



## Lincoln University Course Syllabus

Course: English 75 - Critical Thinking  
Semester: Fall 2016 – Tuesdays, 9:00 – 11:45  
Course prerequisites/co-requisites: None  
Credit: 3 units, 45 lecture hours

Instructor: Dr. Sylvia Y. Schoemaker Rippel  
Office hours and location: T, Th -- 11:45-12:30 and by arrangement, room 308  
Office phone: 510-628-8036  
University instructor email: [sysr@lincolnuca.edu](mailto:sysr@lincolnuca.edu)  
Course-related email: [profsylvia@gmail.com](mailto:profsylvia@gmail.com)

### Course Description

#### Eng. 75 - Critical Thinking

Consideration of cognitive skills and communicative strategies for defining, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information. Course includes structural and operational approaches to task/mission analysis, decision-making, change forecasting, adaptation, and evaluation. System approach to analysis and solution of complex problems. Conceptual issues in problem definition, goal determination and measurement of effectiveness. (3 units)

### Learning Objectives

Skills emphasized include ability to examine objectively various sides of issues and to effectively use the procedures involved in systematic problem solving. Additional skills targeted include increased ability to develop and apply academic and professional communication skills, including improved ability to interact appropriately with challenging materials at an increased level of communicative competence.

### Instructional Materials and References

#### Required Texts:

Mayfield, M. (2014). *Thinking for yourself*. (9th Ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning: Wadsworth. (TFY) ISBN 978-1133311188

Vaughn, L. (2015). *The power of critical thinking: Effective reasoning about ordinary and extraordinary claims* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. (TPCT) ISBN 9780199385423

## **Companion Sites**

[Thinking for Yourself Site](#)

[The Power of Critical Thinking](#)

## **Instructional Methods**

The course sessions will include lectures, A/V-augmented presentations (text-based and other topically related slides and relevant audio/video/web resources), written and oral classroom exercises applying course concepts, small group and classroom discussions, student presentations of individual and group assignments based on course units, with emphasis on engaging students in learning by doing.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to consistently attend class punctually and fully (arriving on time and leaving the classroom only at the scheduled break and end times). Successful students participate in individual and group work in a productive manner, prepare and perform well on tests, complete assignments according to schedule and at a level appropriate to university rubrics, and take personal responsibility for meeting the objectives of the course.

## **Topical Outline**

Topics covered include observation skills, appropriate language skills and encoding strategies, differentiating among fact, inference, judgment, recognizing fallacies of reasoning and evaluation, understanding viewpoint, analyzing character, logic, and emotion in persuasion.

## **Homework Assignments**

For each of the units (as well as additional assignments given in class), students will do the following by the date listed on the schedule below:

**Read** assigned materials with care and understanding.

**Respond** to the main points of each chapter assigned by listing three or four key questions with answers (no more than two or three sentences each).

**Reflect** on the unit in writing (a brief paragraph or two).

**Email** your unit and chapter assignments to me at [profsylvia@gmail.com](mailto:profsylvia@gmail.com), before the date on the schedule.

For midterm and final review assignments, students will present ePortfolios/PPTs adapted from the weekly assignments as individual or team projects.

## SCHEDULE

Session	Date	Unit	HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS Thinking for Yourself (TFY) The Power of Critical Thinking (TPCT)
1	23-Aug	Introduction Where Do You Stand?	TPCT Ch. 1: The Power of Critical Thinking
2	30-Aug	Observation	TFY C1, Observation Skills: What's Out There? TPCT Ch. 2: Obstacles to Critical Thinking
3	6-Sep	Language and Thought	TFY C2, Word Precision: How Do I Describe It?
4	13-Sep	Facts	TFY C3 Facts: What's Real?
5	20-Sep	Inferences	TFY C4, Inferences: What Follows? TPCT Ch. 9: Inference to the Best Explanation
6	27-Sep	Assumptions	TFY C5, Assumptions: What's Taken for Granted? TPCT Ch. 4: Reasons for Belief and Doubt TPCT Ch. 5: Fallacies and Persuaders
7	4-Oct	Opinions	TFY C6. Opinions: What's Believed? TPCT Ch. 11: Critical Thinking in Morality and Law Review; ePortfolio 1
8	11-Oct	Midterm	
9	18-Oct	Points of View	TFY C7, Viewpoints: What's the Filter?
10	25-Oct	Argument	TFY C8, Argument: What's a Good Argument?
11	1-Nov	Fallacies	TFY C9, Fallacies: What's a Faulty Argument?
12	8-Nov	Induction	TFY C10, Inductive Reasoning: How do I Reason from Evidence?

13	15-Nov	Inductive Fallacies Review E-Portfolio/Ppt Presentations	TFY C11, Inductive Fallacies: How Can Inductive Reasoning Go Wrong?
--	23-Nov	Fall Recess (November 22-26)	
14	29-Nov	Review E-Portfolio/Ppt Presentations	TFY C12, Deductive Reasoning: How Do I Reason from Premises?
15	6-Dec	Final	

### Assessment Criteria & Method of Evaluating Students

Students will demonstrate their level of achievement through appropriate and accurate application of critical thinking theory, including problem-solving, analysis, and decision-making criteria in approaching and solving text, classroom, and real-world exercises, individually and as group participants.

Items	Points
Exercises/ Daily Assignments, Oral and Written	20
Midterm	25
E-Portfolio I, II	10
Presentation of Assignments	10
Final Exam	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Points	Grade
100-95	A
94-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-65	D+
64-60	D
59 or less	F

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Revisions to the schedule will be announced in class as needed. Class attendance is required. Required textbooks should be obtained as soon as possible and brought to class for each session. Class participation is encouraged for enhanced learning through applied content, group interactions, and individual and small group presentations. Plagiarized content is strictly prohibited: Researched materials must be documented using a consistent style for both in-text and end-text citations of sources using the published standards of the most recent subject-appropriate style guide, such as APA (social sciences) or MLA (humanities), for example. Missed exams and assignments require certified excuses (signed documentation by an appropriate medical or other official representative). With documentation, a makeup exam may be scheduled. Electronics are not allowed during exams. Cell phones should not be active during class sessions.

Revised 8/16