Syllabus

Course Information

Title: Critical Thinking

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

Course Description

In this course, we will be learning how how to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments. We will begin by discussing what critical thinking is and why we should improve our ability to do it. Since critical thinking concerns arguments, the bulk of the course will focus on reconstructing arguments and learning how to diagnose them. Topics to be covered include argument patterns, argument types, fallacies, introductory formal logic, probabilistic reasoning, and reasoning in the law.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to (i) identify the difference between deductive and inductive arguments, (ii) assess the former for validity and soundness, the latter for strength, (iii) identify argument patterns, (iv) diagnoze their own thoughts, (v) reason better.

Texts/Media

The following are required for this course:

- ['The Power of Critical Thinking: Effective Reasoning about Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims', 4th edition, by Lewis Vaughn](#) (Available from the campus book store as well as online retailers)
- [Book's Companion website](#)
- Online problem sets as well as grades are posted on the Blackboard site.

Course Requirements

Workload: Successful students will read materials both before and again after the classes in which they are discussed, look through and revise their notes, think about and not just read the materials, etc.

Attendance: You can earn up to 20 points towards you final grade by attending regularly. Please note that no points are earned during an exam day. You are considered absent if any of the following apply:

1. You arrive arrive more than 10 minutes late.
2. You leave more than 10 minutes early.
3. You leave class for longer than 5 minutes or leave class more than once.

Problem Sets: There will be weekly online problem sets administered through Blackboard starting in week 2. It is your responsibility to use a charged device on a stable internet connection. The problem sets will be posted on Mon. night by 11:59 PM. You must submit your answers by Sun. at 11:59pm. Please note that Blackboard does not allow me offer to selectively extend the deadline for any student.

Exams: There is both a mid-term and final for this course. If you have questions, concerns, or would like detailed comments on a returned exam script, I am happy to give them in person.

Late work & Make-up Policy: Since the grading scheme allows you some freedom to choose which assignments to do, I will not allow any exam make-ups without proper certification. This is a strict policy. Please do not ask for special treatment.

Grade Distribution:

- 10 Weekly Problem Sets, 3 points each, 30 points total.

- Mid term, 25 points

- Final, 35 points

- Attendance, 1 point for each class attended. Begins week 2. 20 total.

Grading Scheme

96+	A-
90–95	A-
87–89	B+
83–86	B
80–82	B-
77–79	C+
73–76	C
70–72	C-
60–69	D
0–59	F

Communication: I will normally respond to emails within two days of receiving them. This will normally be during business hours on Mon. through Fri. Please check your NJCU email address.

Grading Schedule: Grades will be available within 2 weeks of an assignment being submitted.

Academic Integrity: Please familiarize yourself with NJCU's Academic Integrity Policy

Attendance: You are considered absent if any of the following apply:

1. You arrive arrive more than 10 minutes late.
2. You leave more than 10 minutes early.
3. You leave class for longer than 5 minutes or leave class more than once.

Conduct: Please avoid any behavior that would distract your peers. This includes eating, leaving your seat, talking out of turn, etc.

Demeanor: You will be developing your speaking and debating skills through interaction with both me and your peers. You will be cold-called and often challenged to both clarify and defend your views. Please be cooperative and friendly.

Technology/Mindfulness: You will also develop your abilities to attend carefully to new and abstract information. Using technology can be a distraction both to yourself and to your peers. So, unless you are given explicit permission otherwise, please turn off laptops, phones, and so on.

Statement for students with disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and wish to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, please register with the Office of Specialized Services and Supplemental Instruction (OSS/SI). To begin this process, complete the registration form available on the OSS/SI website at www.njcu.edu/Specialized_Services.aspx (listed under Student Resources-Forms). Contact OSS/SI at 201-200-2091 or visit the office in Karnoutsos Hall, Room 102 for additional information.

Tentative Schedule (changes will be announced in class)

Listed here are the readings and (non-exhaustive) topics we will be discussing during each session. Although assigned readings are often short, they are difficult, and multiple readings are strongly advised.