

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

PHIL 113 – Critical Thinking

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: PHIL 113 – Critical Thinking

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year: 2015

D. Effective Term: Fall 2016

E. Sponsoring Department: Humanities, Social Science and Education

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3 Lecture: 3
 Laboratory: 0
 Out of class student work per week: 6 hours

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: none

I. Laboratory Fees: none

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair at time of approval: Stephen Kaufman; steve.kaufman@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

This course has no formal prerequisite. It serves as an introduction to ways of thinking inside and outside of the purview of logic, while also investigating the ways in which speech and visual images can be an opportunity to critically examine what people see, listen and internalize. It is designed to improve the student's ability to read analytical and argumentative material with precision and clarity, while also recognizing their own ability to identify (and construct) argument frameworks that fall within multiple disciplines.

III. Statement of Course Need

- A. The course offers practice in skills essential to thinking and writing in philosophy and the sciences. It is intended to improve clarity of thought and application of what is involved in critical reading and writing, and the interpretation of text within print and non-print material. It introduces the student to a range of philosophical problems and issues contained within academic discourse and the information environment.
- B. Please describe the transferability of this course. For example:
 - 1. This course generally transfers as a Philosophy and Religion general education course.
 - 2. This course generally transfers as a philosophy program requirement.
 - 3. This course generally transfers as a philosophy elective.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course serves as a General Education course in Humanities/Philosophy and Religion.
- C. This course meets a requirement for Electrical Utility Technology AAS.
- D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

- A. The nature of reasoning: deduction, induction, and validity
- B. Informal fallacies and their place in the literature of advertisement, editorial, and elsewhere
- C. The nature of science: induction, evidence, and conceptual schemes associated with empirical thinking
- D. Critical thinking about ethics and religion
- E. Extraordinary and “paranormal” claims: science and pseudo-science
- F. Contestable claims to truth as illustrated in the visual world

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Develop a clearer sense of what is involved in effective reasoning and take note of errors that often enter inferences (GE 1);
- 2. Differentiate between deductive and inductive reasoning, and what is involved in the confirmation of an inductive hypothesis (GE 1,

- 4, 7);
3. Assess how critical thinking is related to activity in moral philosophy, psychology and philosophy of religion (GE 1, 2, 4, 5);
 4. Apply a critical approach to select text materials in science, philosophy, social science and the information environment (GE 1, 2, 4)

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. identify examples of argument as either deductive or inductive, and identify the premises and conclusion either explicit or implicit in various examples of vernacular language;
2. identify examples of a mistake in reasoning (fallacy) in ordinary speech and writing
3. explain the difference, in terms of truth claims, between legitimate science and activity that merely appears to be scientific;
4. explain the meaning of science and how such things as evidence and confirmation bias enter into the formation and testing of a given hypothesis (GE 1);
5. identify the worth of various arguments found in passages of philosophical/psychological literature (e.g. short stories and poetry)
6. Identify the ways in which truth claims are disseminated and manufactured in the information environment

C. Assessment Instruments

- A. course lecture
- B. small group discussion
- C. large-group review of discussions
- D. extra-credit student presentations
- E. essay exams
- F. think pieces (Reader responses to assignments)
- G. extra-credit in-class student presentations

VII. Grade Determinants

- A. written work as noted
- B. in-class participation

Given the goals and outcomes described above, LIST the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. lecture/discussion
- B. small-group discussion
- C. student presentations

VIII. Texts and Materials

Halpern, Diane F., (2014) *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. 5th edition. Psychology Press: New York

Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.

IX. Resources

- A. texts
- B. library resources
- C. classroom
- D. various on-line sources