



Course Type: **CORE VALUE**

Course Code: **VAL503**

Course Name: **Critical Thinking**

COURSE SYLLABUS

Students please note that this is core value course. All students must undertake this Calwest courses (\$250 per course) via Tube classes. Students may have undertaken similar course in another accredited university; but must still complete this course at Calwest. There will be no Recognized Prior Learning (RPL) for this course.

1. Course Description

In this course students will develop and enhance their ability to think critically, assess information and develop reasoned arguments in the context of the global challenges facing society today. Critical thinking is the ability to gather and assess information and evidence in a balanced and reflective way to reach conclusions that are justified by reasoned argument based on the available evidence.

Critical thinking is a key skill in the information age, valuable in all disciplines and professions. This introductory course will give students the opportunity to better understand what critical thinking is, and to practice and enhance your critical thinking skills. To do so, the course will use the context of some important global challenges that affect us all, and to which we have no clear “correct” solutions: for example, the risk and spread of serious infectious diseases in epidemics in modern societies, the implications of increasing human population on global resources, energy, environment and climate, and the challenges of human health and wellbeing in the modern world. Possible solutions to global issues such as these are hotly debated and give the perfect setting to practice recognizing and evaluating facts, ideas, opinions and arguments.

3. Learning Objectives

1. Students will study the tool and techniques used for critical thinking.
2. Students will gain a broad critical perspective of the basic terms and concepts employed in logic and critical thinking.
3. Student will be introduced to ‘argument’, which is the primary function of logic and critical thinking.
4. Students will learn how to structure an argument in logic that actually aims towards a goal.
5. Students will learn not only how an argument is supposed to work; but also, that not all arguments are good arguments.
6. Students are introduced to the Principle of Bivalence and its importance to the traditional systems of logic, and deviant logic, which rejects Bivalence.

4. Learning Outcomes:

To successfully complete this subject, a student should be able to:

1. Differentiate between premise statements and conclusion statements, and between deductive and inductive arguments.
2. Appreciate that most of our knowledge is derived with inductive arguments, but that probability should not be confused with certainty.
3. Test deductive arguments for validity and soundness.
4. Distinguish the multiple senses of a text (literal and beyond the literal).
5. Identify and understand assumptions, theses, and arguments that exist in the work of authors.
6. Evaluate and synthesize evidence in order to draw conclusions consistent with the text.
7. Seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence relevant to original and existing theses.
8. Ask meaningful questions and originate plausible theses.
9. Critique and question the authority of texts and explore the implications of those texts.

5. Prescribed Reading (Compulsory)

Bruce N. Waller, *Critical Thinking: Consider the Verdict, (Latest Edition)*, Pearson, New Jersey, USA.
<http://www.pearsoned.com/>

6. Student Resource Requirements

- PC: A reliable computer running Windows XP or higher with 500 MB of RAM or higher
- Mac: A reliable computer running Mac OS 10 or higher
- Reliable high speed Internet connection (minimum 768 Kbps/128 Kbps)
- Web browser with Adobe Flash Player installed (Flash Player 10 or higher recommended)

7. Topic Outline

Topic No.	Topic	Chapter and Topic PowerPoint
1	Introduction and Important Terms	Ch 1,2
2	Ad Hominem Arguments	Ch 3
3	The Strawman Fallacy	Ch 4
4	Questions and Reasons	Ch 5,6
5	Analyzing Arguments	Ch 7
6	The Burden of Proof	Ch 8
7	Language and Pitfalls	Ch 9
8	Appeal to Authority	Ch 10
9	Arguments by Analogy	Ch 11
10	Arguments and Pitfalls	Ch 12, 13
11	Necessary and Sufficient Conditions	Ch 14
12	Scientific and Causal Reasoning	Ch 15
13	The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth	Ch 16, 17, 18, 19

8. Assessment

There will be **Continuous Assessments** done throughout this course. All topics will have a **Topic Quiz** that needs to be satisfactorily answered prior to being allowed to access the next topic in the course. You are allowed 3 attempts in each Topic Quiz, so that you can revise the course material and master the topic before proceeding to the next topic in the course. Calwest keeps computer logs of all student activity in terms of accessing the course material and MCQs to ensure that sufficient time is being spent on online studies. Note that negative marks will be attached to wrong answers in the Topic MCQs, and this will affect the final assessment score. *Therefore, please study the course material before attempting the Topic MCQs.*

After completing all Topics (and Quizzes), your **Final Assessment** will be available for you to undertake online at a time of your convenience. There will be a time limit of *90 minutes* for the final assessment in which you will need to answer *80 multiple-choice questions* that will be randomly selected from the questions asked in the topic quizzes.

Please ensure that you have an undisturbed 90-minute time frame to undertake your Final Assessment as after 90 minutes your work will be automatically submitted and graded.

There will be only one attempt provided for the Final Assessment.

The Final Assessment will form the over 80% of the weight given to your final course grade. The Balance 20% is obtained as an average of the scores you achieve in the Topic Quizzes.

9. Grading Criteria

Calwest University applies the following grading system in all courses:

A pass mark of 60% (grade of D which is a bare minimum pass) or above is required to satisfy the educational requirements of the university for completing the course. The grade assessments are as follows:

Below 60%: Fail	73-75% : C	85-88% : B+
60-64% : D	76-78% : C+	89-91% : A-
65-69% : D+	79-81% : B-	92-95% : A
70-72% : C-	82-84% : B	Over 95% : A+