



Course Outline for History 5  
CRITICAL THINKING IN HISTORY

Catalog Description:

HIS 5 - Critical Thinking in History

3.00 units

Introduction to critical thinking, reading, writing skills and practical logic and reasoning through study of historical method. Emphasis on the techniques and principles of effective written and oral argument in case studies and historical problems. Includes the perspective of Middle Eastern and Arab Americans, European Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans and Mexican Americans.

Requisites: none

Grading Option: Optional

	Units	Contact Hours	
		Week	Term
	3.00		
Lecture		3.00	52.50
Laboratory		0	0
Clinical		0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>52.50</b>

Prerequisite Skills:

None

Measurable Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. demonstrate critical thinking skills in class discussion and written essays
  - a. read and interpret case studies from a range of academic, cultural and historical contexts;
  - b. discuss the relationship between meaning and language manipulation, and between language and logic;
  - c. identify unstated premises and hidden assumptions, which arise from the social, historical, or cultural contexts in which the primary texts and critical writings, which apply to them, exist;
  - d. evaluate the pattern of reasoning present in an argument and related critical evaluation, including induction and deduction, and the misuse of statistics;
  - e. identify logical fallacies, including appeals to authority, common practice, equivocation, non-sequitor, appeals to ignorance, and anachronism;
  - f. identify the similarities and differences between the intention, biases, assumptions, prejudices, and arguments of an author, witness, reporter, chronicler, historian, etc.;
  - g. distinguish between fact, inference, and judgment, recognizing that many reasonable inferences can be derived from the same facts
  - h. identify historical viewpoints; recognize historical relationships and patterns; and determine the adequacy of causal explanations.
2. demonstrate composition skills
  - a. explore a line of inquiry and limit the topic appropriately;
  - b. establish and state clearly a unifying thesis or proposition;
  - c. select examples, details, or other evidence to support or validate the thesis and other generalizations;
  - d. use detail, example, and evidence to develop and elaborate upon subtopics;
3. understand logical principles
  - a. use principles of inductive and deductive reasoning to support and develop ideas;
  - b. avoid logical fallacies in the presentation of argument;
  - c. achieve coherence;
  - d. communicate unambiguously

Course Content:

1. The Historical Method
  - A. Primary and secondary sources
  - B. External and internal criticism
  - C. Corroboration of facts and interpretations
2. Informal Fallacies of Logic
  - A. Importance of recognizing fallacies
  - B. Appeal to authority, hasty conclusion, common practice, equivocation, questionable premise, anachronism, appeal to ignorance, slippery slope, non-sequitor, conspiracy, appeal to emotions, gambling fallacies, inconsistency, composition, division, two wrongs make a right, conspiracy, and others
  - C. Problems with statistics: small samples, questionable methodology
3. Critical Thinking and Composition skills
  - A. Hone the ability to ask pertinent questions concerning a given topic
  - B. Establish a thesis statement with a historical line of inquiry
  - C. Support claims with valid evidence and use proper citation methods
  - D. utilize inductive and deductive logic to support and develop ideas
  - E. Communicate unambiguously and know the audience
4. Case Studies in Recent History and Additional Content Emphasis
  - A. Use the present as a prism with which to view the past. Pay particular attention to race, gender and class as factors for understanding and interpreting history. Subtopics can vary from instructor to instructor. One example is- America, 9-11,

- and the War on Terror: A History of Foreign/ Domestic Policy, Media and Propaganda
- B. Survey wide variety of ideological views from the far right to left of the political spectrum in the words of those proponents. Use prisms of race, class, and gender to view history in a variety of perspectives. Also, focus on shifting definitions of liberty, patriotism, and democracy in U.S. history as major themes
  - C. Understand perspectives of the aforementioned topic example, or others, through the lens of Middle Eastern Americans, the working class, European Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans in particular and their respective degrees of support, participation, and opinions concerning the War on Terror or other historical periods and topics. Historical emphasis on treatment of immigrants and civil liberties in America during time of warfare or other political, economic, or social crisis
  - D. Review foreign media concerning global opinions of U.S. actions around the world from the 9-11 attacks and the War on Terror through their historical roots in the 19th century. Survey non-corporate media in the U.S. for alternative perspectives to official government and ruling class sentiments including voices of color, i.e., Hispanics, African Americans, and Arab Americans in particular, as their views are often ignored by mainstream media and in many other official historical accounts
  - E. Site historical examples of government and media propaganda from the Spanish American War and WWI through Vietnam and the current War on Terror. Show media use of statistics and other information to create consensus among the public in support of specific government policies
  - F. Detect uses and abuses of history as ideological weapon to advance governmental administration agendas for groups or individuals in the present
  - G. Focus on the possible connections with the War on Terrorism and Globalization policies and their roots in European colonialism in the so-called Third World and potential roots for terror networks or cells. This also includes elements of institutional, economic, and environmental racism manifest historically in neoliberalist policies perpetuated by the American and European dominance via the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank
  - H. Analyze sources from a variety of perspectives to reconstruct history independent of students' own culturally conditioned views, value assumptions and biases based on cases presented

### **Methods of Presentation**

1. Group Activities
2. Lecture/Discussion
3. Guided discussion and debate
4. Appropriate audio-visual material and websites
5. Required writing skills proficiency
6. Students must complete three 1,500 word minimum out-of-class essays concerning course contents clearly stating a thesis and supporting the argument with logical and sound exemplification. Essays must provide proper citations for primary and secondary sources, which may include: print materials audio/video presentations interviews personal observation and examinations computer databases, including internet websites

### **Assignments and Methods of Evaluating Student Progress**

1. **Typical Assignments**
  - A. Write a 1,500 word argumentative essay concerning the connotations and denotations of terrorism, in theory and practice, in modern U.S. history
  - B. Identify and give clear examples of major fallacies relating to arguments in course topic materials
  - C. Write an in-class essay concerning the role of media and other sources in interpreting and recording history. Historians refer to this as historiography
2. **Methods of Evaluating Student Progress**
  - A. Class Performance
  - B. Class Participation
  - C. Evaluate clarity and effectiveness of writing and discussion, and the degree to which it successfully incorporated principles of composition and of logical reasoning taught in the course
  - D. Monitor clarity of understanding of the historical method, and the application of critical thinking to that method using the aforementioned course contents
3. **Student Learning Outcomes**  
Upon the completion of this course, the student should be able to:
  - A. Analyze the causes and consequences of political, economic and social change
  - B. Synthesize factual information and historical evidence from a variety of sources and identify the connections between them
  - C. The students will demonstrate a body of knowledge about and critical understanding of historical eras, their key events and ideas, and the process of change over time

### **Textbooks (Typical):**

1. Ronald Takaki (1994). *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (latest/e). Back Bay Books.
2. Davidson and Lytle (1999). *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (latest/e). McGraw Hill Publishers.
3. Barbara Olshansky (2004). *America's Disappeared: Secret Imprisonment, Detainees, and the War on Terror* (latest/e). Seven Stories Press.
4. Browne and Keeley (2003). *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking* (latest/e). Prentice Hall Publishers.
5. Dale Maharidge (1999). *The Coming White Minority: California, Multiculturalism and America's Future* (latest/e). Vintage.
6. Dale Maharidge (2004). *Homeland* (latest/e). Seven Stories Press.
7. E. Narveson, (1998). *The Historical Process: Critical Thinking and Historical Methodology* (latest/e). BEK Publications.
8. Benjamin Barber (1996). *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism and Reshaping the World* (latest/e). Ballantine Books.
9. Jonathan Barker (2003). *No Nonsense Guide to Terrorism* (latest/e). Verso Publishers.
10. Peter Phillips (2003). *Project Censored 2004* (latest/e). Seven Stories Press.
11. Eqbal Ahmad (2001). *Terrorism: Theirs and Ours* (latest/e). Seven Stories Press.
12. Susan Hawthorne (2002). *September 11, 2001: Feminist Perspectives* (latest/e). Bronwyn, Spinifex Press.
13. Nancy Chang (2002). *Silencing Political Dissent* (latest/e). Seven Stories Press.
14. David Cole (2002). *Terrorism and the Constitution* (latest/e). The New Press.
15. Michael Zezima (2004). *The Seven Deadly Spins: Exposing the Lies Behind War Propaganda* (latest/e). Common Courage Press.
16. Bell Hooks (2000). *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (latest/e). Routledge.

### **Special Student Materials**

### **Abbreviated Class Schedule Description:**

**Requisites: none**