

Syllabus for Critical Thinking (Psych 3310) Fall 2018, Dr. Lee Gugerty

Class meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45 PM in Surrine Hall room 114

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

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30 PM; 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 60 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.
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 **individuals** 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 groups of people—**scientists, 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:

- **Class periods:** these 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 whole class and sometimes ask questions of individual students.
- 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.
- **Preview questions:** Before each class, I will put a set of preview questions on Canvas. These questions tell you what to focus on in the readings. They are like a study guide for the projects and test that will be based on the reading. I recommend that you read the preview questions for each reading before you do the reading and try to answer the questions while you read.
- **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	topic	due date
Pretest – get 100 if take test by due date (0 if not)	2.5		8/28 12:30 PM
Evaluation 1 (small group project)	20	belief bias; signal detection; other topics	9/18 12:30 PM
Evaluation 2 (individual project)	20	credibility	10/9 12:30 PM
Evaluation 3 (in-class, closed book/notes test)	20	causal reasoning; argumentation; decision making	11/1 in class
final evaluation (small group project)	35	decided as a class	exam week
Post-test – get 100 if take test by due date (0 if not)	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 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.
- If you give me an acceptable reason why your evaluation will be late and do it **BEFORE** the evaluation is due, then I **MAY** adjust these penalties.

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.