CRITICAL THINKING

Fall 2017

Faculty: Charles F. Stone
Home: 773-779-2363
email: cstone2@sbcglobal.net cstone@depaul.edu

Sept 12-Nov. 21

Tuesdays, 5:45 - 9:00 p.m.

Location: Loop Campus

Credit Hours: 4

L-5

Competences to be Developed and Assessed:
"Student can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking."

INSTRUCTOR: Charles F. Stone is an attorney retired from private practice. He represented accident victims and others in a general practice that included commercial litigation, business and real estate transactions. He received his B.S. degree in Journalism from the University of Illinois, Urbana, worked as a newspaper reporter in Texas and Illinois, and then returned to UI/Urbana and received his law degree in 1984. He has
taught at SNL since 1992, including courses on critical thinking, prejudice, social justice, business writing, the universe, the Advanced Project Online, and conflict resolution.


Critical Thinking approaches thinking as a skill that can be learned, developed and demonstrated while engaging in college-level intellectual activity.

METHODS: Students will pay attention to their own thought processes and observe how thinking is influenced by emotions and habits of mind. Students will study thinking skills while analyzing articles, solving problems, writing arguments, working in small groups and discussing current events and history. They also will practice these skills of metacognition – thinking about thinking – while working collaboratively on an in-class group project.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES: Students will:

1. Think critically and appreciatively to interpret experiences;

2. Demonstrate refined thinking that improves upon an idea after identifying risks and benefits of various alternatives;

3. Identify claims and assess whether they are supported adequately by reasons;

4. Use evidence to be persuasive;

5. Identify assumptions, assertions, evidence, and common elements of persuasion in
speech and writing;

6. Demonstrate active listening skills;

7. Apply thinking strategies to solve problems by producing ideas creatively, minimizing frustration, exploiting resources, and exploring experience to notice new things about familiar situations.

8. Understand and discuss listening and reasoning as skills to be developed throughout lifelong learning;

9. Understand and discuss how emotions affect listening and reasoning, and practice suspending judgment during those activities;

10. Assess the relationship of writer to reader, and speaker to listener, and understand ways to demonstrate credibility in intellectual discourse;

11. Demonstrate reasoning in communications by choosing points to emphasize and thinking about information needed by the audience;

12. Understand and discuss the value of multiple viewpoints, seek new perspectives and apply methods of breaking out of a fixed view of a situation.

The course will entail the following Learning Experience, and students will submit the following evidence of learning, to be evaluated as follows:

EVALUATION: This course generally is Pass/Fail. Alternately, students may, by written
request, obtain permission from the instructor within the first two weeks of the course to receive a letter grade. Under this grading option, grades A through C- represent passing performance. Once students commit to receiving a letter grade, they cannot switch back to a grade of Pass/Fail. Students interested in the grading option should consult the final two pages of this syllabus for the instructor’s grading practices regarding written work.

Students will be evaluated on short, weekly written assignments that require critically examining claims and proposals, a short speech about their problem-solving efforts, participation in classroom discussions about issues and ideas, and participation in small group exercises and collaboration with classmates on assignments. In addition, we will work on an in-class, all-class project that builds on the work of prior Critical Thinking sections. Collectively, this comprises 50% of the work toward achieving a passing grade, divided equally between the short weekly assignments/speech and in-class participation. In addition, there are two Major Assignments - one based on analyzing issues, and the other based on reconciling problems - which are each 25% of the instructor’s evaluation. Students will choose topics for these Major Assignments:

1) **Persuasive Essay, due the 7th class session.** Students will demonstrate critical and appreciative thinking while analyzing an issue and advocating a policy – the action that we should take on the issue. Students will apply the Six Hats thinking method, and will analyze opposing arguments, generate and compare alternate positions and viewpoints while noting strengths and weaknesses in them, and design a position that answers all reasonable objections. This essay must be original work performed for this class, and not recycled work from another class.

2) **Problem-Solving Exercise, due the 10th class session (Reiterative Problem-Based Learning).** Students will demonstrate critical and appreciative thinking by identifying a
problem in their lives, and by working to solve the problem using a thinking method studied in class. Students will choose the problem from work, home, school, family, or social relationships or settings. The problem must require a creative solution. Students will produce ideas creatively, analyze information and experience that is available at the beginning of the problem-solving process, think of information that needs to be gathered, take action on their ideas, and analyze the results of their actions. Along the way, they will be alert to insights and changes in how they view the problem or interpret their experience. Students will turn in worksheets that list their thoughts (this is not an essay!) and demonstrate their thinking in each of these directions.

Separately, students will present an 8-12 minute speech to the class about their problem-solving efforts. These presentations will occur during weeks 9 and 10.

All assignments should be double-spaced and must be turned in by the specified due dates, unless permission from the instructor has been granted in advance. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that assignments delivered electronically are received in proper form when due.

The instructor will uphold the University’s guidelines on academic integrity found in the Student Handbook. Violation of the plagiarism policy, or use of recycled work to fulfill current assignments, constitutes grounds for issuance of a failing grade.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU ATTEND EACH CLASS SESSION. WE WILL LEARN AND APPLY SKILLS THAT BUILD UPON EACH OTHER FROM WEEK TO WEEK. TWO OR MORE ABSENCES MAY CONTRIBUTE TO ISSUANCE OF A FAILING GRADE.

Course Calendar:
PLEASE DOUBLE-SPACE ALL WRITING.

Week One: Introduction:
Sept. 12
New Terms: Appreciative Thinking; Intellectual Discourse; Reiterative Problem-Based Learning; Persuasion (Ethos, Logos, Pathos);

Next Week: Chaffee, 2 (pp. 54-61) and 4 (pp. 144-155); De Bono, Table of Contents, Preface, Conclusion (p. 172), article on “The Art of Listening.”

Week Two: Perceiving and Judging; Do Our Expectations Affect Our Perceptions?
Sept. 19
Listening Influences Creative and Appreciative Thinking;
Types of Evidence, and Using it Responsibly (Plagiarism Policy).

Next Week: Chaffee, 4 (pp. 160-177), 5 (pp. 197-207, 217-226);
De Bono, White and Green Hats

Week Three: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning: Producing Ideas Creatively;
Sept. 26
Information, Internet Filter Bubbles;
Looking for Vagueness in Ideas, Information that is Needed, and the Limits of our Knowledge.

Next Week: Chaffee, 6 (pp. 250-260, 267-273, and 283-288), 10 (pp. 454-458 on Deductive Arguments), and 11 (pp. 473-476 on Inductive Arguments);
“A Soldier’s Story” from D2L; de Bono, Red Hat.
Quiz on the Six Hats Method on D2L.
Week Four: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning (continued);
Oct. 3
Emphasis and Bias; Language and Thought; Public Speaking;
Primary Sources.

Next Week: Chaffee, 8 (Relating and Organizing, pp. 349-374, and 383); De
Bono, Black & Yellow Hats,
Writing Assignment: Problem-Solving Facts and Ideas

Week Five: Problem-Solving.
Oct. 10

Next Week: Chaffee, 9 (Thinking Critically About Moral Issues, pp. 388-424),

Week Six: The Evaluation Style: Summarizing, Evaluating and Judging;
Oct. 17
Ethical Thinking; Reading Critically.

Next Week: Chaffee, 11 (478-483, 490-503, and 516-525 [Milgram]);
Public Speaking (and the Problem-Solving Presentation).

Week Seven: Logical Fallacies;
Oct. 24
Milgram’s Experiment;
Introduction to Active Listening.
Skim “The SCAMPER Method.”

Week Eight: Building a Persuasive Case;
Thinking Errors and Hazards of Argumentation;
Active Listening, continued;
SCAMPER: Dealing with Exhaustion - Generating New Ideas.

Next Week on D2L: “On Nation and Race” (short writing assignment);
skim “Errors in Thinking” by de Bono.

Week Nine: Emotional Appeals and Assumptions;
Nov. 7 Adversarial Thinking versus Design Thinking;
Errors in Thinking Caused by Narrow Perception;
Reiterative Problem-Based Learning Presentations.

Week Ten: Reiterative Problem-Based Learning Presentations (continued).
Nov. 14

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

See additional information pertaining to the grade designations for undergraduate grades. See Pass/Fail Grading Options.

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

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