COURSE SYLLABUS

Thinking Critically, Writing Clearly Course (Self-Paced)

Develop your critical thinking skills to enhance your writing skills so that the reader can understand your intended message. Critically read information so you can analyze and understand the message of the writer.

Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/thinking-critically-writing-clearly



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Course Outline

Lesson 1: Critical Thinking and You

- Define critical thinking and describe what makes someone a critical thinker.
- Examine why critical thinking matters to effective professional writing.
- Compare the similarities and differences between academic and professional writing.
- Learn to navigate your grammar handbook as a working reference.

Lesson 2: Critical Reading

- Read actively to uncover an author's main idea and assumptions.
- Summarize and paraphrase an argument accurately.
- Apply correct citation practices and avoid plagiarism.

Lesson 3: Arguments

- Identify the components of a written argument.
- Recognize rhetorical appeals and steer clear of rationalization.
- Anticipate and address your readers' objections.

Lesson 4: Analyzing Arguments

- Apply your critical lens to arguments with confidence.
- Analyze arguments in an unbiased, thoughtful way.
- Identify the finer points of an argument, including thesis, tone, definitions, and assumptions.

Lesson 5: The Writing Process

- Explain the stages of the writing process.
- Overcome writer's block and move from a blank page to a draft.
- Use freewriting and planning strategies to generate ideas.

Lesson 6: The Writing Process, Revisited

- Plan, draft, and edit your own work.
- Choose a topic, find material, and evaluate sources.
- Write for your audience, craft strong introductions and conclusions, and revise for organization.

Lesson 7: Grammar Review

- Use your grammar handbook with ease.
- Correct common errors in subject and verb agreement, that versus which, comma placement, and semicolon use.

Lesson 8: Style Review

- Identify the elements of style in effective writing.
- Avoid mixed metaphors, biased language, clichés, and unnecessary abstraction.
- Explain how regular reading strengthens your writing and thinking.

Lesson 9: Fallacies

- Apply the reasonable person test to evaluate reasoning.
- Recognize common logical fallacies.
- Avoid fallacious arguments in your own writing.

Lesson 10: Final Thoughts

- Integrate critical thinking, reading, and writing into a capstone assignment.
- Assess your strengths and weaknesses as a writer.
- Build a plan to keep improving on your own.