ES2660 Assessment details and prompts

We assess what we teach in the course objectives. You should be able to identify what information looks like in the information age – words, pictures, words spliced together or juxtaposed against pictures, words from multiple perspectives, a text by one author and many comments by readers, to which you will add your own analysis – this is assessed in the group project and in the Oxford tutorials. And since we say you should be able to think and speak on your feet, there will be an impromptu speech assignment which is called "wild cards". You will be assessed both in spoken and written communication. Both forms will be at the level of academic conversations, or essentially, the articulation or the nexus of content (knowledge), language (communication) and thought (critical thinking).

The rubrics assess the three main components of articulation. There are different rubrics for spoken and written communication as the skills differ slightly according to the context. These rubrics are also used to give you feedback which you can use to improve your performance and to gauge your own progress.

Content Components	Language Components	Thought Components
Content Knowledge Depth/breadth shown Sources mentioned	*Language use* e.g. questions/discussion frames/ *Nonverbal language use* e.g. engagement through eye contact/posture Discussion (task taken) e.g. facilitator/summariser/time keeper/devil's advocate/harmoniser, tasks undertaken successfully	*Critical Thinking skills* (Ennis, 2011) Open-minded /analytical /intellectual curiosity/scepticism etc. seen consistently as might be seen in POV (roles played) e.g. government/techno-preneur/public/profession al, roles played convincingly, consistently
Quality & Quantity	*Quality & Quantity*	*Quality & Quantity*

CA1 Story-Retelling (5%)

Task description

The Jaq and the Beanstalk activity in class, models how a critical thinker may integrate comprehension skills with critical thinking skills and dispositions to deconstruct and evaluate an argument. In this follow-up activity, students are encouraged to choose an old story to interrogate a narrative, and retell it. Each group chooses a fairy tale/myth/folklore/familiar story. Your group should present your re-telling of the 'story' to the class. The format you chose is entirely up to your imagination. It could be a traditionally told story illustrated with drawings, or it could be a live or videotaped skit; it may be in song, rap or poetry or parody. Whatever the format, all group members must have had an equal or as near equal part to contribute. The presentation must not exceed 10 minutes. There should be an equal emphasis on substance as on style.

Objectives

Communication Learning Objective:

By the end of the course, you should be able to (a) develop and use a framework to ask questions which mine for meaning, and (b) develop skills and strategies for thinking and speaking on your feet.

More specifically, the aims of this task are to:

- Marry Barrett's and Ennis' taxonomies
- Demonstrate how claims and assumptions may be interrogated
- Question common conclusions (e.g. in myths and fairy tales)
- Question status quo
- Draw reasonable inferences
- Show creativity and imagination, e.g. in the telling of the tale, the inferences drawn and the implications or ramifications foreseen.

CA2 Group Project (25%)

Task description

One way of dealing with huge amounts of information from various sources and in various forms, is to process all information critically. To do so we need to crack the 'code' the information is in – this code could be words, images, numbers, sound, colour or indeed a combination of several media. No matter how the information is coded, we need to express our understanding and views in words. The aim of this project is to develop a way of processing information, henceforth referred to as "rubric' and to demonstrate that it works by applying it to two sources of information. The first source will be your pilot test that you will write up in the critical reflection and the second test is on the prompt* that we will send you 72 hours before you are to demonstrate (orally) in class how your rubric works.

You should also be able to persuade us that your rubric is effective because it is easy to remember and use. This will be an opportunity for you to show creativity and imagination, e.g. telling us about how your rubric works in a story is one way of capturing our attention.

Objectives

Communication Learning Objective:

By the end of the course, you should be able to (a) develop and use a framework to ask questions which mine for meaning, and (b) 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.

More specifically, the aims of this task are to:

- Express your understanding of Ennis Taxonomy of critical thinking in the form of a critical reflection.
- Develop a rubric that is based on Ennis Taxonomy and apply it to a source of information of your choice.
- Show, in an oral presentation, how your rubric works when applied to another given information source.

Details of assessment

This assessment comprises 2 components: the critical reflection and the oral presentation.

(a) Critical reflection (written) – maximum 5 pages (15%, group mark)

    i.   Each member should have read and reflected on Ennis (2011).
   ii.   You need to identify the key taxa of his taxonomy of critical thinking skills and dispositions.
  iii.   You should also analyse how these taxa can be applied to evaluate information, either as a single or in more complex forms
  iv.   In particular, you should be able to show a degree of deep learning by formulating and applying a rubric to show the taxa most useful for evaluating different forms and sources of information as used by you in the information age, e.g. website or online news.

(b) Oral presentation – 3-5 minutes but 4 minutes is ideal, per person (10%, individual mark)

  i.   The team will be given a prompt* 72 hours in advance.
  ii.   Team members should discuss how their rubric can be used to assess and evaluate information in the specified source.
  iii. The resultant discussion points should then be divided among the team members.
  iv.   Each team member will present a section.
  v.   At the end of all the short presentations, the team will take questions[@] from the rest of the class who have been their audience.

*Sample Prompt

"How can your rubric be used or adapted for use on the 5-minute video at this link: URL _____ in order to assess the veracity of the information or the claims made therein?"

Alternative information sources: online news articles or an organisation's website

[@]Sample question for the Q and A

"In the video of 'CSI: Beyond Borders' by Mr Brown, Singlish is used, why is it inappropriate for Singlish to be used in a more formal critique? What is the point of an academic convention for more formal contexts?"

Tip for Q and A – make sure each and every member of the team gets some chance to answer at some point. You must be inclusive.

CA3 Oxford Tutorial (40%)

Task description

This semester we will be exploring the umbrella topic: **How computer technology is used to solve human problems**. You are expected to be well informed about how computer technology has been applied to solve human problems in general; you should also pick a specific problem area in which the way computer technology is used that particularly interests you and your group, or worries you and your group. It is this particular aspect that you will be sharing your thoughts on in the panel discussion. A panel discussion comprises panellists who have knowledge about a topic and who may have different points of view about it. You are expected to research the given topic and prepare to share your information as a panellist. The panel discussions are not graded as a separate assignment, but your efforts will go towards one-third of the individual Class Participation grade.

It is envisaged that the panel discussions will lay the ground work for the Oxford Tutorial essay and discussion assessment. Each student would have taken part in one panel discussion and be better informed in one aspect of the topic, and because they heard three other panel discussions, they will be better informed generally about other aspects of the topic. This would give each of you quite a lot of information from which to decide on a "live question" and it is this live question that forms the basis of your essay.

Objectives

Communication Learning Objective:

By the end of the course, you should be able to (a) articulate your ideas, and views and analyses confidently and cogently, with appropriate and accurate substantiation, (b) write an essay using your own live questions

More specifically, the aims of this task are to:

- research and share topic-specific information in a panel discussion
- write a critical argumentative essay based on a 'live' question you have identified
- engage in 'academic conversations' regarding your essays and your classmates'

Details of assessment

The Oxford Tutorial assessment comprises two components: the discussion and the essay.

(a) Oxford Tutorial Essay – 650-800 words (30%)

For the Oxford Tutorial Essay, upcycle information and research on the topic that you already have, and ask a live or a searching question about it that you can explore your response to in the essay, e.g. "is the solution to reducing traffic accidents, not the use of assistive technology in enhancing safety features in cars, but rather replacing the human driver with a completely autonomous vehicle?" Please refer to the tutorial notes for further details on what makes a live question.

Bring the essay (draft) to the discussion, where you and your team will converse about one or two key points in each other's essays.

(b) Oxford Tutorial Discussion (10%)

The purpose of the discussion is to peer review each other's essays, and in so doing demonstrate how well you have transformed head knowledge of comprehension and critical thinking skills and dispositions into a habit of mind. You will be demonstrating analytical and evaluative skills, questioning skills and communicative competence in how and what you say to each other about each other's essays and how confident yet humble you are in defending your own views. Make revisions to your essay based on any salient points brought up during the discussion, and submit the revised essay not later than 48 hours after the discussion.

Essay writing tips

You will need to:

- Ask a live or searching question on ONE specific focus that you wish to address. This question usually identifies some underlying issue or problem that should be addressed or solved.
- Based on your thinking about the source information, and after evaluating the main arguments or differing points of view, formulate your own conclusions.
- Write a persuasive i.e. argumentative essay beginning from the short background of the question you have formulated, state your thesis, develop your argument giving supporting details backed with source information, showing how your points are cogently linked, before coming to an overall conclusion.
- Show what evidence you have by using in text citations, end of text references and distinguishing between the source author's voice and your own critical thinking value add.
- Remember that you need to display critical thinking skills, an intellectually curious mind that has asked itself clarifying, elaborating and probing questions and answered them.
- Finally, challenge the status quo, if possible because that sort of question can lead to a new way to solve an existing problem.

Logistics

- 24-48 hours in advance, submit your essay to the work bin for your sectional group on LumiNUS – use the work bin labelled **CA3 Oxford Essay DRAFT**.
- Read the essays of your team mates. There will not be more than 4 essays to read.
- Note two key points in their essays which you find interesting because it resonates with your own essay focus, or which you wish your team mate to clarify, elaborate on or that you want to find out more about (probe further).
- Write down your two notes as questions to ask.
- Attend the discussion with your team mates at the agreed slot.
- Discuss each other's essays' key points.
- Make revisions to your essay based on any salient points brought up during the discussion.
- Submit your second and final draft into the Turnitin enabled work bin for your sectional group on LumiNUS, labelled **CA3 Oxford Essay FINAL** 24-48 hours after the discussion.

Late submissions not supported by a medical certificate or other valid reason, will be penalised at the rate of two marks per day up to three days late, and thereafter will no longer be accepted. Plagiarism will be severely penalised.

On a brighter note, originality and critical thinking will be rewarded.

CA4 Wild Cards (15%)

Task Description

These are short prompts and they may be in any medium – graphics, video, text, photo, - this should not be surprising to you after a semester of looking at information from various sources in various forms. You will have some class time to practice putting together your considered opinion on an issue and this is an opportunity to show how much it has become a habit of mind that you can apply critical thinking to a given prompt and answer cogently.

Objective

Communication Learning Outcome:
By the end of the course, you should be able to apply skills and strategies for thinking and speaking on your feet.

Details of assessment

There are 36 wild cards altogether. Each wild card has a textual prompt. Prompts are based on current affairs, general IT topics, the IT umbrella topic for the essays in the semester you are taking the course, general Singapore-based topic, or a general knowledge topic.

The prompts are multi modal. A prompt could be in the form of:

- a short verbal paragraph
- a photograph
- a cartoon
- a link to a short video
- a link to a song

You will be given 2 minutes to read, watch, listen and think about the prompt. You will then speak on the prompt for 1-2 minutes. During that minute, tell us how you have used your CT skills and dispositions to deconstruct the message and say why you think it is a fair or unfair message. Do not waste time paraphrasing or retelling the text. Just go straight into the salient points.

Worked Example:
This photo of a Singa mascot from SG50 was a wild card prompt. Such a prompt would be topical, therefore, part of current affairs.

This is a possible response:
Singa mascot for SG50, one of several designs. It's meant for propaganda purposes, but does it serve its purpose? Why would Singapore want to be represented by a zombie however cute it may look? Does it represent any Singaporean really? If it represents popular culture, is it an uncritical regurgitation of it? Does a zombie have a place in a country's golden anniversary? Is something or someone the living dead? Would everyone in Singapore think it is cute to play with a ghostly figure? Does it truly represent national culture? Maybe, it appeals to the younger generation? Could it be that zombies like vampires are part of

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popular culture and to the non-religious part of the population mean nothing sinister at all? Just consider how many young girls fell in love with the vampire hero in Twilight. Personally, it doesn't work for me since I am puzzled by its design.

This answer shows a range of CT skills and dispositions:
- Being well informed
- Asking critical questions
- Showing intellectual curiosity
- Acknowledging alternative view points
- Being able to defend a view or conclusion

Formative assessments will be conducted throughout the course where students take turns to give impromptu short talks in class, including (not exclusively):

- Reflections on key learning points from class activities
- Video prompts
- Articles/readings
- Graphic stimuli

ES2660 Assessment Rubrics

CA1 Story-Retelling (5%)

Component	Criteria for Success
Story	• Interesting and relevant story chosen • Recognizable as a well-known story • Clearly a new interpretation • Original twist to the tale
Comprehension	• Systematic exploration and or expression of the different levels of comprehension possible, could show understanding of Barret's taxonomy of comprehension, seen in choice of words, inferential meaning, literal and metaphorical understanding.
Critical thinking	• CT skills and dispositions shown throughout the retelling, especially creativity and imagination

CA2 Group Project (25%)

Component	Degree of success	Criteria for Success
Critical reflection (simplified version – see argumentative text construction (written) rubric for critical reflection for full details)	**Above average**	Shows that Ennis, 2011 has been read and well understood AND may also make cross references to other CT frameworks. Clear evidence of having carefully researched and analysed what likely information sources, forms and quality of information is available in the information age, and shows particular understanding of what is defined as useful or valuable information. Clearly shows their own CT skills and dispositions in the analysis and approach they take wrt to information management, manipulation and use. Clearly, comprehensively and accurately articulates their position and on the question of how to manage information and to propose a simple and effective rubric as part of their solution to process information. Rubric is creative and imaginative, is easy to use and is versatile on so that it can work on the widest possible range of information types.
	Average	Satisfactory analysis given, but lacking the robustness of being strongly and extensively evidence based. May owe a lot to fluent language skills and strong reasoning. CT skills and dispositions can be clearly discerned. Articulation is clear on the whole, with occasional lapses. Rubric is fairly versatile and can work on a wide range of information types.
	Below average	Lacking in CT skills and dispositions e.g. general and vague claims, seems to be paying lip service to an explanation of what information is, how it could be communicated to show critical thinking skills and dispositions, lacks understanding or lacks evidence to show a detailed knowledge of Ennis let alone other CT frameworks. Rubric is too tight or too loose to work on the widest possible range of information types.

Short OP	**Above average**	Developed and defended position confidently, reasoned logically and presented cogently and coherently. Showed good content knowledge. Handled questions confidently and knowledgably. Showed open mindedness and engagement. Listened respectfully to other presenters and responded politely to audience questions or comments.
	Average	Some inconsistencies in developing and defending a position, may be lapses or lack of clarity in cogency and coherence, may be some lapses in etiquette, could not always tell the difference between being passionate and engaged in the topic and being defensive.
	Below average	A number of inconsistencies in developing and defending a position, obvious lapses or lack of clarity in cogency and coherence, some lapses in etiquette, defensive and closed minded, did not handle questions well or failed to answer any questions.

CA3 Oxford Tutorial (40%)

(a) Essay – Rubric and Checklist (30%)

This rubric is used for marking the Oxford Tutorial Essay. The critical thinking component is based on Ennis' Taxonomy (2011). The table below represents how the label in the rubrics has been worked out.

Component	Ennis's Taxonomy Checklist of CT skills dispositions	Expressed through language use in the Oxford tutorial essay
Content Substance And substantiation Selection, depth, breadth of knowledge	**Open-mindedness Knowledgeable**	Knowledge and understanding of content especially which points are especially important, also the range of **information** that was useful to developing a critical mind. All claims are supported by evidence. All conclusions are warranted Also seen in careful documentation of source information as seen in intext citation and end of text references. In the knowledge shown about the given topic, the engagement with ideas, in the research question addressed, or in the parameters of the argument constructed. Also sources selected must be credible and from different points of view.
Definition and delineation	**Circumspect/judicious evaluation and conclusions Intellectual curiosity Claims //evidence Systematic definitions/ categorisations**	Delineation of argument, scope pf topic, definition of key terms. Judicious quality of the claims made in the essay. Warranted conclusions. Mostly found in definitions of key terms, delineation of argument, nature of claims and assumptions, claims are made based on the strength of the evidence. There should be no overgeneralisations nor fallacies used. Conclusions are based on evidence and reasoning.

Vigour Of analysis	**Analytical assessment of source credibility Analytical deconstruction Analytical evaluation of argument**	Clear **CT value add** on the information sources, how information has been verified by **triangulation** or **corroboratio**n. There should be a distinction made between where the source information and the essay writer's view of that information. The analysis and evaluation of each source must be clear. The synthesis of all the sources of information used should be logical and thoughtful.
Persuasiveness & organisation	**Points organised clearly (e.g. ascending/descending order) Points reasonable, good cohesion, logical, cogent**	How the points of information are held together - logic, use of cohesive devices to link sentences within each paragraph, transition sentences or signposts used to link paragraphs, correct use of such. The meaning is always clear due to accurate and objective word choice. Grammatical errors, are non-existent or few, AND/OR do not obstruct meaning. Writing is concise and complete – that is no loose threads, counter arguments are anticipated and refuted. This will be found in language use e.g. word choice, grammatical accuracy, cohesive devices, and transitions. It will also be found in the mechanics of an argumentative essay e.g. easy to find thesis, presence of topic sentences, supporting details, counter arguments, refutations, and recap, and overall conclusion, reiteration of the thesis.
Originality & creativity & confidence	**Confidence in reasoning** **Imagination and creativity**	Research question identified clearly and it is a question that shows curiosity and/or addresses a controversial issue. Thesis statement is well formulated. Development of the thesis throughout the essay. Ability to foresee the implications and further ramifications. Found in the introduction of the essay – e.g. thesis, the perspicacity of the problem/issue identified, the quality of the topic sentences in each paragraph, insights in the argument, and the quality of the final word in the conclusion.

(b) Discussion (Academic Conversation) (10%)

This rubric is used for the **Panel discussion (5% of Class Participation)** and the **Oxford Tutorial Discussion**.

Juggling the academic conversation balls in general (see Figure 1):
Critical Thinking
- Engagement with other POVs in particular
- Being sceptical/brave about evaluating claims or assertions that are not sufficiently backed up, or where explanation lacks clarity etc. Being open –minded to feedback, yet able to defend a position/point if necessary
- Consistency of O+R+ E – opinion with reasoning and evidence

Knowledge
- Referencing credible evidence and their sources
- Being or showing knowledge in topic

Language
- Agreeing/ disagreeing
- Building/ challenging
- Asking questions

Non-verbal
- Body language, e.g. eye contact, to show engagement, enthusiasm

IPC etiquette
- Willingness to be part of a community of learners
- Giving critical feedback with tact and diplomacy

Language + Substance (*Knowledge + CT***) + Confidence (***Nonverbal + IPC***)**

| If you can do	Then you have
- **All** of the above, **consistently, with confidence and substance**	Aced
- **All** of the above**, some of the time**, with **confidence and substance**	Done very well
- **Some o**f the above, **most** of the time, **generally** with confidence and often with substance	Made a good effort
- **Some** of the above**, most** of the time, **generally with confidence, but with only general knowledge or superficial specialist knowledge** e.g. refers to news articles not studies or key players	Made a good start
- **Some** of the above, **some** of the time, w**ith confidence and good reasoning**, but **superficial content**	Probably not done enough research but you are confident
- **Some** but **not enough substance, little confidence and contribution**	Probably not caught up on your homework
- **Hardly** spoke, and with **varying degrees of substance, confidence etc.**	Not engaged, and may want to talk to your tutor about changing this
- **Absent** with valid reason **or silent**, especially if passed on invitation to speak	Not engaged and may want to talk to your tutor about what to do next
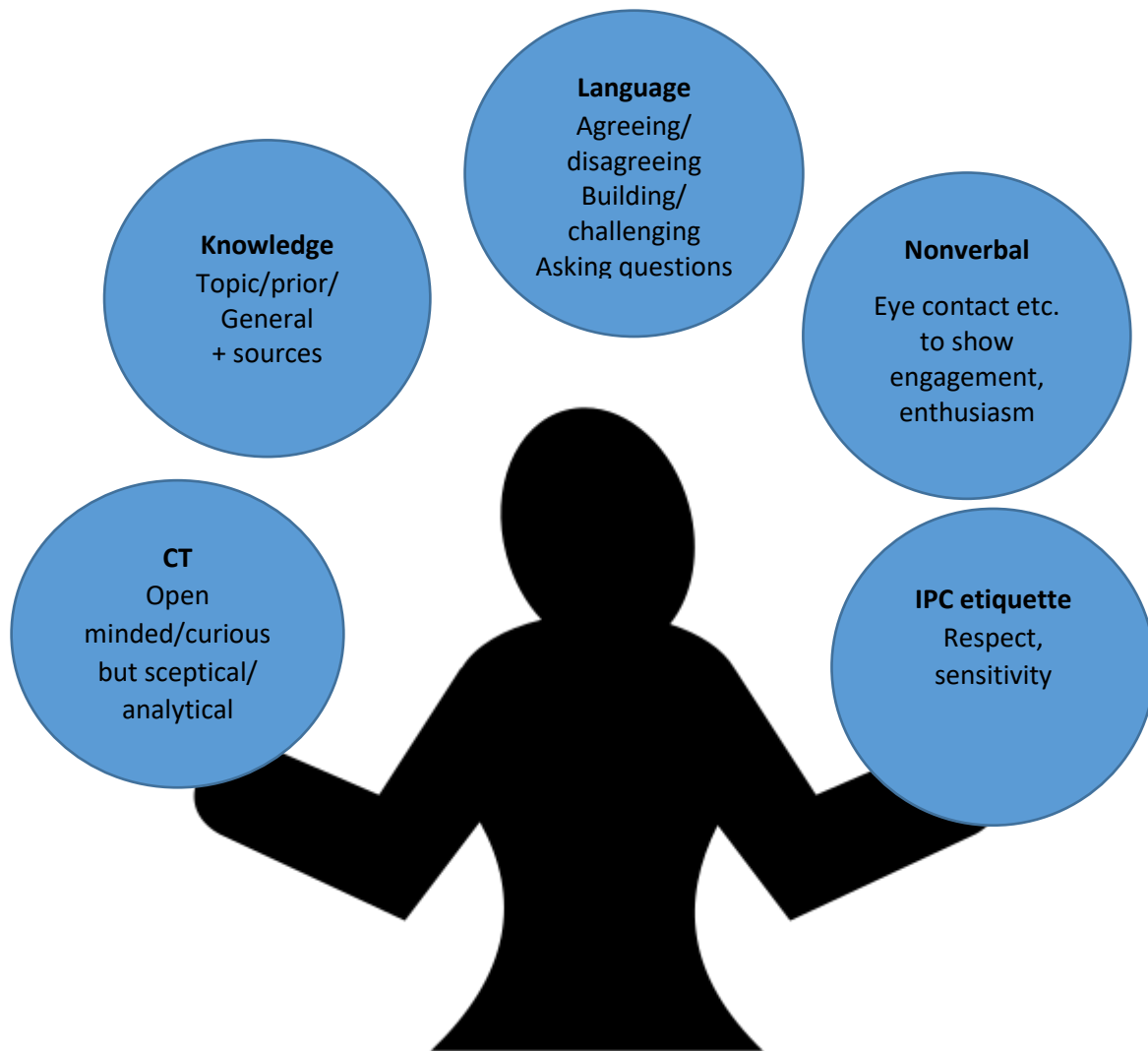
Figure 1. Juggling the academic conversation balls

CA 4 Wild Cards (Spoken)

For the short and impromptu talk (minimum 1, maximum 2 minutes), these criteria will be marked holistically, meaning that the overall quality of the deconstruction of an argument and the overall articulation of an opinion based on evidence will be taken into consideration in the award of marks upon 15.

☐ Deconstructs wild card cue systematically, e.g. defining key terms, identifying premises/etc., may even have given personal rubric used.

☐ Supports assertions/stand with reasons

☐ Understands own views and others' points-of-view, with an ability to explain any personal assumptions (other POV's acknowledged in explanation) and Is prepared to defend own view and able to refute other views

☐ Identifies flaws in assumptions and line of reasoning

☐ Questions/probes beneath the surface to deal with the complexity of issues, implications, applications and ramifications

☐ Uses CT tools to deconstruct (where applicable)[1]

☐ Is confident in reasoning/develops and defends stand or response

☐ Is judicious and careful in conclusions.

Other traits, e.g. humour/knowledge_____

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[1] Words such as "triangulation/corroboration/empirical/anecdotal evidence, fallacies, assumptions, pathos, ethos, logos, logic, rhetoric, circumspect, judicious, warranted" etc. are used and used appropriately.

Class Participation (15%)

There is 15% of the course assessment for class participation. This is a significant percentage and must be awarded judiciously. Class participation has thus been broken down into 4 components. Students are to be rewarded for EFFORT rather than achievement per se. There are students who have enjoyed the course and worked hard in it, but not scored higher grades previously. This component is designed to redress that lack. The 4 components approximate to their being in class in body, mind and spirit.

In Body 10%	In Mind 40%	In Spirit 50%	
		The Welcome	**Panel Discussion**
Throughout the course: • Comes to class • Comes on time • Does online exercises and quizzes	**Throughout the course:** • Participates in class • Shows interest by asking or answering questions • Picks up on points raised in class and elaborates, clarifies, supports, brings related materials – appositely and without hogging • Treats others or the POVs of others with kindness and respect	• Hands in homework • Shows a degree of engagement e.g. not just answering the questions, but also showing some CT value add e.g. own view supported by examples from video, or cross reference to other sources of information, showing some understanding of the ramifications or implications of paradigm shifts in thinking on social issues	• Shows a degree of engagement e.g. not just answering the questions, but also showing some CT value add • Contributes to the discussion as evidenced by content knowledge • Shows effort in applying academic conversation skills