



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	PSYC
Course Number:	103H
Descriptive Title:	Honors Critical Thinking and Psychology
Division:	Behavioral and Social Sciences
Department:	Psychology and Human Development
Course Disciplines:	Psychology
Catalog Description:	This honors course, intended for students in the Honors Transfer Program, focuses on the development of critical thinking skills related to psychology. In addition to learning basic skills of logic, students will also learn about the logic of the scientific method and the common errors of human cognition that impede critical thinking. Emphasis is placed on the application of critical thinking skills to writing effective arguments, analyzing the writings of others, and understanding contemporary controversies in psychology. Note: Students may take either Psychology 103 or Psychology 103H. Duplicate credit will not be awarded.
Prerequisite:	English C1000 or English C1000H with a minimum grade of C
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	12/18/2017
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	fall 2018

General Education: ECC	Area 4B - Language and Rationality: Communication and Analytical Thinking
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	Area A3 - English Language Communication and Critical Thinking: Critical Thinking
Term:	
Other:	
IGETC:	Area 1B - Critical Thinking and Composition
Term:	
Other:	
CalGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Logic of the Scientific Method On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to describe the hallmark characteristics of the scientific method and contrast it with other forms of inquiry. SLO #2 Fundamental Principles On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to differentiate and compare fundamental critical thinking concepts (e.g., premises, conclusions, and qualifiers; inductive versus deductive, valid versus sound arguments). SLO #3 Everyday Application On examination (e.g., m/c, T/F, fill-in, matching, essay), written essay, research paper, and/or oral presentation, students will be able to apply to apply principles of critical thinking (e.g., logical fallacies, rhetorical devices) in their daily decision-making (product purchase, school selection, medical treatment).
Course Objectives:	1. Differentiate between the characteristics of critical and usual thinking. 2. Identify and analyze the structure and components of arguments.

	3. Compose and evaluate arguments, applying critical thinking skills. 4. Differentiate between deductive and inductive arguments, and evaluate various forms of each. 5. Describe the components of credibility and assess the credibility of sources and claims. 6. Recognize logical fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and distinguish between fallacious, non-argumentative, and argumentative reasoning in persuasion. 7. Describe the hallmark characteristics of the scientific method and contrast it with other forms of inquiry. 8. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs in psychology. 9. Evaluate issues of causal inference by differentiating between correlation and causation. 10. Analyze the influence of language ambiguity, vagueness, and other linguistic factors on reasoning. 11. Identify characteristics of human cognition that interfere with critical thinking. 12. Use critical thinking skills to assess controversial issues in psychology. 13. Conduct scholarly research independently to enrich multiple reading and writing tasks.
Major Topics:	I. Introduction (4 hours, lecture) A. Definitions of Critical and Usual Thinking B. Common Misconceptions About Psychology C. The Importance of Thinking Critically About Psychology

II. Arguments (7 hours, lecture)

A. Components of Arguments

1. Premises and Conclusions
2. Assumptions and Qualifiers

B. Diagramming Arguments

C. Analyzing Arguments

D. Composing Arguments

III. Inductive and Deductive Reasoning (6 hours, lecture)

A. Inductive Reasoning

1. Characteristics of Inductive Arguments
2. Strong Versus Weak Inductive Arguments

B. Deductive Reasoning

1. Characteristics of Deductive Arguments
2. Valid and Sound Deductive Arguments

IV. Credibility (5 hours, lecture)

A. Assessing the Content of a Claim

B. Assessing the Source of a Claim

C. Credibility and the News Media

D. Credibility and Advertising

V. Persuasion (7 hours, lecture)

A. Fallacies

B. Other Rhetorical Devices

C. The Impact of Fallacies and Other Rhetorical Devices on Reasoning

D. Fallacious, Non-Argumentative, and Argumentative Reasoning

VI. Scientific Reasoning (7 hours, lecture)

A. The Logic of the Scientific Method

	B. Research Designs 1. Case Studies 2. Correlational Designs 3. Experiments C. Common Challenges of Scientific Reasoning 1. Differentiating Correlation and Causation 2. Proper Use of Case Study Information 3. Understanding Probability 4. Identifying Pseudoscience VII. Thought and Language (5 hours, lecture) A. Ambiguity B. Vagueness C. Emotional Tone D. Undefined Terms E. Other Linguistic Factors VIII. Characteristics of Cognition that Impact Critical Thinking (6 hours, lecture) A. Memory Errors B. Perceptual Errors C. Heuristics IX. Critical Thinking and Controversial Issues in Psychology (7 hours, lecture) A. Parapsychology B. Pseudoscience and Self Help C. Psychology and the Law D. Psychology and Politics E. Other Controversial Issues
Total Lecture Hours:	54

Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 - all courses; choose one):	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	Read the five passages about purported paranormal phenomena on pages 432-434 of your textbook. For each of the five passages, address the following questions. Each passage should be addressed in a minimum of three typed pages. 1. What is the phenomenon being explained? 2. What theories - stated or implied - are used to explain the phenomenon 3. Which theory seems the most plausible and why? (Base your judgments on the strength of the evidence cited in the passage as well as any background knowledge you might have on the subject. Be sure to use the five criteria of adequacy when addressing plausibility.) 4. What kind of evidence would convince you to change your mind about your preferred theory?
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Review the two opposing argumentative essays on the topic of gay marriage. In a seven-page typed paper (minimum), evaluate each of the arguments presented by applying the five steps discussed in class. In addition, for each essay, describe other types of persuasive techniques used by each author (e.g., fallacies, rhetorical devices, psychological techniques). Finally, compare the two essays with regard to the persuasive power of each.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	Think back over today and yesterday. In a seven-page typed paper (minimum), describe a problem that you faced or a decision which you considered. Who was involved, and what was the issue? Describe how you thought about the problem or decision - not so much what you decided or what solution you picked, but the process you used. Examine the decision in detail: were you open-minded about various options, systematic in your approach, courageous enough to ask yourself tough questions, bold enough to follow the reasons and evidence wherever they led, inquisitive and eager to learn more before making a judgment. nuanced enough to see shades of gray rather than only stark black and white? Did you check your interpretations and analyses? Did you draw your inferences carefully? Were you as objective and fair-minded as you might have been? Finally, evaluate the overall quality of the critical thinking you demonstrated, including the weaknesses you hope to correct next time you are faced with this particular problem or decision.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Completion, Essay Exams, Matching Items, Multiple Choice, Term or Other Papers, True/False, Written Homework

Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Brooke Noel Moore, Richard Parker. Critical Thinking. McGraw Hill, 2024. Lewis Vaughn, Theodore Schick. How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age. McGraw Hill, 2023.
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	Theodore Schick, Lewis Vaughn, How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age, McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2019. (Discipline Standard) Keith Stanovich, How to Think Straight About Psychology, Pearson, 2012. (Discipline Standard) Edwin Gantt, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Psychological Issues, McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2017. (Discipline Standard)
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	Prerequisite
Category:	communication or computation skill
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	English C1000 English C1000H
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	The student should be able to locate and correct grammatical errors (e.g., sentence fragments, misused commas, incorrect pronoun case, subject-verb disagreement, and incorrect tense) in the own essays or in other written works. ENGL C1000 - Recognize and revise sentence-level grammar and usage errors. ENGL C1000H - Recognize and revise sentence-level grammar and usage errors. The student should be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills in the reading of essays, fiction, and nonfiction. These skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to locate key components in written materials (e.g., the thesis statement, the central theme), summarize and paraphrase written material, evaluate support and evidence, and compare and contrast two written works or different portions of one written work. ENGL C1000 - Read and apply critical-thinking skills to numerous published articles and to college-level, book-length works for the purpose of writing and discussion.

	ENGL C1000 - Demonstrate ability to locate and utilize a variety of academic databases, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly websites. ENGL C1000H - Read and apply critical-thinking skills to numerous published articles and to college-level, book-length works for the purpose of writing and discussion. ENGL C1000H - Demonstrate ability to locate and utilize a variety of academic databases, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly websites. The student should be able to compose essays and research papers. Composition includes, but is not limited to, composing thesis and topic statements, composing paragraphs, organizing compositions, using support, and performing research techniques to write a research paper. ENGL C1000 - Compose multi-paragraph, thesis-driven essays with logical and appropriate supporting ideas, including in-text citations. ENGL C1000 - Utilize MLA guidelines to format essays, cite sources in the texts of essays, and compile Works Cited lists. ENGL C1000H - Compose coherent, multi-paragraph, thesis-driven essays with logical and appropriate supporting ideas, including in-text citations. ENGL C1000H - Utilize MLA guidelines to format essays, cite sources in the texts of essays, and compile Works Cited lists.
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
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Enrollment Limitations and Category:	

Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	
Date:	
Original Board Approval Date:	12/18/2017
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Amy Himsel
Date:	09/20/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	12/16/2025
Effective Term:	FA 2026
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Effective Date:	Prior to July 1992

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Effective Date:	prior to fall 1992
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Term:	
Other:	
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C. Common Challenges of Scientific Reasoning

	1. Differentiating Correlation and Causation 2. Proper Use of Case Study Information 3. Understanding Probability 4. Identifying Pseudoscience VII. Thought and Language (5 hours, lecture) A. Ambiguity B. Vagueness C. Emotional Tone D. Undefined Terms E. Other Linguistic Factors VIII. Characteristics of Cognition that Impact Critical Thinking (6 hours, lecture) A. Memory Errors B. Perceptual Errors C. Heuristics IX. Critical Thinking and Controversial Issues in Psychology (7 hours, lecture) A. Parapsychology B. Pseudoscience and Self Help C. Psychology and the Law D. Psychology and Politics E. Other Controversial Issues
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Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 -	1) Substantial writing assignments

all courses; choose one):	
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	After viewing a video of a political debate between presidential candidates, analyze the quality of argumentation provided by each candidate in a two- to three-page essay, focusing on the use of fallacies and other rhetorical devices.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Based on assigned readings, class lecture, and discussion, write a four- to six-page argumentative essay putting forth your own position on the following issue: Can experiments using animals be justified? In your essay, focus on constructing strong argument structure, avoiding fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and applying knowledge of scientific methodology in research.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	In a four- to six-page essay, analyze the argumentation presented in articles written on opposing sides of the following issue: Can involuntary commitment to mental hospitals be justified? In your essay, evaluate expert credibility, acceptability and consistency of premises, use of fallacies and other rhetorical devices, and overall strength of the arguments presented.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Completion, Essay Exams, Matching Items, Multiple Choice, Term or Other Papers, True/False, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Brooke Noel Moore, Richard Parker. Critical Thinking. McGraw Hill Humanities, 2017. (Discipline Standard) Judith Boss. Think: Why You Think the Way You Do. McGraw Hill, 2017. (Discipline Standard)
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age, Theodore Schick, Lewis Vaughn, McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2023. Critical Thinking, Brooke Moore & Richard Parker, Pearson, 2024.
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	Prerequisite
Category:	communication or computation skill
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Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	The student should be able to locate and correct grammatical errors (e.g., sentence fragments, misused commas, incorrect pronoun case, subject-verb disagreement, and incorrect tense) in the own essays or in other written works. ENGL C1000 - Recognize and revise sentence-level grammar and usage errors.

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Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Ron Wood
Date:	10/01/1987
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Amy Himsel
Date:	09/20/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	12/16/2025
Effective Term:	FA 2026