

Honors Colloquy: Creative and Critical Thinking

Course Syllabus

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Background

The course emphasizes the philosophy, values, and practices associated with the Delta College Honors Program. In the Program, students are encouraged to:

- Further self-knowledge
- Grow intellectually
- Exchange ideas freely
- Develop a sense of community with other Honors students
- Connect learning in one discipline with others, i.e. English to History, Biology to Government, etc.

Course Objectives

If you participate conscientiously in the course, you will very likely learn:

1. To think more creatively and critically.
2. To become more conscious of, and thus more able to direct, your thinking process.
3. To communicate your thinking clearly in speaking and writing.
4. To listen better.
5. To read and analyze with more awareness.
6. To generate creative thought.

Course Content

The course will usually consist of reading a text that emphasizes thinking, such as Vincent Ryan Ruggiero’s The Art of Thinking, and applying principles of creative/critical thinking to reading and responding to written materials such as essays, poems, memoirs, short stories, and articles. Films and other media may also be used. Sometimes the course will be thematic—that is, all the materials will focus on a particular concept or idea which will be explored in depth.

Writing Assignments

Writing is essential to thinking well, because writing directs thought to various objectives. You will write regularly for the course, both formally and informally, and for a variety of audiences—yourself, fellow classmates, the teacher, and possibly audiences beyond the classroom (i.e. letters to the editor, work-related writing, etc.).

Please save and date all your writing, including class notes, drafts, revisions, etc. We will often work with the process of how writing develops thinking, and vice versa. Save this writing in a looseleaf notebook.

Evaluation:

Your grade will be based on the following criteria.

Writing. When I grade, I look at your ability to direct your creative and critical thinking in writing. I look for the following:

- a. Progress. Does your notebook get better as it goes along? Are the last entries more creative and critical than the first? Allowing for off days and stops and starts, all of which are part of the creative process, is there gradual improvement?
- b. Consistency. Do you keep up the notebook steadily? Are there sufficient weekly entries and few large gaps?
- c. Thoroughness. Some entries will be short, but in general do you cover subjects as thoroughly as necessary?
- d. Variety. Is there a range of creative and critical thought in your notebook? Do you, at least sometimes, challenge yourself in your writing in terms of subject matter and new approaches to the material?

Class Contributions. I expect to see evidence of your participation in class, either through talking or active listening. You will frequently be asked to cooperate with fellow students on writing and other tasks. We strive for an atmosphere in which people can speak their thoughts freely, and perhaps disagree, but maintain a level of harmony.

Attendance Usually the class is taught in 2 or 3-hour blocks, so attendance is essential. If you must miss class, here are some guidelines:

--If you know ahead of time you will be absent, call 989-686-9159 (English Division). Leave a message for Skip Renker.

--If you miss a class, contact a classmate for the assignment (you'll receive everyone's email and phone numbers). If you have any questions after getting the assignment, contact me.

--If you miss 2 classes in a row without contacting me, I assume you have stopped attending and I withdraw you from the class. If you miss 3 classes altogether, I may request that you withdraw. I'm not unreasonable, however, and I trust you to speak with me about attendance difficulties and tell me what the problem is.

--If you withdraw on your own, be sure to go through the drop process with Delta, or you could lose money and receive an automatic E.

Further Credit

The structure of the course usually allows for considerable latitude, so feel free to approach me about getting credit for such things as: creative writing projects; responses to media, such as radio shows or movies; critical thinking about current events; etc. Think creatively about adapting the course at least partially to your learning needs.