

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 7: Critical Thinking, Section 3, Fall 2010

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Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-10:15
Classroom:	Sweeney Hall 413
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area A3

Course Description

Welcome to English 7! This is a course that will develop your critical thinking skills, and it fulfills the Area A3 requirement of Core General Education. In order to be enrolled in this class, you must have successfully completed English 1A (or equivalent), so please be sure that you have met this prerequisite.

In this class, we will explore relevant issues in our society, and you will hone your ability to think critically about these topics. We will focus on logical reasoning, and I will challenge you to evaluate and perhaps reconsider previously held opinions. The goal of this course is to introduce you to the mechanics of rational analysis—recognizing, analyzing, evaluating, and engaging in effective reasoning—and to give you the opportunity to practice this analysis on everyday as well as academic and professional topics. In addition to evaluating and analyzing the validity of arguments and claims, you will craft your own arguments that will be based on sound reasoning and free of logical fallacies.

We will read and write on a daily basis. The course requirements include midterm and final examinations, one formal essay, two case analysis arguments, an oral argument, and various readings, exercises, quizzes, and in-class work. I expect you to come to class everyday with all of the assigned work completed. Also remember that this is an English course, so all writing will be graded based on quality of content, clarity in written communication, *and* grammatical correctness. I realize the difficulty of this course; always remember that I am your best resource. I am here to help you learn, and I hope you come away from this course

with an increased appreciation for critical thinking skills and their importance in our modern society.

Learning Objectives

Students will demonstrate, orally and in writing, proficiency in the course goals. Development of the following competencies will result in dispositions or habits of intellectual autonomy, appreciation of different worldviews, courage and perseverance in inquiry, and commitment to employ analytical reasoning. Students should be able to:

- **Learning Objective 1:** Distinguish between reasoning (e.g., explanation, argument) and other types of discourse (e.g., description, assertion).
- **Learning Objective 2:** Identify, analyze, and evaluate different types of reasoning.
- **Learning Objective 3:** Find and state crucial unstated assumptions in reasoning.
- **Learning Objective 4:** Evaluate factual claims or statements used in reasoning, and evaluate the sources of evidence for such claims.
- **Learning Objective 5:** Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism.
- **Learning Objective 6:** Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.
- **Learning Objective 7:** Locate, retrieve, organize, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information of relevance to the subject matter of the course in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Learning Objective 8:** Reflect on past successes, failures, and alternative strategies.

The following Content Objectives are specific to GE Area A3:

- Students will analyze, evaluate, and construct their own arguments or position papers about issues of diversity such as gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
- Reasoning about other issues appropriate to the subject matter of the course shall also be presented, analyzed, evaluated, and constructed.
- All critical thinking classes should teach formal and informal methods for determining the validity of deductive reasoning and the strength of inductive reasoning, including a consideration of common fallacies in inductive and deductive reasoning.
- Courses shall require the use of qualitative reasoning skills in oral and written assignments. Substantial writing assignments are to be integrated with critical thinking instruction. Writing will lead to the production of argumentative essays, with a minimum of 3000 words required. Students shall receive frequent evaluations from the instructor. Evaluative comments must be substantive, addressing the quality and form of writing.

Required Texts and Materials

- Moore, Brooke Noel and Parker, Richard. *Critical Thinking*, 9th Edition
- Hager, Michelle. *English 7 Course Reader* (to be purchased at The Maple Press)

- *Recommended:* A college-level dictionary
- *Recommended:* A writing handbook, such as the one that you used for English 1A and/or 1B (such as *The DK Handbook*, *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, etc.)

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Reading:

In English 7, there will be reading assigned on a daily basis. This material will form the basis for our study of critical thinking, so it is crucial that you complete every reading assignment by the beginning of each class period. Essay assignments, quizzes, in-class writings, and material found on the midterm and final examinations will relate to the assigned reading, so it will be difficult to excel in this course if you neglect to complete the reading.

Writing:

There is one formal required essay for this course, and it constitutes 15% of your course grade. You will also be responsible for two formal case analysis arguments (worth 10% each). Out-of-class writings must be typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point, Times New Roman font. They must be in accordance with MLA citation guidelines (we will have a class discussion on the MLA format; additional information can be found in your handbook and in the *English 7 Course Reader*). Major assignments will have specified minimum page requirements that will be listed on the prompt sheets; if you do not meet the minimum page specifications, your grade will be lowered accordingly. Writing assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on their due dates, and all major out-of-class writing must also be uploaded to the following website: <http://www.turnitin.com>. This website automatically checks your compositions for plagiarism; please remember to register as soon as possible. ***I will not accept major writing assignments until they are submitted to the Turn It In website. Our class ID is "3330620 ," and the password is "thinking."***

Midterm & Final Examinations:

There will be one midterm examination (worth 15% of your course grade) and a comprehensive final examination (worth 20% of your grade). The midterm will take place during normal class time, and the final exam will be held at the scheduled time during final examination week. Both exams will cover the major concepts that we review throughout the semester.

Oral Argument & Outline:

In addition to the brief, informal presentations and debates that you will participate in throughout the semester, you are also responsible for a formal oral argument that you will present to the class. Each student will have a unique topic, and the presentation will show the same deep level of critical thinking that you will be required to demonstrate in your written work. Along with the oral presentation, you will also submit a formal outline that details your argument. Further details will be provided as the semester progresses.

Class Work, Homework, and Participation:

We will complete daily work in class that goes toward your participation grade; you will not be able to complete these assignments if you do not come to class. I expect you to attend class on a daily basis and come on time. ***Absences and/or tardiness will affect your grade.*** In addition, class participation does not simply mean that you are physically present in class. You must have all class materials, contribute to discussions, actively listen to your peers, and take notes as necessary. ***Turn off cell phones or put them on silent mode during the class period; you will lose all participation points for the day if I see your cell phone (this especially includes under the desk/table text messaging—I do see you!).***

In addition to daily oral participation, quizzes, class activities, and short presentations will also factor into this portion of your course grade. Occasionally, I will give pop quizzes, so be sure to keep up with the assigned work. Class work, various homework assignments, and in-class participation count for 15% of your course grade.

Late Policy:

I am a prompt person, so I expect the same from you. While late assignments will be accepted up to one week after the due date, they will be graded down significantly. ***For each calendar day that your assignment is late, it will be graded down one full letter grade.*** If the work is turned in after the class period on the due date, it will be graded down half a letter grade. Turn in all late work to the English Department Office (FO 102), and have it time-stamped by the office secretary. ***After one week, I will no longer accept the assignment.*** If extenuating circumstances apply, you must contact me *before* the due date in order to request an extension or make necessary accommodations. Turn in your work on time!

Grading Breakdown:

Formal Essay	15%
Case Analysis Arguments (2 @ 10% each)	20%
Final Exam	20%
Midterm Exam	15%
Oral Argument & Formal Outline	15%
Class Work, Homework, & Participation	15%

University Policies

Departmental Grading Policy

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A, B, C, No Credit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students’ grade point averages.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

Essays in this class will be graded according to the following SJSU academic standards for assessment:

- The “**A**” essay will be well-organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and to construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free from grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.
- The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.
- The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.
- The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or too short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer’s ability to communicate.
- The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.htm>. The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one’s own (without giving appropriate credit), regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another’s work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one’s own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the

Academic Integrity Policy. All instances of violating the Academic Integrity Policy will be reported to the Dean of Student Services.

Add/Drop Policy

For the fall 2010 semester, Tuesday, September 7th is the last day to drop courses without an entry on your permanent academic record. Tuesday, September 14th is the last day to add courses and register late. Students may petition to Late Drop only for *serious and compelling* reasons after the drop deadline. Reasons must be documented. Conditions and circumstances defined as “serious and compelling” are considered beyond the student's control. Legitimate documentation **must** be provided.

Campus Policy on Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability. The DRC website is <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu>.

The Writing Center

The San José State University Writing Center is an on-campus facility that provides tutoring for SJSU students of all abilities. The Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126, and you can refer to the Writing Center's website, <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>, in order to make a tutoring appointment or to review informational handouts/worksheets.

Office Hours

I hope all of you will utilize my office hours at some point in the semester. I am here to help you in any way that I can. Whether you need individual tutoring, want to talk about an assigned reading or essay, or have grade concerns, please stop by and visit.

English 7, Fall 2010, Course Schedule

Reading assignments must be *completed* by the day they are listed! **ALWAYS bring the course reader and textbook to class.**

All of the reading assignments and exercises meet the requirements for Learning Objectives 1-8

LO = Learning Objective; CT = *Critical Thinking*, 9th Edition; CR = *Course Reader*

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Thursday, August 26 th	Introductions and syllabus review
Tuesday, August 31 st	“What Is Critical Thinking?” Discussion In-Class Writing and Discussion: “Bonnie and Clyde” (CT 482-483)
Thursday, September 2 nd	Chapter 1, “Critical Thinking Basics” (CT 1-22) <i>Exercises 1-3 (CT 24-25) and 1-11 (CT 37) DUE</i>
Tuesday, September 7 th	Plato, “Crito” (CR 13-22) In-Class Writing and Discussion: “Crito” Questions
Thursday, September 9 th	<i>Case Analysis Argument #1 (Edgar Allan Poe’s Death) Assigned</i> “MLA Guidelines with 2009 Update” (CR 51-53) MLA Review and Plagiarism Discussion
Tuesday, September 14 th	Chapter 2, “Two Kinds of Reasoning” (CT 41-55) <i>Exercises 2-3 (CT 56) and 2-5 (CT 57) DUE</i>
Thursday, September 16 th	<i>Formal Essay Assigned</i> Chapter 3, “Clear Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Clear Writing” (CT 69-92)
Tuesday, September 21 st	Chapter 4, “Credibility” (CT 105-135) <i>Exercise 4-8 (CT 139) DUE</i> <i>Two Advertisements DUE</i>
Thursday, September 23 rd	Chapter 5, “Persuasion Through Rhetoric” (CT 147-169) <i>Exercises 5-1 (CT 169-172) DUE</i>
Tuesday, September 28 th	<i>Case Analysis Argument #1 (Edgar Allan Poe’s Death) DUE (LO 1-8; 800 words)</i> Informal Argument Presentations
Thursday, September 30 th	Chapter 6, “More Rhetorical Devices” (CT 183-200) <i>Exercise 6-2 (CT 201-202) DUE</i>

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Tuesday, October 5 th	Chapter 7, “More Fallacies” (CT 211-229) <i>Exercise 7-2 (CT 229-230) DUE</i> <i>Two Newspaper/Magazine/Internet Article Fallacies DUE</i>
Thursday, October 7 th	Chapter 8, “Deductive Arguments I” (CT 254-285) <i>Exercises 8-1 (CT 262) and 8-9 (CT 272) DUE</i> <i>Midterm Review</i>
Tuesday, October 12 th	<i>Formal Essay DUE (LO 1-8; 1500 words)</i> Brief Chapter 9 Review In-Class (No reading homework) Midterm Review/Questions
Thursday, October 14 th	<i>Midterm Exam (LO 1-8)</i>
Tuesday, October 19 th	No Class—Class Cancelled
Thursday, October 21 st	<i>Case Analysis Argument #2 (Identity of Jack the Ripper) Assigned</i> Chapter 10, “Three Kinds of Inductive Arguments” (CT 346-372) <i>Exercises 10-1 (CT 373) DUE</i>
Tuesday, October 26 th	Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. “A Case of Identity” (CR 24-36) In-Class Sherlock Holmes Group Work
Thursday, October 28 th	Chapter 11, “Causal Explanation” (CT 385-413) Koretz, Gene. “Are Women Less Competitive?” (CT 434) <i>Exercise 11-2 (CT 414-415) DUE</i> <i>Brief Writing Exercise #2 (CT 435) DUE</i>
Tuesday, November 2 nd	Chapter 12, “Moral, Legal, and Aesthetic Reasoning” (CT 436-468) <i>Exercises 12-4 (CT 451) and 12-7 (CT 453) DUE</i>
Thursday, November 4 th	<i>Oral Argument Assigned</i> In-Class Discussion: Political Rhetoric Obama, Barack. “The American Promise” (CR 42-50) Bush, George W. “Address to the Joint Session of Congress Following 9/11 Attacks” (CR 37-41)
Tuesday, November 9 th	<i>Case Analysis Argument #2 (Identity of Jack the Ripper) DUE (LO 1-8; 800 words)</i> “How Can School Prayer Possibly Hurt? Here’s How” (CT 496-497) “We Need More Prayer” (CT 497-498)

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Thursday, November 11 th	No Class—Veteran’s Day Holiday
Tuesday, November 16 th	“Equal Treatment Is Real Issue—Not Marriage” (CT 484-485) “Gay Marriage Is ‘Unnatural’” (CT 485-486)
Thursday, November 18 th	“Buying Notes Makes Sense at Lost-in-Crowd Campuses” (CT 491-492) “Buying or Selling Notes Is Wrong” (CT 492-493) <i>Brief Website Analysis DUE</i>
Tuesday, November 23 rd	“Next, Comprehensive Reform of Gun Laws” (CT 493) “Gun Laws Are No Answer” (CT 494)
Thursday, November 25 th	No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday
Tuesday, November 30 th	<i>Oral Arguments (LO 1-8)</i>
Thursday, December 2 nd	<i>Oral Arguments (LO 1-8)</i>
Tuesday, December 7 th	<i>Oral Arguments (LO 1-8)</i>
Thursday, December 9 th	<i>Final Exam Review</i> <i>In-Class Writing: “Letter to the Instructor”</i> <i>Finish Oral Arguments (LO 1-8)</i>
Monday, December 13 th	<i>FINAL EXAM, 7:15-9:30AM!! (LO 1-8)</i>