

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### INSTRUCTOR

Michael Aparicio

You may contact me by sending a message through Canvas. Or...

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Office: Emeritus 1516A

*Office Hours:* In-Person and additional Zoom meetings by Appointment. Contact me and request a meeting. I will respond within 24 hours, usually much faster.

*You also can contact me in other ways.* You can email me at [maparicio@santarosa.edu](mailto:maparicio@santarosa.edu) and send a message via Canvas. Monday through Thursday, I will respond within 24 hours. From Friday through Sunday, I will respond by the following Monday at 12noon. Usually much sooner.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course familiarizes students with a number of skills used to think critically. After a brief introduction, we will fine-tune our ability to distinguish between an argument's conclusion and premises. These skills will be used to *fine-tune our ability to assess arguments*. Upon completion of the course, successful students will be able to identify, analyze, and assess many arguments encountered in day-to-day life.

### COURSE EXPECTATIONS

**PARTICIPATION** You are not graded for your class participation. However, participating in each week's required tasks is a precondition for our learning process. For this reason, there are two participation expectations.

*First, you are expected to complete our weekly required assignments.* Any student missing over 10% of our assignments will be dropped from the class. Counting quizzes and exams, we will have 11 assignments.

*Second, you are expected to complete your assignments promptly.* Do not procrastinate. If you procrastinate and experience technical difficulties, I consider your procrastination a more significant cause than any technical difficulty. After teaching for over 28 years, I no longer concern myself with distinguishing between good excuses and poor excuses. See the ExtraCredit section's "Oops" policy to know what to do when you missed a deadline. No exceptions! To learn more, go to this syllabus's Extra-Credit section.

Please note: If you know in advance you are likely to miss a deadline and contact me earlier enough for us to problem-solve, I will make a reasonable effort to work with you. Sometimes I will allow for an alternative way of completing the work. Sometimes I will reschedule a deadline in advance. The proposed solution will depend upon the nature of the problem. This will not count as one of your "Oops."

**WEEKLY PRACTICE** A key to our course's learning process will be practice. You are not graded for your practice. However, good practice skills will provide essential preparation for our graded assignments.

Weekly Online Practice: There will be weekly *recommended and ungraded* online practice examples designed to assist our efforts to learn our critical thinking skills. Most weeks this will include Flashcards, Tutorials, Handouts, and Practice Quizzes.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS** Our class includes three different types of graded assignments. They will be the only measures used to determine how well you are learning in our course.

*Weekly Online Quizzes:* There will be weekly *required and graded* online quizzes. Each Skills Quiz will assess your ability to demonstrate that week's new skills. Each Review Quiz will assess your ability to demonstrate all of the skills we've learned up to that week of the semester. Week #5 will include a Thinking Critically About the Media reading quiz. You will need the sixth edition to take this quiz. Quizzes are not timed. You may review them multiple times before completing and submitting them. All quizzes may be submitted only once.

*Final Exam:* There will be a *required and graded* final exam. This exam will assess your comprehensive understanding of the skills we've learned during our semester. The online exam will be timed. You will have 2 hours

to complete and submit 50 questions. Like our Review Quizzes, the Final Exam will be multiple-choice questions asking you to demonstrate all of the skills we've learned up to that week of the semester.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Please begin by buying our course textbook. It's been ordered through the SRJC bookstore. However you get it, be sure you have the book by the first day of our term (June 13, 2022), and be sure it's the right edition:

Title: Critical Thinking: A Students Introduction

Author: Bassham, Gregory (and others)

Edition: 6th edition

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

ISBN-13: 978-0078038396

While you don't have to start course work until June 13, many students like to prepare for the semester by reviewing our course website and completing all of the Course Prep tasks listed on our modules (aka, course schedule). Just click the "Home" button.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Each week's required and recommended tasks are listed in our course schedule. Please remember that, in the end, you are responsible for knowing each assignment's due date and completing each assignment promptly.

## **TEXTBOOK**

*Critical Thinking*, Bassham, Irwin, Nardone, and Wallace, McGraw Hill; sixth edition.

Please note- The textbook is sold in the bookstore. If you happen to buy it online, make sure, 1) It is the sixth edition; 2) You have the textbook before the first day of class.

## GRADING

Weekly Online Quizzes: On Skills Quizzes and Review Quizzes, you will earn one point for each correctly answered quiz question. For the Thinking Critically about the Media Quiz, you will earn two points for each correctly answered question. Each quiz will be twenty points. Combined, your quizzes are worth 200 points.

Final Exam: The final exam will be worth 200 points.

In total, you can earn up to 400 points. Your grade will be based on the percentage of these points that you earn:

A: 90%-100%

B: 80%-89%

C: 70%-79%

D: 60%-69% F:

0%-59%

No other considerations will determine your semester grade.

Please remember ...

**NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED  
YOU MUST HAVE PRIOR INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL TO RE-SCHEDULE ANY  
ASSIGNMENT.**



THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN YOUR GRADE IS YOUR OWN WORK.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

*Quizzes: There will be no extra points given for work. However, students will be given opportunities to improve each week's quiz scores. Beginning Week #2, each week's module will include a Review Quiz. If you take and score higher on a Review Quiz than you scored on the previous week's quiz or quizzes, that Review Quiz score will be applied to the previous week's lower quiz or quizzes. Week #5 does not have a Review Quiz. It has a reading quiz titled "Thinking Critically about the Media." If you score higher on this quiz than either Week #4 quiz, this Media Quiz score will be applied to the previous week's lower quiz or quizzes. There is no second chance for the Final Exam.*

The course's grading policy is designed to consider improvement and minimize the impact of occasional failure. No other considerations will be used to determine your semester grade. Remember the single most important factor in your grade is your own work. Ultimately only you can change this for the better.

## **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

**YOU MUST HAVE PRIOR INSTRUCTOR APPROVAL TO RE-SCHEDULE ANY ASSIGNMENT.**

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

While we are not having class discussions this term, we still can and hopefully will communicate with each other on our weekly Online Office, through the Canvas messenger, and potentially through email. As always, I cherish our academic freedom and will enforce the college's Academic Freedom policy.

Philosophical discussions, activities, and assignments frequently involve questioning one's assumptions. The goal of this self-examination is not to persuade you to change your beliefs. Rather, the goal is for each of us to fine-tune our ability to identify, analyze, and assess arguments, no matter how controversial the topic. To promote an environment in which each of us feels comfortable doing this, it will be important to understand, appreciate, and value each other's academic freedom. Toward this end, both the instructor and students are expected to honor the following policies:

**Student Academic Freedom Policy** Every student has a right to pursue instruction objectively. This includes, but is not limited to, having instruction that distinguishes between general knowledge and the instructor's personal opinion, having instruction that acknowledges the existence of plausible opposing opinions, and being evaluated using only the standards noted in this syllabus. In addition, every student has a right to instructional methods that are conducive to his/her academic freedom. While a student's presuppositions may be questioned by the instructor or other students, and the student may be expected to question his/her presuppositions, this shall be pursued in a manner that is consistent with each student's freedom: 1. To inquire; 2. To explore difficult and controversial material within official course descriptions; 3. To access any available information relevant to the official course descriptions; 4. To express differing opinions with students, faculty, staff, and administration; 5. To demonstrate, learn, and defend critical thinking skills; 6. To demonstrate, learn, and defend intellectual honesty; 7. To learn in an environment free of intimidation and censorship; and 8. To be graded solely on considerations that are intellectually relevant to the subject matter as articulated in the course's official course description and described in the course's syllabus.

**Faculty Academic Freedom Policy** The instructor has a right to pursue instruction objectively. This includes, but is not limited to, having the freedom to state personal opinion, having the freedom to ignore or identify implausible opposing opinions, and having the freedom to evaluate using solely the standards noted in this syllabus. In addition, the instructor has a right to use instructional methods that are conducive to academic freedom. As such, the instructor not only has a right to question a student's presuppositions, allow other students to question a student's presuppositions, or expect the student to question his/her presuppositions; but, so long as the instruction is pursued in a manner that is consistent with each student's academic freedom, the instructor shall be free: 1. To inquire; 2. To present and explore difficult and controversial material that is relevant to the official course descriptions; 3. To present and explore any information that is relevant to the official course descriptions; 4. To express differences of opinion with students, faculty, staff, and administration; 5. To demonstrate, teach, and defend critical thinking skills; 6. To demonstrate, teach, and defend intellectual

honesty; and 7. To teach and interact in an environment free of intimidation and censorship.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Hopefully, this syllabus has provided a good introduction to our course's resources, expectations, and policies. A key to successfully completing the course will be understanding each. If, at any time during our semester, you have any questions about our course, including questions about our resources, expectations, and policies, don't hesitate to contact me and ask.