

ENG526 Critical Thinking and Reading

(2 credit hours)
Course Syllabus

Course Description

This course will strengthen students' critical thinking skills at the graduate level by reading classical texts such as Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics*. Students will also strengthen their reading skills by reading and analyzing professional journal articles. The course will teach students techniques to thoroughly understand graduate level texts and to critically think about those texts both philosophically and in a research context.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Use reading techniques to appropriately summarize a professional journal article
2. Analyze and evaluate a journal article's argument for effectiveness
3. Analyze texts from different perspectives by questioning main points and arguments
4. Create original arguments by synthesizing material

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Semenza, Gregory. (2010). *Graduate Study for the Twenty-First Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities*. 2nd edition. Palgrave Macmillan.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you

dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays**.
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

Learning Activities

The learning activities in this course will include discussion boards, reflection papers, and traditional academic papers to help you practice critical thinking and reading skills. The course will also include other assignments such as creating a concept map and infographic as well as creating a presentation to share your work with others.

The course also uses Semenza's textbook to explore the culture of academia. Semenza targets graduate students in larger traditional research universities, but his advice can be useful for graduate students in all sorts of programs. So we'll critically think about his advice and discuss what we can take away from it.

Key Assessment (Taskstream Submission)

This TU course features a "Key Assessment" that provides you the opportunity to demonstrate your program's core competencies. It also shows how the course fits within the broader curriculum. For this course, the Key Assessment is the Final Paper due in Week 7. This paper will test your critical thinking skills as you write about graduate school.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussions Activity 1.1 (n/a) Activity 1.2 (20)	Discussions Activity 2.1 (20)	Discussions Activity 3.1 (20)	Discussions Activity 4.1 (20)	Discussions Activity 5.1 (20)	Discussions Activity 6.2 (20)	Discussions Activity 7.1 (20)	140
Assignments Activity 1.3 (50) Activity 1.4 (20)	Assignments Activity 2.2 (100)	Assignments Activity 3.2 (100)	Assignments Activity 4.2 (100) Activity 4.3 (20)	Assignments Activity 5.2 (100)	Assignments Activity 6.1 (200)	Assignments Activity 7.2 (150) Activity 7.3 (20)	860
90	120	120	140	120	220	190	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | F: <69%

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Start Here	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Activity 1.1: Driving Force – Initial Post
Week 1: What is the “humanities”? Writing as thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 1.1: Driving Force – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 1.2: Humanities Definition – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 1.2: Humanities Definition – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 1.3: Concept Map <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 1.4: Reflection
Week 2: Critical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 2.1: Using Brainteasers – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 2.1: Using Brainteasers – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 2.2: Analogy Paper
Week 3: Reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 3.1: Reading Techniques – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 3.1: Reading Techniques – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 3.2: Reading Comprehension Infographic

<p>Week 4: Summary Questioning claims and arguments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 4.1: Socratic Method – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 4.1: Socratic Method – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 4.2: Article Summary and Critique <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 4.3: Reflection
<p>Week 5: Creating “original” arguments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 5.1: Photo Safari – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 5.1: Photo Safari – Secondary Posts <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 5.2: Current Event Paper
<p>Week 6: Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 6.1: Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 6.2: Presentation Peer Review – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 6.2: Presentation Peer Review – Secondary Posts
<p>Week 7: Reflect on learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 7.1: Muddiest Point – Initial Post <input type="checkbox"/> THU: Activity 7.2: Final Paper <input type="checkbox"/> THU: Activity 7.3: Reflection <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 7.1: Muddiest Point – Secondary Posts

Tips for Success

Successful online learning requires a good deal of self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge and review one another’s academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery and constructiveness. Your course is a place for you to stretch and grow as you benefit from the expertise, knowledge, experience and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge, understanding and application.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

For More Information:

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.