

Syllabus  
Critical Thinking in Psychology  
PSYC 4303-201  
Spring, 2022

Professor: Paul C. Guthrie, Ph.D.  
Office Hours: 1:00 - 3:00, MW  
8:30 - 9:30, TR  
Class Times: 11:00 - 12:20, TR  
Email: paul.guthrie@msutexas.edu

Office: O-113  
Phone: 397-4178

Location: PY102

Texts:

Ruscio, J (2005). *Critical thinking in psychology: Separating sense from nonsense* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Thompson Wadsworth

Levy, D.A. (2009). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Allyn and Bacon.

Course Objectives: This course is intended to be an introduction to the process of critical thinking, and the application of this method to some of the more interesting and controversial topics in psychology.

Course Description: Material will be presented in the form of class lectures and video presentations. While this course is basically a lecture course, it is necessary that students read material ahead and be prepared to engage in meaningful class discussion. Class lectures will be related to, but not identical with, material presented in the text, and you will be tested on both; therefore, regular class attendance is required.

There will be two papers required in this class. The first involves finding an article - from a newspaper, magazine, on-line source, etc. - then evaluating it from a critical thinking perspective. In other words, identify the internal and/or external influences that could be expected to distort your perceptions and/or influence your behavior. This paper is due no later than 3/10/22. The second paper will involve a critique of an article, on-line source, etc. that addresses some type of pseudoscience or aspect of the science and practice of psychology. The second paper is due no later than 4/21/22; late papers will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day.

There will be four exams, including the final. Exams will consist of short answer/essay questions.

## **Tentative Reading and Exam Schedule**

(1/11 – 2/1) Internal Processes that naturally distort our perceptions

Ruscio, Chapter 1

Levy, Chapter 15-29

And other readings, as assigned.

Exam I on 2/3

(2/8 – 3/1) External efforts to influence our perceptions and behaviors

Readings to be assigned

Exam II on 3/3

Paper I due on 3/10.

(3/8 – 3/24) Science vs. Pseudoscience

Levy, Chapters 1-9

And other readings, as assigned

Exam III on 3/29

(3/31 – 4/28) Psychology and Critical Thinking

Ruscio, Chapter 10

Slife, Reber & Richardson - Chapters 1 & 2 (I will send you a scanned copy)

And other readings, as assigned

Paper II due on 4/26.

Final Exam: Tuesday, 5/3 @ 1:00 - 3:00.

Grades: Exams (4 @ 100 points each)

Papers (2 @ 100 points each)

A = 600 - 540 points

B = 539 - 480 points

C = 479 - 420 points

D = 410 - 360 points

F = < 360 points

Attendance Policy: Students are allowed three (3) absences. Once you exceed this limit, whether the absences are excused or not, you may be dropped from the course with a grade of "F". I will not be responsible for recording attendance for students who are tardy.

Make-up Policy: You may make up **one** (1) missed exam: if you miss more than one exam, you should drop the course. A mass make-up for exams will be administered on Tuesday, 5/3, following the final exam. No other make-ups will be allowed; if you miss an exam during this semester, you must attend this session. Failure to do so will result in a grade of “0” on the missed exam.

Cheating Policy: Any evidence of cheating on exams or plagiarism will result in dismissal from this class with a grade of “F”.

Note: Individuals requiring special accommodation may contact me after class or during office hours.

Also note: Phones are to be turned off during class. If you have a situation that requires you to receive calls, you need to contact me ahead of time, have your device on vibration mode, and take the call outside the classroom.