

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature English 7, Section 4, Critical Thinking, Fall 2014

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Professor Dalia Sirkin
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Office Hours:	Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:15 and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-10:15
Classroom:	SH 413
Prerequisite	English 1A strongly recommended
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Area A3

Course Description

The word “critical” derives from two Greek roots: “kriticos” (meaning discerning judgment) and “kriterion” (meaning standards). Etymologically, then, the word implies the development of “discerning judgment based on standards.” In this course we will develop strategies to determine the true worth, merit, or value of a claim. We will pay special attention to cultural and individual assumptions behind claims, the sorts of evidence which support claims, arguments and fallacies which contain claims, and the rhetoric and language used to express claims. Our study of critical thinking will include readings representing diverse opinions and ideas, and writing styles as well as class discussions within a multicultural context. In the written assignments students will learn to assess the validity of an argument, distinguish denotation from connotation, the role of audience, and evaluate rhetorical appeals.

Course Goals

In Critical Thinking courses, students will understand logic and its relationship to language: courses include a series of integrated reading, writing, oral, and research assignments that engage students in complex issues requiring critical thinking and effective argumentation. Students will develop language that distinguishes fact and judgment; articulates elementary inductive and deductive processes; parses fact, assumption and conclusion; integrates rebuttal and qualification as appropriate. Students will develop the ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate complex ideas, reason inductively and deductively, research and rebut information and arguments, and reach well-supported factual conclusions and judgments.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Students will demonstrate, orally and in writing, proficiency in the Area A3 Learning Outcomes. They will be able to:

1. locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.

2. present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view.
3. effectively locate, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize evidence in a comprehensive way in support of one's ideas.
4. identify and critically evaluate the assumptions in and the context of an argument.
5. effectively distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences).

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. learn to assess an argument's validity, its strength, its underlying support and assumptions;
2. improve their own abilities to convey their ideas clearly, logically, and persuasively, and to communicate their positions effectively, both verbally and in writing;
3. understand the importance as well as the limitations of statistics, measurements, and other factual evidence in supporting arguments; and
4. appreciate the value of a free exchange of ideas, with tolerance for someone with whose ideas they may disagree, and exhibit a willingness to challenge their own unanalyzed assumptions and arguments as well as those of others.

Required Texts and materials

Konnikova, Maria. *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*. Ebook available to SJSU students at the MLK Library.

Ariely, Dan. *Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 978-0061353246

Lunsford, Andrea. *The Everyday Writer*. Bedford/St. Martins. ISBN: 9780312664848, Write 2.0
3 large green books (one for each midterm and one for the final exam).

Library Liaison

Toby Matoush is the library liaison for English and Comparative Literature and for Languages.

Phone: (408) 808-2096

Email: toby.matoush@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

NOTE that [University policy F69-24](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading."

A Note on Participation

Participation is a key component in Critical thinking. To earn all or most of the 10 points, it is important that you actively engage in the classroom experience by asking questions and/or making comments. You will be

able to contribute in small-group or full-class discussions. In addition, the instructor may call upon individual students to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

Pop quizzes are always at the beginning of class. They involve writing brief essay responses from the assigned reading and knowing material discussed in class. Be sure to review your notes and come to class on time. If I am still handing out the quiz when you enter, you may take the quiz. If I have already handed the quiz out, you may not take the quiz and will receive no credit.

Oral presentation: This assignment will include individual presentations; group, team discussions; debates. Students will be evaluated for clarity of content, delivery of presentation, and logic of the argument.

Written work: the writing assignments—two formal essays, counting 15 points each--will be structured to explore the relationship between language and logic in composing arguments. In writing you will show good control of grammar and syntax; you will state your position clearly and take into account other points of view. Drafts and revised final drafts must be typed and double-spaced, follow MLA format (EW: Ch. 49-51), and be submitted by the beginning of class on the dates they are due. Unless arrangement with the instructor is made in advance, late work will not be accepted, and students will lose 5 points for not meeting the deadline.

Argument Essay: you will incorporate critical thinking skills in building a persuasive argument that includes analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

Research Paper: you will write a draft to show how you plan to incorporate your research into the essay. After locating and evaluating sources through library research, you will submit an annotated bibliography of at least five reliable sources. Your final draft will use appropriate citation and quotation.

Midterms and final exam: There will be two midterm exams, counting 10 points each, where you will define terms, write short answers, and compose a short essay. The final exam, counting 20 points, will be comprehensive.

Assignments and Grading Policy

ASSIGNMENTS	WORD COUNT	POINT VALUE	DEADLINES	STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Participation	n/a	10	Each meeting	SLOs 2
Pop quizzes	n/a	10		SLOs 2, 3, 4
First midterm	350	10	Sept 23	SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5
Second midterm	350	10	Nov 18	SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5
Oral presentation	n/a	10	Oct 21 and 28	SLOs 2, 3
Argument Essay:				SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5
Outline	(1 page) 250	5	Oct 2	
Revised Final draft	(3 pages) 750	10	Oct 14	
Research Paper				SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Draft –Annotated bibliography	(2 pages) 500	5	Nov 4	
Revised Final draft	(4 pages) 1000	10	Dec 2	
Final Exam		20	Wed Dec 17, 7:15	SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5
Totals	3200	100		

Grading Policy

A+	100-97	B+	89-87	C+	79-77	D+	69-67
A	96-94	B	86-84	C	76-74	D	66-64
A-	93-90	B-	83-80	C-	73-70	D-	63-60

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The “A” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “B” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as an “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show slight weakness in one of these areas. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical or usage errors.

The “C” essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it will show weaknesses in fundamentals, such as development. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.

The “D” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Classroom Protocol

- Students should come to class on time having read the day’s assignment and prepared to discuss it.
- Bring a copy of all texts assigned for that day.
- Before you enter the classroom, please turn off your mobile phone, your iPod, and anything that may distract you from the day’s work. Texting is not permitted at any time.
- Without prior notification, missed in class essays and presentations cannot be made up. Should you miss class, you are responsible for contacting a student in the class to learn about assignments, lecture notes/ classroom activity and announcements.
- All essays and homework assignments must be submitted by the beginning of class. I shall not accept written assignments via email.
- To ensure that you get credit for your work, make sure that you complete your assignment on time. You will lose 5 points for not meeting the deadline.
- Extra credit is not available.
- “Grade Checks”: Please bring your forms to the instructor during office hours only.

University Policies

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>.

Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
 - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
 - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic Integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to



scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

English 7, Section 4: Critical Thinking, Fall 2014

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class in advance. Readings are from Konnikova's *Mastermind*, Ariely's *Predictably Irrational*, and guidelines and exercise from *The Everyday Writer (EW)*.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Tu, 8/26	Introduction and Myth story
1	Th, 8/28	Mastermind: Prelude
2	Tu, 9/2	Mastermind: Ch. 1, EW: Analyzing Arguments Ch.13b (recognize cultural contexts), 13c (identify basic appeals)
2	Th, 9/4	Mastermind: Ch. 2, EW: Analyze the elements of argument 13d, 14i (Toulmin)
3	Tu, 9/9	Mastermind: Ch. 3, EW: Fallacies and misleading charts and graphs 13e, Shulman, Max "Love Is a Fallacy" (online)
3	Th, 9/11	Mastermind: Ch. 4, EW: Constructing Arguments Ch. 14 (a: checking whether a statement can be argued), (b: making a claim/thesis), (c: examining assumptions)
4	Tu, 9/16	Mastermind: Ch. 5, EW: Inductive and deductive reasoning 14f
4	Th, 9/18	Mastermind: Ch. 6, EW: Denotation and Connotation Ch. 23b
5	Tu, 9/23	First midterm—Bring large green book
5	Th, 9/25	Mastermind: Ch. 7--No class
6	Tu, 9/30	Mastermind: Ch. 8, EW: Unstated Assumptions 21a
6	Th, 10/2	Argument Essay: outline due
7	Tu, 10/7	Mastermind: Postlude
7	Th, 10/9	Predictably Irrational: Introduction
8	Tu, 10/14	Argument Essay: revised final draft due
8	Th, 10/16	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 1, EW: Ch. 15 Preparing for a Research Project Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on campus, Student Union Ballroom Monday, 10/20, 4pm
9	Tu, 10/21	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 2, Oral presentations
9	Th, 10/23	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 3, EW: Ch. 16 Doing Research
10	Tu, 10/28	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 4, Oral presentations
10	Th, 10/30	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 5, EW: Ch. 17 Evaluating Sources/Taking notes
11	Tu, 11/4	Research Essay: Annotated bibliography due , EW: 17b and online http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/
11	Th, 11/6	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 6, EW: Ch. 18 Integrating Sources
12	Tu, 11/11	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 7--Veterans' day – Campus closed
12	Th, 11/13	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 8, EW: Ch. 19 Writing a Research Project

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	Tu, 11/18	Second midterm—Bring large green book , Predictably Irrational: Ch. 9
13	Th, 11/20	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 10, EW: Ch. 19e Revise and Edit
14	Tu, 11/25	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 11
14	Th, 11/27	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 12--Thanksgiving—Campus closed--
15	Tu, 12/2	Research final draft due
15	Th, 12/4	Predictably Irrational: Ch. 13
16	Tu, 12/9	Final Exam Review
Final Exam	Wednesday 12/17	0715-9:30