Critical Thinking in Psychology
COURSE SYLLABUS
Prendergast

Course Description
In this class we will explore what it means to think critically in Psychology by studying a variety of different topics in this discipline. The main objectives of this course are to show students what studying Psychology at the college level looks like and to help them develop a Focus question for their Senior Project.

So, what is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question-at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference.[1]

The iSchool's Senior Project Timeline

Q4	Q1	Q2
Critical Thinking in the Disciplines	***Research and Writing***	***The Senior Project***
0.5 discipline-specific credits	*0.5 English Credit*	*0.5 discipline-specific credits*
Required of all juniors. In addition to introducing students to the "ways of thinking" around a discipline, the outcome of the course is a research question (and possibly a research plan, TDB) to carry students through the research process in the fall.	*Required of all seniors. The outcome of the course is a research paper that responds to the question students identified in Critical Thinking. This research will form the rationale or context for the project that is proposed in the following course.*	*Required of most seniors, except for those who are credit deficient . The purpose of this course is to develop and execute a project that creates original work in reaction to their research. All students will present their work in January.*

Students who earn an 85+ in all three of these courses will graduate with Distinction

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131 Avenue of the Americas, 5th Floor, New York, New York 10013
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Course Objectives

Through this Critical Thinking course, students will:

1. Develop a working definition of "critical thinking" in Psychology
2. Explore a range of Psychology topics at a college level.
3. Examine what professional work looks like in Psychology
4. Develop, support, and deliver cohesive written and oral arguments on field topics
5. Understand the layers of their Area of Focus – various fields, perspectives, philosophies/schools of thought – that inform current thinking in Psychology
6. **Choose a topic of interest and develop a Focus Question around which their senior project will revolve.**

Course Requirements

  Materials: each student needs a Critical Thinking Binder or Folder. All hand outs and work completed should be kept together in an organized way.

  Attendance: The course meets 25 times, students are expected to attend all class sessions.

  Behavior: Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates and the teacher. This includes when others are presenting or working a topic that is not of interest to everyone. As juniors in high school all students are expected to act as such.

Course Topics (tentative)

Week 1	Introduction to the Course + Begin Brainstormting
Week 2	Psychological Studies in Biology and Human Behavior
Week 3	Psychological Studies in Perception and Consciousness
Week 4	Psychological Studies in Learning and Conditioning and Cognition
Week 5	Psychological Studies in Human Development and Motivation
Week 6	Psychological Studies in Psychopathology and Psychotherapy
Week 7	Psychological Studies in Social Psychology
Week 8	Finalize and present Focus Question
Week 9	Critical Thinking Final Product

Grading

  Mastery   70%

    Developing a Research Question

    Analysis of Psychological Studies

  Work Habits   20%

    Completion of out of classwork,

  Contributing Factors   10%

    Participation in seminars, punctuality/attendance, effort, peer feedback

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Late Assignments
All coursework is due on the date given at the beginning of the assignment/project. Late work will be accepted up to five days after the due date. The assignment must be completed in my presence during my posted Office Hours, or by appointment. While students can earn full credit for the mastery portion of their grade on any assignment, points will be deducted for late work from the student's final "contributing factors" grade.

Student Absences
If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to come to Office Hours the day he/she returns back to school find out what was missed the day he/she was absent. The student is expected to turn in any assignments due on the day absent on the day immediately following the absence. During an absence, students are expected to check in with Miss P via email to receive any assignments.

Resources
- Students should get in the habit of checking iSchool email regularly, as teachers will communicate instructions, assignment feedback, etc. through email.
- Additional help is available during Office Hours or by appointment; my office hours are: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, from 3:20 – 4pm.
- If you have additional concerns please e-mail me at: sprendergast@nycischool.org

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