LL-270 CRITICAL THINKING

Spring, 2018

Faculty: Charles F. Stone
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Instructor is available to talk. Request a time by email or in person.

Class Hours: Monday, April 2, 2018 – June 4, 2018
5:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location: Loop Campus

Credit Hours: 4

Competences to be Developed and Assessed: L-5

"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:

**GRADING:** 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. For those students choosing to obtain a letter grade rather than taking the course Pass/Fail, consult pages 5-7 of the syllabus for grading practices regarding written work. The grading scale shall be: A = 95 to 100; A- = 91 to 94; B+ = 88 to 90; B = 85 to 87; B- = 81 to 84; C+ = 77 to 80; C = 73 to 76; C- = 69 to 72; D+ = 65 to 68; D = 61-64; F = 60 or below.

**ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** 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. 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.

**POINT ASSESSMENTS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

(Points reflect the maximum points available for each activity. Fractions will be rounded up).
10 points total for completing the first three short, written assignments (two evaluations and a quiz on the Six Hats Thinking Method). You will receive points only upon completion of all three assignments due on Weeks 2-4; partial credit will not be given for completing individual parts of this sequence.

25 points for the persuasive essay described below under “Major Assignments.”

25 points for the problem-solving exercise, consisting of the first draft of facts and ideas, the final worksheets, and the speech to the class described in “Major Assignments.” Of these points, 20 attach to the written work, 5 to the speech.

15 points total (5 points each) for short written assignments based on the readings due on Weeks 6, 8, and 9.

25 points (2.5 per week) for respectful participation in class discussions, the group project, and in-class appreciative thinking with classmates about Major Assignment topics. Full points will be awarded each week in which you attend class and actively participate unless the instructor notifies you of a deduction. Points are lost without notification for absence from class. It is your responsibility to collaborate with classmates during class time, both about your own work and theirs, to work together to identify different perspectives, problems, objections, answers, assumptions, benefits, risks, alternatives, information that is needed, and new lines of inquiry.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS: 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.

Instructor’s Practices on Work Presented for a Letter Grade

All work in this class will be evaluated in part by how well you apply thinking methods that we study. Written work, including the short written assignments and the persuasive essay, will be evaluated as follows:

A = work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of an idea; reflects strong evaluation of evidence and sources of evidence, identifies alternatives and different viewpoints, and rebuts opposing arguments persuasively; reflects a strong ending that emphasizes a key point; reflects a perspective that not all evidence, argument, or reasons are of equal weight, but rather shows why some items are more compelling; and reflects overall a trustworthy tone as an advocate.

B = work of good quality; chooses an issue that truly presents the possibility of reasonable opposing arguments; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with strong evidentiary development and support of ideas; rebuts opposing arguments; identifies at least roughly the alternate viewpoints appropriate to the issue at hand.
C = work which minimally meets requirements set forth in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete; may not evaluate evidence and sources of evidence persuasively, or may be missing reference to alternatives, different viewpoints, and opposing arguments; may formulate the issue in a way that does not allow for reasoned argument.

D = work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treats material superficially or simplistically; fails to research or evaluate the subject thoroughly, or fails to understand or apply principles discussed in class, in conference with instructor, or in readings.

Written work on the problem-solving assignment will be evaluated as follows:

A = work of high quality; reflects sustained thinking and action that progresses toward solving a problem that truly requires a creative solution; formulates the problem as well as could be done at the beginning of the problem-solving efforts; produces an excellent list of ideas for potential solutions, a list that is lengthy, that approaches the problem from different directions; that exploits available resources, that elaborates and uses previously-produced ideas to generate new ideas, and that contains innovative and unusual ideas; reflects strong use of available information, providing that information in detail and noting insights that occurred from analysis of that information; identifies the limits of the student’s knowledge of the subject by thinking of information that must be gathered and questions that must be answered about the problem in order to achieve a solution, and produces ideas to obtain that information; takes action on several ideas for potential solutions, and demonstrates learning by analyzing the results of those actions, including learning in the sense of a change in viewpoint or insight.

B = work of good quality; reflects sustained thinking and action that progresses toward solving a problem that truly requires a creative solution; formulates the problem reasonably; produces several ideas for potential solutions that approach the situation from different directions, and that indicate use of creative-thinking techniques studied in class; lists available information that is relevant with some degree of detail; identifies information that is needed and questions that need to be answered about the problem, and generates at least some ideas to gather that information or answer those questions; takes action on multiple ideas and analyzes the results of those actions in a manner that
demonstrates learning by analyzing the results of those actions.

C = work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects a basic understanding of the problem-solving method studied in class, but displays an incomplete or undeveloped inventory of available information; reflects limited creative thinking such as by producing a short list of ideas for solving the problem, or a list that features ideas with only one or two approaches to the problem when others approaches are readily apparent; reflects superficial or incomplete thinking about the limits of the student’s knowledge about the situation, including information that must be gathered, or questions that need to be answered about the situation as a part of reconciling the problem; reflects few attempted actions based on the student’s ideas; and/or reflects superficial analysis of the results of the attempted solutions.

D = work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment, typified by any of the following: student chooses a problem that does not require a creative solution or sustained thinking, or that amounts to choosing between options that the student understands fully before engaging in the assignment; reflects lack of understanding or effort regarding the problem-solving method studied in class; failing to think about information that is available, including information that describes the situation that is unacceptable, resources that might help toward a solution, and past attempts to solve the problem, and failing to note available information in a form that is sufficient to aid the student’s problem-solving efforts; failing to demonstrate creative thinking by producing several ideas for potential solutions that identify actions that the student might take; failing to think about the limits of the student’s knowledge about the problem; failing to take action on multiple ideas, or to analyze the results of those actions, in a meaningful way that demonstrates progress toward a solution.

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.

Course Calendar:
PLEASE DOUBLE-SPACE ALL WRITING.
Week One: Introduction:
April 2
New Terms: Appreciative Thinking; Intellectual Discourse; Reiterative Problem-Based Learning; Persuasion (Ethos, Logos, Pathos); “Analyze,” “Issues,” “Assumptions,” “Assertions,” “Evidence” Defined.

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?
April 9
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;
April 16
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);
April 23
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.
April 30

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

May 7

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

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

May 14

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

May 21

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

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

May 28

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

June 4

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

Policy on Attendance
Attendance is critically important to this skills class. First, to apply the thinking methods studied in class, you’ll need to build upon and apply new practices from week to week. Missing a week is a setback to your performance the following week. Also, attendance in class assures your opportunity to practice and demonstrate appreciative thinking from
the L-5 competence. This is your chance to collaborate with classmates, and to benefit from their thoughts on your Major Assignment topics, while assisting them with their topics. It is an express goal of this class to practice active listening and appreciative thinking to strengthen your design of a policy or solution. **If you miss two classes, any unexcused absence thereafter shall result in a failing grade.** The instructor will consider extenuating circumstances that led to an absence, but does not promise to accept an excuse or justification. In addition, the instructor will not accept late work submitted after an unexcused absence.

**Policy on Plagiarism**
Students are expected to observe the University’s established guidelines regarding academic integrity, including the following statement regarding plagiarism, as quoted from the University’s “Handbook for Undergraduate Studies”:

> Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

> The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else’s.

> Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgment.

> Submitting as one’s own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

> The paraphrasing of another’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.

> Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor’s discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the College or the University taking further punitive action including dismissal from the University.
For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul’s Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or inquire via email at csd@depaul.edu.
Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677.

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

Writing Help

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and much more, see the Writing Guide for SNL Students at http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the DePaul University Writing Centers at http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/.

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)
- University Attendance Policy
- University Center for Writing-based Learning
- SNL Writing Guide
- Dean of Students Office