Course Title: Effective Thinking: Problem Solving, Reasoning & Comprehension  
Catalog #: HM50 -Sec. 1541  
Instructor: Prof. C. Stewart, Ph.D.  
Day/Time/Room: Tues.-Thurs. 12:30-1:45/C-017  
Office: Orient 217 – 548-3599

TEXTBOOKS:


OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

1. A loose leaf folder
2. Black and dark blue ink pens
3. Index cards (100)
4. Stapler
5. American Heritage College Dictionary
7. Scantron sheets
8. #2 Pencils

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

1. EXAMINING OUR OWN THINKING: THOUGHTFUL INTROSPECTION

   Students will:
   a. Demonstrate their ability to identify the various levels of consciousness in their lives.
   b. Through observation, identify how sensation, perception and thinking interact in the acquisition of knowledge.
   c. Differentiate among inferences, assumptions, opinions and facts; and demonstrate how these thinking activities influence perception of reality.
   d. Demonstrate an awareness of the origins of their own viewpoints and recognize the inevitable bias inherent in all knowledge.
   e. Evaluate their own ideas according to pre-established standards (i.e. validity, clarity, purpose, appeal, ethics, etc.); and give reasons and evidence to support their evaluation.

2. EXAMINING THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE: COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS

   Students will:
   a. Recognize how words take on new meanings and definitions and how word precision (specification and agreement of terms) is essential to critical thinking.
b. Be able to construct syntactical relationships (analogies, definitions, cause/effect, sequence, etc.) which will accurately represent their own thinking.

3. EXAMINING THE THINKING OF OTHERS: RECEPTION & ANALYSIS OF DATA

Students will:

a. Restate accurately the author’s (or producer’s) message without any distortion or alteration imposed upon it by their own thinking.

b. Identify and distinguish the facts, inferences, assumptions, opinions and viewpoints evidenced in assigned data.

c. Identify the presence of ambiguities, errors in reasoning, omission of relevant information and propaganda techniques in assigned data.

d. Evaluate ideas communicated according to pre-established standards (i.e. validity, clarity, purpose, organization, appeal, ethics, etc.); and furnish reasons and evidence to support their evaluations.

4. EXAMINING THEIR OWN THINKING & THAT OF OTHERS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES: THOUGHTFUL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WORLD

Students will:

a. Formulate working thesis statements and articulate relevant reasons which support their theses.

b. Research, articulate and document relevant evidence to support their reasons.

c. Recognize the importance of exploring and exposing opposing viewpoints as an essential step for understanding the issue at hand.

d. Recognize that the purpose of argumentative papers is not to prove “you are right” but to seek a more complete understanding of the issue at hand.

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Based upon a clearly defined need, students will initiate a search strategy to locate relevant resources. After assessing, comprehending and interpreting information, students will organize and communicate the results as follows:

a. UTILIZING STRATEGIES, EXECUTING PROCESSES & PRODUCING A PRODUCT

   1. Use the search information to identify the important conclusions or resolutions to the problem to be shared with others.
   2. Decide on a purpose.

b. EVALUATING THE PROCESSES AND THE PRODUCT

   In addition, students will be able to evaluate the product and the process as demonstrated by the following:

   Evaluation is the ability to determine how well the final product resolved the information problem and if the steps taken to reach the desired outcome was appropriate and efficient. Students may evaluate their own work and/or be evaluated by others (i.e. classmates, teachers, library mediator staff, parents). The students will be able to do:
   1. Determine the extent to which the conclusions and project met the defined information need and/or satisfied the assignment.
2. Consider the research question/problem, search strategy, resources, or interpretation should have been expanded, revised or otherwise modified (i.e. what could/should I have done differently?).

3. Re-assess his/her understanding of the process and identify steps which need further understanding, skill development or practice (i.e. how can I do better in the future?).

PROCEDURES FOR ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES

Students will be provided ample opportunities for processing information provided through assigned reading materials, visuals and video tapes to develop proficiency in recognizing different types of thinking.

Methodology will include lectures, group discussions, small group projects and library/research assignments.

Emphasis will be placed on the incorporation of out-of-school/life experiences to illustrate how these thinking processes operate in the world. Writing assignments will increase in length and complexity, throughout the semester. The final assignment will require team research of an assigned topic from contrasting perspectives and the submission of a 5-10 page thesis paper (with documentation) on that topic (5 sources). Each student will be responsible for his/her written and oral presentation.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE

1. Quality participation in class discussions and presentations. Be a thoughtful prepared contributor.

2. HOMEWORK: Completion of all homework assignments. Any missing assignments at the end of the semester will affect your grade. (i.e. one missing a B grade becomes a B-; two missing a B- becomes a C+, etc.). All homework will be graded (A,B,C,D,F) on the basis of content and effort. Homework handed in late will result in a reduction of a graded point on that assigned homework (same as above).

3. EXAMS: There will be 2 exams; the time and content of each exam will be discussed in detail in class beforehand. No make-up examinations without physician's or authoritative documentation.

4. FINAL EXAM: There will be a written final exam.

5. Complete and submit a research paper and an oral presentation of it.

GRADING PRACTICES:

A student’s final grade will be based on the grades earned in the following areas:

- Graded homework 40%
- Exams 30%
- Written and Oral presentation/thesis paper 15%
- Quality Participation 15%

ABSENCES, LATENESS AND PARTICIPATION

You are expected to attend each scheduled class. Anyone missing 2 day classes is endangering possibilities of passing; and upon 3rd absence (day), will be withdrawn from the course. Two times late to class (by five minutes is late) will be counted as an absence. You must consult with professor during office hours.
You are expected to come to each class with needed materials, prepared to contribute and perform scholastically. Your classroom behavior must strengthen the teaching/learning environment. If not, you will be referred to the Dean of Students, with recommendation for withdrawal.

I have read the HM50 course outline and understand the student requirements concerning attendance, participation, prompt submission of homework, as well as the grading practices. I now know and accept the rules concerning absences and lateness.

Name: ______________________

Date: ________________