



LEAVELL COLLEGE

AT NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Critical Thinking: LCGE1340-65

Spring 2021 (Term 213)

Monday, Weekly 6:00 pm – 8:50 pm

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Adjunct Instructor

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Office hours by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will be introduced to the concept of critical thinking. Emphasis will be given to identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing the components of arguments. Additionally, students will develop necessary skills and habits for logical reasoning, which will lead to becoming a better thinker. *Prerequisite: None*

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSLOs)

At the conclusion of the semester, the student will:

1. Understand and identify key elements of thought/thinking outlined in the textbook.
2. Identify and further develop the skills needed for becoming a better, critical thinker.
3. Be able to think critically about ethical and theological issues from a Christian worldview.
4. Be able to critically identify, understand, and analyze oral and written arguments.

COURSE TEXTS

The following textbooks are required:

1. Chatfield, Tom. *Critical Thinking*. London: SAGE Publishing, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4739-4714-6.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Participation:** This course is designed to be a learning laboratory. Daily attendance and participation—along with reading the required texts—will serve as the foundation for the class. Class Participation is worth 20 percent of the total grade.
2. **Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam will cover the material discussed in class as well as pertinent material from the required textbooks and supplementary readings. The exam will consist of objective and subjective questions. The exam will be given at the beginning of the class period. The student will be given no more than the time allotted for the class to complete the exam. The midterm exam is worth 20 percent of the total grade.

3. Final Exam: The final exam will cover the material discussed in class as well as pertinent material from the required textbooks and supplementary readings. The exam will consist of objective and subjective questions. The exam will be given at the beginning of the class period. The student will be given no more than the time allotted for the class to complete the exam. The final exam is worth 20 percent of the total grade.
4. Critical-Thinking Papers: The student is required to write a one-page, single-spaced paper describing her/his position on the current illegal immigration debate or racial issues in the United States. The paper must be typed in Times New Roman with one-inch margins. **Due February 1st**

At the end of the semester, the student will read differing voices on the topic of illegal immigration or racial issues in the United States. The student will use the elements of thought/thinking outlined in *Critical Thinking* as well as the tools for identifying, understanding, and analyzing arguments to revisit his/her position on the illegal immigration/racial issues debate in the United States. The second critical-thinking paper must show a well-reasoned and clear argument for the student's position. If the student's position on immigration has not changed, s/he must provide rationale(s) for the lack of change. The second paper must be typed in Times New Roman with one-inch margins. The paper should be no longer than 3 pages. Students are encouraged to interact with the various voices in the required reading. The second, immigration paper is **Due May 3rd**. The Critical-Thinking Papers are worth 20 percent of the total grade.

5. Reading Log: Reading is an integral part of the course and the assigned readings provide important background material to the lectures. The student is required to complete the assigned reading for each class meeting. The student will need to complete the reading log throughout the semester. The reading log will be turned in at various times throughout the semester. The Reading Log is worth 20 percent of the total grade.

GRADING

Class Participation (20%)
 Midterm Exam (20%)
 Final Exam (20%)
 Critical-Thinking Papers (20%)
 Reading Log (20%)

GRADING SCALE

A: 93 - 100
 B: 85 - 92
 C: 77 - 84
 D: 70 - 76
 F: below 70

COURSE OUTLINE

All topics and dates (excluding the final exam) are subject to change.

Note: **Reading should be completed prior to coming to class.**

| Week | Dates | Content | Assigned Reading Critical Thinking | Assignment Due |
|------|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Jan 25 | Syllabus Overview What is critical thinking (and why does it matter)? | <i>pp.</i> 1–18 | |
| 2 | Feb 1 | Understanding the reasons behind things Spelling out-arguments and assumptions | Ch. 1 Ch. 2 | <i>Critical Thinking Paper 1 Due</i> |
| 3 | Feb 8 | Reasoning with logic and certainty Reasoning with observation and uncertainty | Ch. 3 Ch. 4 | |
| 4 | Feb 15 | Developing explanations and theories Assessing evidence and planning your reading strategy | Ch. 5 Ch. 6 | |
| 5 | Feb 22 | Getting to grips with rhetoric Seeing through faulty reasoning | Ch. 7 Ch. 8 | |
| 6 | Mar 1 | Understanding cognitive bias Overcoming bias in yourself and others | Ch. 9 Ch. 10 | |
| 7 | Mar 8 | Thinking critically about technology Putting it all together | Ch. 11 Ch. 12 | |
| 8 | March 15- 19 | Spring Break: No Class | | |
| 9 | Mar 22 | Introduction to Worldview | | Due on Blackboard by March 28: Midterm Exam |

| Week | Dates | Content | Assigned Reading Critical Thinking | Assignment Due |
|------|--------|---|---|--|
| 10 | Mar 29 | Death Penalty The Ultimate Punishment | Hugo Adam Bedau, “Capital Punishment” ERLC: “Capital Punishment: An Overview of Christian Perspectives” Ernest van den Haag, “The Ultimate Punishment” | |
| 11 | Apr 5 | Gun Control Church and State (religious liberty) | Gun Control articles Religious Liberty articles | |
| 12 | Apr 12 | Racial Reconciliation, Race/Ethnicity, and Cancelling History | Related Articles | |
| 13 | Apr 19 | Illegal Immigration and Immigration Reform | Immigration Articles | |
| 14 | Apr 26 | Sanctity of Life <i>Second Critical Thinking Paper Due</i> Euthanasia | Sanctity of Life articles Euthanasia articles | |
| 15 | May 3 | Catch Up and Review | | <i>Critical Thinking Paper 2 Due</i> |
| 16 | May 10 | Final Exam | | Due on Blackboard by May 10: Midterm Exam |

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

1. Attendance Policy: Leavell College follows the attendance policy as stated in the Leavell College catalog.
2. Policy for Late Submissions: There will be a late penalty of 7 points per day on all writing assignments, including weekends. After 5 days, no late work will be accepted.
3. Plagiarism Policy: A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all Leavell College students. Copying another person’s work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that*

all sources be cited. Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Leavell College for further action.

4. *Classroom and Online Decorum:* Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of the others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times. Electronic devices should be used only for classroom purposes as indicated by the professor.
5. *Special Needs:* If you need accommodations for a disability, please set up a meeting with the professor for consideration of any modifications you may need.
6. *Emergency Plan:* In the event the NOBTS schedule is impacted due to a natural event, go to the seminary's website for pertinent information. Class will continue as scheduled through the Blackboard site. Please note announcements and assignments on the course's Blackboard site.
7. *Technical Assistance:* For general NOBTS technical help, go to www.NOBTS.edu/itc/
8. *Style Guide:* A copy of the approved NOBTS/Leavell College Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell, or it can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the NOBTS website: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Elder, Linda, and Richard Paul. *A Glossary of Critical Thinking Terms and Concepts: The Critical Analytic Vocabulary of the English Language*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2009.
- Hunter, David A. *A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking: Deciding What to Do and Believe*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.
- Morrow, Jonathan, with a Foreword by Darrell Bock. *Thinking Christianly: Looking at the Intersection of Faith and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. *Critical Thinking: Learn the Tools the Best Thinkers Use*. Columbus, OH: Pearson Prentiss Hall, 2006.
- *Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life*. Columbus, OH: Pearson, 2012.
- *How to Study & Learn a Discipline Using Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2011.
- *How to Write a Paragraph: The Art of Substantive Writing*. Foundation for Critical Thinking, Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2011.
- *The Thinker's Guide to Analytic Thinking*. Tomales: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2016.
- Ryken, Philip Graham. *Christian Worldview: A Student's Guide*. Crossway, 2013.