1: “Enjoying a Capital Childhood, 1899-1913,” pp. 21-33

*Debating the Civil Rights Movement*

Introduction, pp. 1 & 2

From “The View from the Trenches,” pp. 115-129

Write:

Journal 1

How do you define each of the concepts we will be studying this quarter? Specifically, tell me the following for "truth," "morality," and "beauty":

1. Your personal conception of each term (you can use a standard dictionary definition if you find one that fits).
2. A specific example of each concept, for example, "Beauty is epitomized by the American Depression-era documentary photography of Dorothea Lange because she captured on film her subjects' dire circumstances while revealing their innate dignity."

Your work should be typed using a 12-point font with 1.5 line spacing. Title the paper "Journal Entry 1," include your name, and post your submission to the D2L Drop Box no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, January 10.

Discussion Forum:
Based on the Week 1 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 2.

Start a new thread on the Week 2 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 2 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, January 10.

Print a copy of your questions and bring it to class on January 11.

**Week Two, January 11**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous bookkeeping, etc.
2. Discuss Journal 1
3. Truth unit readings discussion
4. Beauty unit readings discussion
5. Break
6. Goodness unit readings discussion
7. For Week 3:

Read and be prepared to discuss in class January 18

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part One: Evolution in the Flesh”:

Chapter 3: Infinite Variety, pp. 37-48,

Chapter 4: Darwin’s Beaks, pp. 49-69, and

Chapter 5: A Special Providence, pp. 70-82

*Beyond Category*

Chapter 2: Starting a Career, 1913-23, pp. 34-60, and

Chapter 3: Seeking Special Sounds, 1923-27, pp. 61-97

*Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement*

Anthology Introduction, pp. ix-xviii,

From “School Desegregation”

Chapter Introduction, pp. 1-3,
“See What Tomorrow Brings,” pp. pp. 4-10, and

“Neighbors,” pp. 17-33

Write:
Journal 2
Directions:

In the preface to John Edward Hasse’s *Beyond Category*, Duke Ellington is quoted in regards to playing or writing music, “Without a problem to solve, how much interest do you take in anything?”

That question applies equally well to all three of our course units, as we will learn throughout this quarter. In this journal entry please answer the following three questions related to problem-solving in short paragraph form. You should be able to complete your work in about two pages of writing (total for all three answers).

1. On page 30 of *The Beak of the Finch*, author Jonathan Weiner presents Charles Darwin’s “first published hint of his secret theory” concerning the reason for the variety of Galapagos finches:

   “Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that, from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends.”

   What was a problem raised by this emerging theory, how does Darwin attempt to solve it (as described in chapter 2), and why was his work criticized?

2. In the short story “Neighbors,” what problems face the parents of Ellie and Tommy, and what do you think of their decision regarding Tommy’s schooling?

3. In your opinion what was the most important thing young Duke Ellington did during his early days in New York to move his career forward? Why?

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 2 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 3.
Start a new thread on the Week 3 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 3 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, January 17.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 3 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Three, January 18**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous bookkeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Beauty unit readings discussion, music review
4. Goodness unit readings discussion
5. Break
6. Truth unit readings discussion, video excerpt from “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”
7. For Week 4:

Read and be prepared to discuss in class January 25

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part One: Evolution in the Flesh“:

Chapter 6: “Darwin’s Forces,” pp. 83-98, and

Chapter 7: “Twenty-Five Thousand Darwins,” pp. 99-112,

*Beyond Category*

Chapter 4: “Composing at the Cotton Club, 1927-31,” pp. 98-143

*Debating the Civil Rights Movement*

From “The View from the Trenches,” pp. 129 (bottom) -155

Write:

Journal 3
Directions:
On page 119 of *Debating the Civil Rights Movement: 1945-1968*, Ella Baker is quoted as follows:

My basic sense of [the movement] has always been to get people to understand that in the long run they are the only protection they have against violence and injustice . . . People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves.

On the following page her thoughts on leadership are presented:

I have always felt it was a handicap for oppressed people to depend so largely on a leader, because unfortunately in our culture, the charismatic leader usually becomes a leader because he has found a spot in the public limelight. It usually means that the media made him, and the media may undo him.

Answer the following questions in short essay form (1 page minimum for each question):

1. Regarding the first quotation, in practical terms how might people serve as their "only protection" against "violence or injustice," and why do you agree or disagree with Ella Baker's view?

2. In terms of the second quotation, describe one example of a leader of "oppressed people" during your lifetime that fits with Baker's description, and did his/her treatment by "the media" square or not with Baker's explanation?

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 3 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 4.

Start a new thread on the Week 4 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 4 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, January 24.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 4 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Four, January 25**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous bookkeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Truth unit readings review and video excerpt from “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”
4. Break
5. Goodness unit readings review and video excerpt from “Freedom Riders”
6. Beauty unit readings review and music
7. For Week 5:

Read and be prepared to discuss in class February 1

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part Two: New Beings on this Earth”:

Chapter 8: “Princeton,” pp. 115-125, and

Chapter 9: “Creation by Variation,” pp. 126-139,

*Beyond Category*

Chapter 5: “Taking the Road, 1931-35,” pp. 144-192

*Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement*

From “Sit-Ins”

Chapter Introduction, pp. 49-52, and


Write:

Journal 4

Directions:
In Journal 1 you were asked to give an abstract definition of the concept of beauty followed by a specific example of the term. In this assignment you will go deeper into your personal conception of beauty. If we can identify things that stimulate pleasant thoughts, emotions, or desires we ought to name things that provoke the opposite reaction and be able to explain why.

Directions: 1. Identify a specific thing or object that you think is beautiful. It can be a building, an automobile, a painting, a sculpture, a piece of music, a particular man or woman, etc. Then capture an image of that thing with your
camera or from the internet (Google Images is my go-to location for all kinds of images) and include that in your paper. Next, in a few paragraphs (don’t be skimpy!) explain exactly what about this thing is beautiful to you. Be as specific as you can in your description. For example, a particular automobile’s styling affects you because of the way the roof melds seamlessly into the body and makes the car seem to be in motion even though it is standing still. Further, you might describe the interior features of the same car that evoke strong sensations in you, and explain why this particular beautiful thing is important to you.

2. Then, choose a specific thing that strikes your senses as the opposite of beautiful, whether you want to call it ugly, distasteful, off-putting, etc. It can be an example from the same set from which your beautiful object comes, like a particular car that offends your stylistic sensibilities. If you choose to go a different route for the thing that is the opposite of beautiful, that’s OK. Just make certain that you provide explicit details as to why this thing is ugly, etc. (a few paragraphs are required to do the job right). For this part of the assignment a photo image of the thing in question is also required. NOTE: This assignment is focused on things in the physical world that can be seen, touched, heard, etc. Do not choose the abstract terms “good” and “evil” as your pair of opposite things, accompanied by artist’s renditions of God and the devil.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 5 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Five, February 1**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous housekeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discussion
3. Beauty unit readings review and music
4. Truth unit readings review
5. Break
6. Goodness unit readings review and video excerpt from “Freedom Riders”
7. For Week 6:

Read and be prepared to discuss in class February 8:

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part Two: New Beings on this Earth”:
Chapter 10: “The Ever-Turning Sword,” pp. 140-156, and

Chapter 11: “Invisible Coasts,” pp. 157-176,

*Beyond Category*


**Write:**

**Discussion Forum:**

Based on the Week 5 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 6.

Start a new thread on the Week 6 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 6 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, February 7.

Midterm Essays Assignment: questions to be posted to D2L and handed-out on February 1.

**Listen:**

“Essential Ellington Chapter 6 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Six, February 8**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous housekeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Goodness unit video excerpt from “Freedom Summer” and discussion
4. Break
5. Truth unit readings review and video excerpt from “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”
6. Beauty unit readings review and music
7. For Week 7

Read and be prepared to discuss in class February 15:

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part Two: New Beings on this Earth”: 
Chapter 12: “Cosmic Partings,” pp. 177-189,

Chapter 13: “Fusion or Fission?,” pp. 190-202, and

Chapter 14: “New Beings,” pp. 203-210

Beyond Category

Chapter 7: “Making Masterpieces,” 1939-43, pp. 231-269

Debating the Civil Rights Movement

From “Documents”

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Last SCLC Presidential Address: “Where Do We Go from Here” (1967), pp. 104-113

From “The View from the Nation,” pp. 3-20

Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement

From “Acts of Violence”

Chapter Introduction, pp. 193-196, and

“The Convert,” pp. 197-212

Write:

Journal 5
Directions: answer the following questions, taken from The Beak of the Finch, in short paragraphs or fill-in-the-blank (where required):

From chapter 9:
• Which step in Darwin’s Origin of Species did many of its readers find the hardest to follow?
• What was Darwin’s assumption about the way the Galápagos Islands were settled by plants and animals?
• Fill in the blanks and explain this statement’s significance to the story of Darwin’s Finches: __________ is not unusual. __________ is.

From chapter 10:
• Define Darwin’s “principle of divergence.”
• What is the advantage of divergence?
• Explain David Lack’s term “competitive exclusion.”

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 6 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 7.

Start a new thread on the Week 7 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 7 Discussion Questions” and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, February 14.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 7 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Seven, February 15**
1. Attendance, miscellaneous bookkeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Truth unit readings review and video excerpt from “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”
4. Break
5. Goodness unit readings review
6. Beauty unit readings review and music
7. For Week 8: Read and be prepared to discuss in class February 22:

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part Three: G.O.D. “:

Chapter 15: “Invisible Characters,” pp. 213-223, and


**Beyond Category**

Chapter 8: “Composing for Concerts,” 1943-51, pp. 270-302

*Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement*
From “Acts of Violence”


Write:
Journal 6
Directions:
Read “Ebola fear shows denial of science spreads quickly,” by Rex Huppke (class hand-out), then write responses to the following prompts (1½ -2 pages):
1. Briefly summarize the article’s contents.
2. Cite the most important passage in the article and explain why.
3. Discuss the article’s relevance to this quarter’s readings and class discussion on the scientific method and the problematic intersection of science and politics.
4. What is the media’s responsibility in the dissemination of information to the public? Should it “cover the other side” of every issue in the interest of “fairness,” or should it distinguish between facts and opinions in reporting events?

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 7 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 8.

Start a new thread on the Week 8 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 8 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, February 21.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 8 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

Week Eight, February 22

1. Attendance, miscellaneous bookkeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Goodness unit reading review, discussion
4. Truth unit reading review, discussion
5. Break
7. For Week 9:
Read and be prepared to discuss in class March 1:
The Beak of the Finch

From “Part Two: New Beings on this Earth”:

Chapter 17: “The Stranger’s Power,” pp. 236-250,

Chapter 18: “The Resistance Movement,” pp. 251-266, and


Beyond Category


Debating the Civil Rights Movement

From “Documents”

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Last SCLC Presidential Address: “Where Do We Go from Here” (1967), pp. 104-113

From “The View from the Nation,” pp. 20 (bottom) -46

Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement

From “Marches and Demonstrations”

Chapter Introduction, pp. 125-128, and


Write:
Journal 7
Instructions:

In Debating the Civil Rights Movement, read the excerpt from "To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights (1947), [pp. 49-57].

Then answer question 1 on page 58 (in 2 pages):
Which of the three reasons presented in the report for taking action against racial discrimination do you consider most important? Why?

In your answer quote from at least 3 of the readings from your two Goodness Unit texts as backing for your opinion.

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 8 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 9.

Start a new thread on the Week 9 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 9 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, February 28.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 9 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

**Week Nine, March 1**

1. Attendance, miscellaneous housekeeping, etc.
2. Check journal entries, discuss
3. Goodness unit readings review, discussion
4. Break
5. Beauty unit readings, discussion, music
6. Truth unit readings, discussion, video excerpt from “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”
7. For Week 10:

Read and be prepared to discuss in class March 8:

*The Beak of the Finch*

From “Part Two: New Beings on this Earth“:

Chapter 20: “The Metaphysical Crossbeak,” pp. 278-293, and


*Beyond Category*

Chapter 10: Renewing Career and Creativity, 1956-65, pp. 325-366
Debating the Civil Rights Movement

From “Documents”

John F. Kennedy’s Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights (1963) pp. 82-87

“This Transformation of People”: An Interview with Bob Moses, pp. 170-188

Short Stories of the Civil Rights Movement

From “Acts of Violence”

“Liars Don’t Qualify,” pp. pp. 220-231

Write:
Final Short Essays Paper: questions to be posted to D2L and handed-out in class March 8.

Discussion Forum:

Based on the Week 9 readings, thoughtfully develop at least two questions for class discussion on Week 10.

Start a new thread on the Week 10 Discussion Forum labeled "(Your name) Week 10 Discussion Questions" and post your questions no later than 11:00 PM Tuesday, February 28.

Listen:

“Essential Ellington Chapter 10 YouTube playlist”: posted to D2L

Week Ten, March 8
1. Attendance, miscellaneous housekeeping, etc.
2. Goodness unit readings review, discussion, & summation
3. Truth unit readings review, discussion, & summation
4. Break
5. Beauty unit readings review, discussion, & summation
6. Final thoughts, discussion
7. Dismissal
Course Policies:
Attendance:
Because we meet just once per week and classroom participation is an important part of the course, attendance at all class meetings is strongly advised. DePaul School for New Learning policy prohibits students who miss more than two classes from passing the course. Please let me know if you are going to miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, and try to arrange for a classmate to take notes, etc.

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:
- Academic Integrity Policy (UGRAD)
- Academic Integrity Policy (GRAD)
- Incomplete Policy
- Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences
- Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability
- Protection of Human Research Participants
- APA citation format (GRAD)

Course Resources:
- University Center for Writing-based Learning
- SNL Writing Guide
- Dean of Students Office

Faculty Biographical Sketch:
I am a graduate of the School for New Learning and thus familiar with the intricacies of balancing educational responsibilities with life’s other obligations. I also have a Master’s degree in Secondary Education earned at DePaul’s School of Education. My SNL teaching experience began in 2003. In addition to teaching Critical Thinking my résumé includes history (Age of Dictators, The 60s, The American Political Tradition) and music (American Popular Song and The Beatles and the Creative Process). I spend the bulk of my leisure time studying history, listening to music, gardening, and spending time with my family.

Competence L.5-14547: Can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking.

Competence Expertise:
- Designed and taught Critical Thinking classroom course utilizing core concepts of General Semantics as devised by Alfred Korzybski, Wendell Johnson, and S. I. Hayakawa.
• Completed graduate course SCG 406: Human Development/Learning, at DePaul College of Education in 2001.
• Earned Masters in Education, Secondary, with History Concentration, at DePaul College of Education in 2004.
• Issued State of Illinois Teaching Certification #1188221 in 2004.