

College of Arts – Online Course Outline Template

Course Code: PHIL 2100	Section: 01	Semester: F12
Course Title: Critical Thinking		
Instructor: D. Dedrick		
Brief course Synopsis: <p>An argument is a set of statements (the <i>premises</i> of the argument) that is intended to provide rational support for some further statement (the <i>conclusion</i> of the argument). We use arguments to convince ourselves and others that some view or position is rationally supported. The purpose of a critical thinking class is to make you better at identifying, analyzing, criticizing, writing about, and constructing arguments. The core text for this course is <i>The Pocket Guide to Critical Thinking</i>. It provides the basic tools for recognizing, analyzing, and criticizing arguments. The other course text is <i>How To Think About Weird Things</i>. The authors of this book focus on various pseudoscientific topics in order to emphasize where people tend to go wrong when they come to believe weird things (e.g. that a flashing light is an alien UFO, that the world was created 8000 years ago, that truth is what you believe is true, that there is nothing special about science as opposed to, say, astrology). The course ranges widely over a number of important philosophical topics: truth, knowledge, scientific method, bad reasoning. It also introduces important and useful concepts in the psychological study of reasoning. Classes will be lecture-based, with plenty of opportunity for students to raise questions. The ultimate objective of the course is practical: to help you develop useful tools for reasoning in any context.</p>		