



Course syllabus

Academic year 2023-2024

1. Information about the program

1.1 Higher Education Institution	Babeș-Bolyai University
1.2 Faculty	European Studies
1.3 Department	International Relations and German Studies
1.4 Field of study	International Relations and European Studies
1.5 Study level	Bachelor
1.6 Programme of study/ Qualification	International Relations and European Studies (English line of study)

2. Information about the discipline

2.1 Title	CRITICAL THINKING SLE0177						
2.2 Course holder	Șerban Văetiși, PhD Associate Professor						
2.3 Seminar holder	Ramona Neagoș, PhD Assistant Lecturer						
2.4 Year of study	3	2.5 Semester	1	2.6. Type of assessment ¹	E	2.7 Type of module ²	OB

3. Total estimated time (teaching hours per semester)

3.1 No. of hours per week	3	3.2 of which for course	2	3.3 of which for seminar	1
3.4 Total no. of hours in the curriculum	42	3.5 of which for course	28	3.6 of which for seminar	14
Time distribution:					Hours
Study by using handbook, reader, bibliography and course notes					2
Additional library/specialised online research, field research					1
Preparation of seminars/laboratories, homework, projects, portfolios and essays					3
Tutoring					-
Examinations					1
Other activities:					-
3.7 Total no. of hours for individual study			7		
3.8 Total no. of hours per semester			42		
3.9 No. of ETCS credit points			4		

4. Prerequisites (where applicable)

4.1 of curriculum	-
4.2 of competencies	-

5. Conditions (where applicable)

5.1 For the development of the course	-
5.2 For the development of the seminar/laboratory	-

¹ E - exam, ME - multi-term examinations, C - collocutional examination/assessment test

² OB - core module, OP - elective module, F - extracurricular module



6. Specific skills acquired

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Professional skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course will familiarize and teach students the principles of critical thinking and the actual practice of thinking critically in the case of <i>various types of discourses</i> and <i>rhetorical-textual structures</i>. • The scope of applicability of critical thinking will be widened, from the construction of elements of speech to methods of evaluating discourses. Accordingly, examples from the areas of interest of students enrolled in faculties of <i>social sciences, political and cultural studies, international relations</i> or <i>diplomacy</i> will be considered. • The course addresses the issue of critical thinking in theoretical and practical perspectives, emphasizing the ways in which critical thinking can be practiced and applied in the case of <i>discourses such as public discourses, scientific discourses, ideological discourses, political discourses</i> or <i>advertising discourses</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students following this course will acquire the basic knowledge about the mechanisms of producing such discourses and will be able to identify the elements of discursive, argumentative and rhetorical construction of discourses, which will be useful in <i>various contexts</i> and <i>professional practices</i> of their future career such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The use of the foundational assumptions of international relations theories in the study of European and international processes (C1)</i> ▪ <i>The use of analysis methodologies in the field of international relations and European affairs (C2)</i> ▪ <i>Designing strategies in the field of international relations and European affairs (C3)</i> ▪ <i>Ensuring assistance in the management of relationships within organizations and institutions involved in European and international processes (C4)</i>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Interdisciplinary skills</p>	<p>Students following this course are expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on time, in a <i>rigorous, efficient and responsible manner</i> professional tasks; respecting the <i>ethical principles of academic activity</i>; develop practical skills such as <i>identifying discourses, identifying the problem, taking decisions, determining the factors</i> that affect the implementation of decisions, evaluating the ethical implications of decisions. • Develop awareness and exercising specific skills for critical thinking such as: <i>determining the relevance of information; distinguishing between rational and emotional assumptions; separating facts from opinions; identifying errors of reasoning and rhetorical / persuasive elements in speeches; producing logical and evidence-based arguments; defending a point of view through valid arguments; indicating weaknesses in an argument; drawing clear conclusions from valid arguments</i>. • Learn the principles of and exercise the <i>art of persuasion</i>; learn the principles of and exercise the <i>art of debate</i>. • Manage specific information for <i>solving complex tasks (CT1)</i> • Apply <i>efficient learning and work techniques</i> in multidisciplinary areas (CT2)



7. Course objectives (based on list of acquired skills)

7.1 General objective	• Making known the characteristics, the mechanisms, and the usefulness of critical thinking
7.2 Specific objectives	• Practicing critical thinking on various types of arguments and contexts of discourses

8. Contents

8.1 Course	Textbook Reference	Teaching methods	Observations
• Introduction to Course. Presenting Syllabus		Comprehensive lectures, PowerPoint presentations Illustrations, contextualizations, discussion, debates, specific analyses, exercises, reviews.	Materials used in the educational process: Power Point presentation (slides), visual illustrations (pictures, maps, charts, cartoons), handouts of bibliography excerpts.
• The Structure of Arguments	Ch. 2		
• Deductive and Inductive Reasoning	Ch. 3		
• Logical Fallacies	Ch. 5, 6		
• Understanding Contexts of Language and Rhetorics	Ch. 4		
• Definitions and Debates	Chs. 4,7		
• The Generative Model of Critical Thinking	Ch. 7, 8		
• Generalization, Analogy, Causation	Ch. 11		
• Description, Representation, Interpretation	Ch. 12		
• Thinking Critically about Socio-Political Topics	Ch. 14		
• Conclusion. Course Review. Preparing Exam			

Bibliography:

The principal bibliographical reference of this course (and model for its structure) is:

- BASSHAM, G. et al. *Critical Thinking. A Student's Introduction*, 4th edition. McGraw-Hill 2011.
→ Students may consider it as a basic, valuable and helpful Course Textbook for their purposes of learning, reviewing course information and preparing for exam.
→ See **Textbook Reference** on the *Table* above for the class topics and the corresponding chapters in this book.

Useful, additional bibliographic sources:

- BOWELL, T.; KEMP, G., eds. *Critical Thinking. A Concise Guide*, 3rd ed., Routledge 2010.
- BRINK-BUDGEN, Roy van den. *Critical Thinking for Students*. Spring Hill 2007.
- FISCHER, A. *Critical Thinking. An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press 2011.
- FORESMAN, G.; FOSL, P.; WATSON, J. *The Critical Thinking Toolkit*. Wiley Blackwell 2017.
- FREELY, A. *Argumentation and Debate. Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making*. Wadsworth 2009.
- GLYNOS, J. *Logics of Critical Explanations in Social and Political Theory*. Routledge 2007.
- HANSCOMB, S. *Critical Thinking. The Basics*. Routledge 2017.
- HUNTER, D. *A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking. Deciding What to Do and Believe*. Wiley 2014.
- KELLEY, D. *The Art of Reasoning. An Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking*. Norton & Co. 2014.
- MacRITCHIE, F. *The Need for Critical Thinking and the Scientific Method*, Taylor & Francis CRC Press, 2018.
- MOORE, B. N.; PARKER, R. *Critical Thinking*, 12th ed. McGraw-Hill 2017.
- MORROW, D. *A Workbook for Arguments. A Complete Course in Critical Thinking*. Hackett 2019.
- NOSICH, G. *Critical Writing. A Guide to Writing a Paper Using the Concepts and Processes of Critical Thinking*. Rowan & Littlefield 2021.



- PAUL, R.; ELDER, L. *The Thinker's Guide For Conscientious Citizens on How to Detect Media Bias & Propaganda in National and World News*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking 2008.
- RUGGIERO, V. R. *Beyond Feelings. A Guide to Critical Thinking*, 9th ed. McGraw-Hill 2012.
- SEN, M. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. Pearson 2010.
- SWATRIDGE, C. *The Oxford Guide to Effective Argument and Critical Thinking*. Oxford 2018.
- TITTLE, P. *Critical Thinking. An Appeal to Reason*. Routledge 2010.
- VAUGHN, L. *The Power of Critical Thinking. Effective Reasoning About Ordinary and Extraordinary Claims*. Oxford 2016.
- WESTON, A. *Thinking Through Questions A Concise Invitation to Critical, Expansive, and Philosophical Inquiry*. Cambridge 2020.

Note: all bibliographical references will be available in PDF formats, uploaded to a *googledrive* link

Online resources:

- www.factcheck.org
- <https://eufactcheck.eu>
- <http://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer>
- <https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com>
- www.argumentationtoolkit.org
- <https://www.intelligentspeculation.com>
- <https://simplicable.com/new/communication>
- www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/critical-thinking.html

8.2 Seminar	Teaching methods	Observations
<p>At the seminars, students will be invited to critically analyze various texts (<i>statements, complex arguments, fragments of discourses, public debates, excerpts from more elaborated studies</i>) through such tasks as:</p> <p>(1) to identify problematic aspects of argumentative and content construction, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>logical fallacies</i> and <i>other errors of reasoning</i> - <i>figures of speech</i> and <i>rhetorical/discursive contexts</i> of production and reception - contents from the spheres of <i>fake news</i> or <i>conspiracy theories</i> - <i>information procedures</i> and <i>research methods</i> flaws <p>(2) to suggest critical approaches of ideas and interpretations, by identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>methodological</i> and <i>communication</i> frameworks - <i>cultural, social and political contexts</i> - <i>ideological positions</i> and <i>theoretical biases</i> - <i>motivations</i> and <i>impact</i> of the analyzed discourses. 	<p>presentation, illustrations, exercises, seminar tasks, teamwork, interventions, discussions, projects</p>	<p>methods of discussing seminar topics: <i>identification, correction, contextualization, critical analysis, debate</i></p>
<p>Bibliography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BERGSTROM, C.; WEST, J. <i>Calling Bullshit, The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World</i>, Penguin Random House, 2020 (Chapter 5: Numbers and Nonsense, pp.77-104) ▪ BRATTON, B. We Need to Talk about TED. <i>The Guardian</i>, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/30/we-need-to-talk-about-ted ▪ CHEN, A. The Agency. <i>New York Times Magazine</i>, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html ▪ DONATH, J. Why Fake News Stories Thrive Online. <i>CNN Opinion</i>, 2016, https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/20/opinions/fake-news-stories-thrive-donath/index.html ▪ EUBANKS, P.; SCHAEFFER, J.D. A Kind Word for Bullshit: The Problem of Academic Writing. <i>College Composition and Communication</i> 59(3), 2008, pp. 372-388 		



- FELDMAN, B. Google's Dangerous Identity Crisis. *New York Magazine*, 2017, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/03/googles-dangerous-identity-crisis.html>
- FRANKFURT, H. On Bullshit. *Raritan Quarterly* 6(2), 1986, pp. 81-100
- PENNYCOOK, G. *et al.* On the Reception and Detection of Pseudo-Profound Bullshit. *Judgement and Decision Making*, 10(6), 2015, pp. 549-563
- SAGAN, C. *The Demon-Haunted World. Science as a Candle in the Dark*, Headline, 1996. (Chapter 12: The Fine Art of Baloney Detection, pp. 189-206)
- SCHICK, T.; VAUGHN, L. *How to Think About Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age*, 7th ed. McGraw-Hill 2004. (Chapter 4: Knowledge, Belief, and Evidence, pp. 62-93; Chapter. 5, Looking for Truth in Personal Experience, pp. 96-152)
- STAPEL, D. Faking Science: A True Story of Academic Fraud. <https://errorstatistics.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/fakingscience-20141214.pdf>

9. The correspondence between the content of the course and the expectations of the academic community, professional associations and representative employers in the field:

Students following this course will be able to *identify* and *avoid errors of reasoning* and better *understand the mechanisms of constructing arguments and statements*, as well as the *rhetorical underpinning and cultural-ideological biases* of discourses, including scientific, political, social and public discourses. This will make it easier for them to address issues related to understanding, communicating and interpreting events, discourses and political relations.

10. Assessment

Type of activity	10.1 Assessment criteria	10.2 Assessment methods	10.3 Percentage of the final grade
10.4 Course	(1) using information, notions and analyzes specific to the course topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - testing the knowledge taught/acquired - assessing the capacity to use information and comprehend discourses - assessing the ability to critically identify, judge and analyze 	66%
10.5 Seminar/Laboratory	(2) joining seminar activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessing participation to discussions and debates - assessing capacity to identify critical aspects of arguments and discourses - assessing capacity to suggest creative and critical ideas for analysis 	33%
			<i>Ex officio</i> : 1 point
10.6 Minimum standard of performance			
For grade 5: <i>using information, notions and analyzes specific to the course topic</i>		For grade 10: <i>having good seminar participation and successfully solving the examination test</i>	

Date

25.02.2024

Course holder signature

Vaetisi

Seminar holder signature

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