

PSYC 103

CRITICAL THINKING IN PSYCHOLOGY

CERRITOS COLLEGE, FALL 2009

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What is this?

Course Description

This course is designed to teach students how to critically analyze information that they encounter in their daily lives from sources such as TV, radio, the internet, magazines and books. Critical thinking skills are discussed in relation to topics in psychology, science and current events in the media including advertising, ESP, memory distortions, alien abductions and the paranormal to name a few. This course also fulfills general education/transfer requirements.

Textbooks (required)

Ruscio, J., (2006). Clear thinking with psychology: Separating sense from nonsense, 2nd Ed., Wadsworth-Thomson Learning: Pacific Grove, CA. (R)

Smith, R. A., (2002). Challenging your preconceptions: Thinking critically about psychology, 2nd Ed., Wadsworth-Thomson Learning: Pacific Grove, CA. (S)

Additional Readings/Material:

JREF, James Randi Commentary at www.randi.org
 Current issue of Skeptic, see www.skeptic.com
<http://www.coasttocoastam.com> Radio Station/Podcast

It will be difficult to do well in this course without the textbook. New and/or used copies are available in the campus bookstore. You can also obtain a copy on-line or from other local textbook vendors. Sometimes shopping around can save you a few dollars. If for some reason you cannot purchase the textbooks, copies are on reserve to be read in the library. Furthermore, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to the class meetings.

	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
Week 1	Introduction to Critical Thinking	S: Ch. 1
Week 2	Introduction to Critical Thinking	S: Ch. 1
Week 3	Pseudoscience, Paranormal, Popular press	R: Ch. 1; S: Ch. 2
Week 4	Pseudoscience, Paranormal, Popular press	R: Ch. 1; S: Ch. 2
Week 5	Magic, Superstition, Psychics	R: Ch. 4
Week 6	Scientific Method, Reasoning	R: Ch. 2
Week 7	Scientific Method, Reasoning	R: Ch. 2
Week 8	Midterm Exam	
Week 9	Statistics, Associations, Misleading tactics	S: Ch. 3; R: Ch. 3, 8
Week 10	Statistics, Associations, Misleading tactics	S: Ch. 3; R: Ch. 3, 8
Week 11	Obedience, Control, Social Influence	R: Ch. 5, 12; S: Ch. 13
Week 12	Obedience, Control, Social Influence	R: Ch. 5, 12; S: Ch. 13
Week 13	Hypnosis, Testimonials, Plausibility	S: Ch. 6; R: Ch. 6, 7
Week 14	Hypnosis, Testimonials, Plausibility	S: Ch. 6; R: Ch. 6, 7
Week 15	Testimonials, Plausibility	R: Ch. 6, 7
Week 16	Memory, Bias	S: Ch. 8; R: Ch. 9, 10
Week 17	Memory, Bias	S: Ch. 8; R: Ch. 9, 10
Week 18	FINAL EXAM	Comprehensive

Prerequisites, Coursework and Grading

In order remain enrolled in PSYC 103, **students must meet the prerequisite for the course which is completion of ENGLISH 100 or the equivalent with a grade of “C” or better.** Your course grade will be based on two (2) papers, one (1) midterm exam and one (1) final exam. Both exams will be multiple choice and short essay/answer. Exam questions will come from material covered in class and the assigned readings. Additionally, there will also be in-class writing assignments; some will be announced in advance; others may be unannounced. Writing assignments will be based on additional material from videos, scientific journals, radio and websites. The in-class writing assignments will be given at the beginning of class. **If you are late to class, you will not be allowed to complete the in-class writing assignments.** You will also be required to write five out-of-class writing assignments. More information on papers and writing assignments will be made available during the semester. No makeups for any work will be given without prior notification or documentation of an emergency. If you find that you are having difficulty with the course, you can seek additional assistance at the Academic Support Center. Also if you need special accommodations while taking exams please let me know. A grade/point breakdown is shown below.

<u>Grading</u>		<u>Grade Breakdown</u>
Midterm exam	50 Points	A = 90%
Papers	75 Points	B = 80%
Out of class writing	50 Points	C = 70%
In class writing	50 Points	D = 60%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>75 Points</u>	F = 59% or less
Total	300 Points	

(Example: $300 \times 90\% = 270$ points for the “A”)
(Example: $300 \times 80\% = 240$ points for the “B” and so on)

Attendance/Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to attend class each meeting, and attendance will be taken regularly. **While it is your responsibility to officially drop the course if you no longer wish to be enrolled, I may automatically drop students who fail to attend class regularly. You are also expected to show up for class on time and stay for the entire class period. Excessive tardiness or leaving class early on a regular basis may also result in you being dropped from the course.** As for classroom etiquette, **you are in college and are expected to act accordingly.** While I encourage students to participate and ask questions, inappropriate, disruptive and/or disrespectful behaviors will not be tolerated. These inappropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to, talking to others during class, passing notes, doing work for other classes or sleeping. Additionally, **turn off your cell phones before coming to class.** If I feel that anyone is disrupting the learning environment for any reason, that person or persons may be asked to leave, may have points deducted from their grades, or may be automatically dropped from the course.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism (the theft of language, ideas or thoughts from another that are represented as one’s own original work) and cheating are serious offenses and **will not be tolerated.** Disciplinary actions for such offenses include an “F” on the test or assignment, “F” in the course and/or possible expulsion from the college.