

# Northern Marianas College

## CURRICULUM ACTION REQUEST

**Effective Semester / Session:** Fall 2020

**Type of Action:**

- New
- Modification
- Move to Inactive (Stop Out)
- Cancellation

**Course Alpha and Number:** BE120

**Course Title:** Critical Thinking

**Reason for initiating, revising, or canceling:**

BE 120 is being created to provide students with interdisciplinary skills and multiple strategies for distinguishing facts from opinions, fake news from evidence-based conclusions, and biases from objective reasoning. Although critical thinking skills are emphasized in such classes as EN101, EN202, and CO210, devoting a course specifically to critical thinking allows for more in-depth analysis of this crucial skill. This course is a requirement for the Criminal Justice program.

Jim Kline	<i>James Kline</i>	4/6/2021
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Proposer		Date
Thomas Sharts	<i>Thomas Sharts</i>	4/6/2021
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Department Chair		Date
Adam Walsh	<i>Adam Walsh</i>	04.02.21
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Language & Format Review Specialist		Date
Ajani Burrell	<i>Ajani Burrell</i>	4.05.2021
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Academic Council Chair		Date
Charlotte Cepeda	<i>Charlotte Cepeda</i>	4/6/2021
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Dean of Learning & Student Success		Date

**1. Department**

Social Sciences and Fine Arts

**2. Purpose**

Critical thinking is becoming even more a crucial skill in the modern world that demands critical analysis and understanding of the causes and solutions about social issues impacting a student's beliefs and world view. It is paramount students learn skills that will help them navigate through the confusion and contradictory attitudes that affect clear understanding of the underlying factors affecting world events and personal beliefs.

**3. Description**

**A. Required/Recommended Textbook(s) and Related Materials**

Required:

Judith Boss, *Think: Critical Thinking and Logic Skills for Everyday Life*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw Hill (2020).

Recommended:

N/A

**B. Contact Hours**

1. **Lecture:** 3 per week / 45 per semester
2. **Lab:** None
3. **Other:** None

**C. Credits**

1. **Number:** 3
2. **Type:** Regular Degree Credits

**D. Catalogue Course Description**

This course aims at developing basic analytic skills and understanding of the principles and concepts involved in critical thinking in order for students to better understand their own attitudes, attitudes of others, and issues impacting their lives, their community, and the world. The course teaches students skills they need in order to think more clearly about solving problems and dealing with the problems of their rapidly changing world. Topics covered include: the characteristics of a critical thinker, how emotions affect reasoning, identifying biases and fallacies, constructing effective arguments, and the ethics and moral consequences of decision-making. Prerequisites: English Placement Level: EN095. Math Placement Level: None (Offered Fall/Spring).

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## **E. Degree or Certificate Requirements Met by Course**

This course fulfills the social science General Education requirement for the A.A. degree in Liberal Arts. It is also a requirement for the A.A.S. and B.S. degrees in Criminal Justice.

## **F. Course Activities and Design**

Course activities include: lectures, discussions, quizzes, student presentations, short essay and formal essay assignments.

## **4. Course Prerequisite(s); Concurrent Course Enrollment**

Prerequisites: None

Concurrent Course Enrollment: None

## **Required English/Mathematics Proficiency Level(s):**

English Placement Level: EN095

Mathematics Placement Level: None

## **5. Estimated Cost of Course; Instructional Resources Needed**

Cost to the Student: Tuition for a 3-credit course and cost of the textbook.

Cost to NMC: Instructor's salary.

Instructional resources needed for his course include: standard classroom materials including projector, screen, and whiteboard.

## **6. Method of Evaluation**

Student learning is evaluated on the basis of class participation, homework assignments, and periodic exams. NMC's grading and attendance policies will be followed.

## **7. Course Outline**

This is a topical outline and does not necessarily indicate the sequence in which the material will be presented.

- 1.0 Introduction to Critical Thinking
  - 1.1 Characteristics of a good critical thinker
  - 1.2 Critical thinking and self-development
  - 1.3 Barriers to effective critical thinking
  
- 2.0 Emotions and their Effects on Critical Thinking
  - 2.1 Reasoning and emotions
  
- 3.0 Communication Through Verbal and Nonverbal Language
  - 3.1 Communication styles
  - 3.2 Manipulation of language to persuade and deceive
  
- 4.0 Effective and Ineffective Evidence
  - 4.1 Evaluating evidence
  - 4.2 Types of evidence
  - 4.3 Avoiding bias
  
- 5.0 Fallacies and Errors in Thinking
  - 5.1 Various types of fallacies
  - 5.2 Strategies for avoiding fallacies
  
- 6.0 Analyzing and Constructing Effective Arguments
  - 6.1 Differences between opinions and arguments
  - 6.2 Types of arguments
  
- 7.0 Inductive and Deductive Arguments
  - 7.1 Analogies and hypothetical syllogisms
  - 7.2 Understanding cause and effect
  
- 8.0 Critical Thinking, Morality, and Ethics
  - 8.1 Stages of moral reasoning
  - 8.2 Effective moral arguments
  
- 9.0 Critical Thinking and Consumer Culture
  - 9.1 Marketing, advertising, and consumer culture
  
- 10.0 Critical Thinking and Mass Media
  - 10.1 Distinguishing between fake news and evidence-based news reporting
  - 10.2 Impact of the internet and social media on critical thinking
  - 10.3 Becoming media literate

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## 11.0 Critical Thinking and Science

11.1 The scientific method

11.2 Research methodology and scientific experiments

## 12.0 Critical Thinking, Law, and Politics

12.1 Social contract theory and the role of government

12.2 International law

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**8. Instructional Goals**

The course will introduce students to:

- 1.0 The ability to identify common barriers to effective critical thought;
- 2.0 The impact of emotions on reasoning;
- 3.0 Verbal and nonverbal communication strategies;
- 4.0 What constitutes quality evidence;
- 5.0 Fallacies in arguments;
- 6.0 Ethics and moral decision making;
- 7.0 The influence of social media on effective reasoning;
- 8.0 How science incorporates critical thinking in designing experiments; and
- 9.0 The role of critical thinking in evaluating political and governmental policies.

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## 9. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1.0 Apply critical thinking skills to solve everyday problems;
- 2.0 Analyze effective and faulty logic in arguments;
- 3.0 Create effective arguments based on quality evidence;
- 4.0 Determine the impact of social media on critical thinking;
- 5.0 Distinguish between fake news and evidence-based news;
- 6.0 Analyze the impact of morality and ethics on decision making;
- 7.0 Determine the characteristics of a well-designed scientific experiment; and
- 8.0 Evaluate the logic behind legal and political decision-making policies.

## 10. Assessment Measures of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment of student learning may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1.0 Informal and Formal Writing Assignments;
- 2.0 Written and Oral Presentations;
- 3.0 Quizzes; and
- 4.0 Final Class Project.

