

Syllabus for Critical Thinking (Psych 3310) Fall 2017, Dr. Lee Gugerty

Class meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 11 – 12:15 PM in Brackett Hall room 122

Professor: Dr. Leo Gugerty, 312-D Brackett Hall, 656-4467, email: gugerty@clemson.edu

Office hours: Thursday 2:30-4PM; also by appointment

Readings:

Books:

- *The Knowledge Illusion: Why We Never Think Alone* by Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach, Publisher: Penguin Random House 2017; Hardcover \$28.00, But Amazon Prime says there is a paperback edition
 - *How To Think Straight About Psychology* by Keith Stanovich, Publisher: Pearson; most recent edition is 2013 10th edition, paperback, **But any edition from 8-10 is acceptable**
 - *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, 2011 Publisher: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Paperback
- Selected readings downloadable from the library website or provided by Dr. G

Learning Outcomes for This Course:

This class is designed so that if students participate fully in the class activities, they will achieve the following learning outcomes.

1. Over the past 65 years, psychological scientists have learned a lot about the best ways for people to make sure that their **beliefs** and conclusions about the world are accurate. These scientists have also learned a lot about the best ways for people to **make decisions** when they really want those decisions to be effective. You will learn about these accurate and effective ways of arriving at beliefs (a process called **argumentation**) and **making decisions**. You will also learn about the **mistakes** people make when they do not use these more effective reasoning techniques. One of my main goals is to teach you about the effective reasoning techniques that psychological scientists have discovered and validated.
2. However, this is not a pure science course. As we cover these effective reasoning techniques, we will discuss many examples of you can apply these techniques in **your everyday life**. By the end of the course, as you are engaging in an argument or making a decision, you should be able to say “I (or another person) just made a reasoning error. I know what the error is and why it’s suboptimal thinking. I also know how to think about this in a better way.”
3. It’s not a coincidence that when psychological scientists studied and then discovered how people arrive at accurate beliefs and make effective decisions in their **everyday life**, the scientists found that these same useful reasoning techniques were also used by other **scientists** (e.g., physicists) and by **lawyers, journalists, law-makers, detectives, and historians**. So psychological research about everyday reasoning and the work practices of these different occupations have converged on the same set of reasoning techniques that people can use whenever they want their beliefs to match the world and their decisions to work out well in the world. We will also learn about how scientists and lawyers and journalists attempt to engage in effective argumentation and decision making.

Class format:

- The classes on Tuesday & Thursday at 11 AM will consist of lecture, discussion, and group problem-solving exercises requiring your participation. You are expected to complete the assigned reading before each class. I will ask you questions during lecture to help you think about and understand the reading material. I will sometimes ask questions of the group and sometimes ask questions of individual students. Remember that the material discussed in lecture will enable you to do well on the projects. If you use your electronic devices to do non-class activities, this may distract other students as well as you. Therefore, I request that you not use any electronic devices for non-class activities during lecture.
- **IMPORTANT:** The point of this class is to learn about a set of reasoning techniques that can be applied in a wide variety of everyday situations, from personal to scientific to political decisions and beliefs. This means we will be talking about questions that people feel strongly about. The goal of this class is for you to learn **HOW** to discuss these controversial and important ideas productively. The goal is **NOT** for any class members (including the teacher) to convince anyone that his or her particular take on controversy X is correct. In other words, the goal is to learn better ways to find out the truth, not better ways to win arguments.

Communication via email

- I will send out important announcements about class regularly by email. I will do this using your Clemson email address which is based on your Clemson userID. So make sure that that email address is working and that you check it regularly, at least before every class.

Evaluations **% of final grade**

Pretest – get 100 if take test by due date	2.5
identifying signal detection situations	10
credibility project	15
project on good causal reasoning strategies	15
project on poor causal reasoning strategies	10
final paper	25
turn in 4 sets of pretest questions, 5% each	20
Post-test – get 100 if take test by due date	2.5

Grading Scale/Rubric

All evaluations will be graded on a 0-100 scale. If your final weighted average is 89.5-100, your course grade is A; if 79.5-89.5, grade is B; if 69.5-79.5, grade is C; if 59.5-69.5, grade is D; if < 59.5, grade is F.

Ask Dr. Gugerty **now** if you have any questions about this.

Attendance:

- Attendance at **ALL classes** is **strongly recommended**. You will be working on group and individual projects for grades. If you don't come to class much, you might end up not being able to contribute to the work of a group project.
- If Dr. Gugerty has not arrived by 10 minutes after the start of lecture or lab, you may assume that that class has been cancelled.

Policy concerning late assignments:

- This applies to all evaluations listed in the evaluations section:
 - If your assignment is 1 day late (i.e., 0 to 24 hours late), 10 points (on a 0-100 scale) will be deducted.
 - If your assignment is 2 days late (i.e., 24 to 48 hours late), 20 points will be deducted.
 - If your assignment is 3 days late, 30 points will be deducted.
 - If your assignment is 4 days late, 50 points will be deducted.
 - If your assignment is 5 days late, 70 points will be deducted.
 - If your assignment is 6 or more days late, 100 points will be deducted.

Academic Integrity:

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor and responsibility, without which we can not earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.