

# ES2660

# Communicating in the Information Age

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## Module Description

In a context of prolific production and convenient access to content and innovation in the Information Age, how should one critically process and clearly communicate ideas to various audiences? In this module, students will learn to question and articulate their analysis of assumptions and assertions on issues facing the Information Age through processes such as identifying bias and substantiating arguments. The [Ennis' \(2011\)](#) taxonomy of critical thinking dispositions will be employed to develop students' analytical thinking skills and their ability to articulate cogent responses to arguments or to defend their own positions in both written and oral form.

This module is taught over 1 semester with 2 two-hour sectional teachings per week for 12 weeks.

Pre-requisites: ES1100, ES1102, ES1103

## Aims

The aims of ES2660, are that students will learn how to use and demonstrate these:

- **Skills** – analysis, evaluation, synthesis, construction and deconstruction of argumentative texts,
- **Knowledge** – Ennis' taxonomy of critical thinking skills and dispositions, Barrett's taxonomy of comprehension, depth of knowledge in an IT topic of choice to solve a human problem of choice
- **Attitudes** – habit of mind in using CT skills and dispositions, care for accuracy, circumspection, drawing warranted conclusions, making reasonable inferences, holding considered and/or evidence based opinions.

## Communication Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Consistently and conscientiously use a critical thinking rubric designed by yourselves, based on your understanding of Ennis' Taxonomy of critical thinking skills and dispositions to evaluate any given argumentative text – written, spoken or graphic.
2. Develop and use a framework to ask questions which mine for meaning, e.g. using or refining a comprehension framework such as Barrett's Taxonomy for understanding text in different modes.
3. Write an academic argumentative essay (650-800 words) answering your own live questions.
4. Articulate your ideas, views and analyses confidently and cogently, with appropriate and accurate substantiation.
5. Apply skills and strategies for thinking and speaking on your feet.

## Teaching and learning format

### Deep learning

The pedagogy that drives this course is based on Bigg's (1999) article on motivating students towards deep learning. We take this to mean that not only should students know what constitutes a fair and solid argument, they also know how and why it is important for them to construct such arguments, just as much as they know how and why arguments they read or hear when deconstructed are insufficiently robust, or incompletely robust.

### Learning by discovery

Where appropriate, we would encourage students to learn by discovery. That is, we will provide the materials and prompts, but students should think about key learning points in pre or post activity reflection and cogitation.

### Scaffolded learning

We have designed a learning ladder which means that one activity leads into the next activity. So the bigger objectives are broken up into component parts. The big ask in terms of learning, is for students to put everything together and take ownership of the notion of developing a habit of mind in how they think, speak and write.

### The pleasure principle

Hattie and Donahue (2016) have argued that in order to develop strong motivation in a course, students need to understand how to succeed and they should also take pleasure in their learning. To this end, we will provide rubrics and rationale for assessments so that students know the criteria for success. We will also endeavour to make the course as enjoyable as possible. This is not to say we are dumbing down, just to say we will try to avoid being too heavy on the theory, and focus more on helping students develop the key learning skills in communication and critical thinking. We use materials from the information age in order to tap into topics students should be familiar with and have already at least general knowledge about. It would then be easier to achieve a deeper understanding by researching on selected topics.

## Schedule (AY 2019/2020 Sem 1)

Week	T1	T2	Intended Learning Outcomes <sup>1</sup>	Tutorial Activities
2 19/8-23/8	"The answer is 42"	"Jaq and the Beanstalk"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain Ennis' taxonomy of CT in own words</li> <li>Analyze and evaluate Ennis's taxonomy of CT</li> <li>Present own understanding of Ennis's Taxonomy in own rubric</li> <li>Explain Barrett's Taxonomy of Comprehension in own words</li> <li>Use Barrett's taxonomy to analyze the meaning of a text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Ennis (2011)</li> <li>Analyze Ennis (2011)</li> <li>Learn about Barrett's taxonomy of comprehension</li> <li>Analyze Jaq and the Beanstalk</li> <li>HW ongoing for 3 weeks- Draw up a shortlist of the most relevant CT skills and dispositions for dealing with the sort of multimedia short texts that proliferate in the information age</li> </ul>
3 26/8-30/8	"The new tortoise and the hare"	"Once upon a time.."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate own CT rubric on given prompt</li> <li>Demonstrate systematic analysis of a given prompt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose an old story/myth</li> <li>Mine for meaning using Barrett's taxonomy of comprehension skills.</li> <li>Demonstrate creative and imagination, by re-telling an old story/myth with an original twist whilst also demonstrating developing CT skills and dispositions</li> <li>Present to the class</li> </ul>
4 2/9-6/9	"No rental to Indians and PRC"	The Welcome		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer comprehension questions based on Barrett's taxonomy to 'No rental to PRC and Indians'</li> <li>Use selected/targeted CT skills and dispositions to analyze No rental to PRC and Indians</li> <li>Give a critical reflection on No rental to PRC and Indian in class</li> </ul>
5 9/9-13/9	Project conference Teams A and B	Project conference Teams C and D		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show progress of project in a conference with tutor.</li> <li>Receive project prompt – 72 hours before project presentation date</li> </ul>
6 16/9-20/9	Project presentations Teams A and B Whole class attends	Project presentations Teams C and D Whole class attends		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project presentation – rubric</li> <li>Project presentation – application of rubric to given prompt</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Intended learning outcomes as defined by Blooms, referenced from <https://tll.mit.edu/help/intended-learning-outcomes> as 'skills, knowledge, attitudes' but using Ennis' taxonomy of CT skills and dispositions

Week	T1	T2	Intended Learning Outcomes	Tutorial Activities
RECESS WEEK 21/9 -29/9			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain knowledge</li> <li>Analyze information</li> <li>Select information</li> <li>Evaluate information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HW – read around IT solution for human problem for panel discussion</li> <li>Form considered opinions</li> <li>Anticipate and refute objections</li> </ul>
7 30/9-4/10	Deep mind	12 angry men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze academic conversation structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishbowl Discussion</li> <li>Academic conversation skills observations</li> </ul>
8 7/10-11/10	Panel Discussion Teams C and D	Panel Discussion Teams A and B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply academic conversation structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel Discussion</li> </ul>
9 14/10-18/10	“Houston, we have a problem”	“The defective detective”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze what is needed to answer own live question</li> <li>Search for and select information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask live question for essay</li> <li>Write introduction</li> </ul>
10 21/10-25/10	“Stealing is always wrong”	“The cat in the hat”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate ability to understand source information</li> <li>Form your hypothesis/define your argument/draw conclusions from your reading</li> <li>Select and synthesize information</li> <li>Construct an argument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft your essay</li> <li>Formulate thesis statement</li> <li>HW - Peer review essays of team - 48 hours in advance in work bin</li> </ul>
11 28/10-1/11	Only Teams A and B	Only Teams C and D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate an argument and information</li> <li>Explain evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford Tutorial Discussion</li> <li>Oxford Tutorial Essay - submission</li> </ul>
12 4/11-8/11	“Read the weather report like a woman in labour”	“Look and learn”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply CT skills and dispositions and comprehension strategies to impromptu speaking situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies for thinking and speaking on feet</li> <li>Design wild cards</li> <li>Wild card practice</li> </ul>
13 11/11 - 15/11	Only Teams C and D	Only Teams A and B		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wild cards assessment</li> </ul>

## Assessment Description

### Structure

The course begins with an introduction to Ennis' Taxonomy of Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions, and is followed by supporting activities designed to apply understanding of the skills and dispositions. There are basically ten essential skills and dispositions which will be presented over Tutorials 1-10. Interspersed will be various formative assessments to enable students to put together the various skills. Formative assessments are so called because students will get feedback but there will be no marks. In other words, they are scaffolded exercises and allow students to learn by discovery in a safe learning environment since there are no marks that carry into the continuous assessment. This is followed by summative assessments of a similar nature after students have had a chance to reflect on the key learning points. This pattern of theory + application exercises → formative assessment + feedback → summative assessment is iterated twice more in the course.

ES2660 is 100% based on continuous assessment. There is no final exam.

It is important to show sustained engagement throughout the course in order to maximise the extrinsic rewards of marks.

### Components for Continuous Assessment (CA)

Assessment	Tasks	Weighting	When
CA1 Story-Retelling	Group presentation	5%	Week 2
CA2 Group Project	(a) Critical reflection (written)	15%	Week 2-6
	(b) Oral presentation	10%	
CA3 Oxford Tutorial	(a) Discussion (academic conversation/debate)	10%	Week 11
	(b) Essay (written)	30%	
CA4 Wild Cards	Impromptu talk	15%	Week 13
Class Participation	Being in class in body, mind and spirit (6 components)	15%	Throughout
Total CA	written: spoken = 50:50 group: individual = 25:75	100%	

Please read the document ES2660 Assessments and Rubrics for details.

### Plagiarism versus Originality

Copying ideas from other sources or forgetting to acknowledge other sources is called plagiarism and it is a sign of intellectual dishonesty and or a lazy habit of mind. Please be reminded that plagiarism is viewed seriously by the University. Please familiarize yourselves on what is meant by plagiarism by clicking on this link.

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/programmes/Proposed%20CELC%20Webpage%20Content%20on%20Plagiarism.php>

You must take the plagiarism quiz (in IVLE Assessment folder) by the end of Week 4.

There is a premium placed on originality, especially in university. The chief training you receive in any tertiary institution, is the training of your mind to think critically. Therefore, your critical thinking value add on sources that you have read is where the marks come from. You will be rewarded for the depth, breadth and analytical vigour of your views on the sources of information used in spoken or written communication on this and every other course in your degree.