

COB 111



COURSE SYLLABUS for Spring 2014

Instructor:	Omar V. Brown
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Office Hours:	Monday 3:00 – 4:00pm and Wednesday 11:00 – 12:00 Noon and by appointment

Welcome to COB 111!

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK:

Keys to Success - Quick. Carter, C., Bishop, J. and Kravits, S.L. (2012). ISBN: 978-0-13-254171-8.

Required Materials:

Blue book (available in bookstore) or small spiral notebook, 8 ½ X 11

Student Planner (May be available at the student center, library, or hot spots)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides a study of Theory and Application of Learning and Critical Thinking, designed to ease the transition from high school to university life and provide important academic, intellectual, and social skills to help ensure a successful first year in college. The course is designed to assist students in increasing their knowledge of and skill in critical thinking and acting behaviors. Concepts studied include perception, memory, creativity, and problem solving as they relate to critical thinking. The effects of attitudes, values, logical fallacies, and thinking errors on critical thinking and problem solving are examined. Assignments require students to apply critical thinking skills to real-life situations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize and appreciate TAMU-C's uniqueness by positively engaging in supporting and encouraging other students.
2. Develop an understanding of the complex issues and choices confronting college students, such as course and career choices and identify problem behaviors that can interfere with student success.
3. Understand the levels of the critical thinking process through problem solving activities.
4. Exhibit higher levels of academic skills that will lead to their success at TAMU-C, such as time management, career exploration, and goal setting through various techniques.
5. Be familiar with the range of university events that are available to students.
6. Clarify how they learn and be able to apply active learning techniques.
7. Express what is expected of students so they can be successful at TAMU-C.
8. Understand the importance of excellent written and verbal communication by demonstrating academic honesty and integrity.
9. Access information from the web and library and understand the meaning of plagiarism and how to avoid it.
10. Engage in the dynamics of group activities to increase individual satisfaction and team performance.
11. Develop a deeper understanding of globalization and how the interconnected world affects them.
12. Construct well written papers with minimum grammar and syntax errors.
13. Develop four-year degree plans that accurately reflect degree requirements.
14. Calculate GPA and the impact grades have on cumulative GPA.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

GENERAL POLICIES FOR CLASSES: All students enrolled at the University will follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. See Student's Guide Handbook, Rules and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct at <http://www.tamuc.edu/studentLife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

Civility Requirement: The instructor reserves the right to manage a positive learning environment and thus will not tolerate inappropriate conduct in the course. If the instructor feels that you have not attended class adequately, habitually arrive late and unprepared, that you have cut class during speeches; left class in the middle of a session, that you have not contributed appropriately in class, or that you have complained inappropriately about assignments and grading policies, your final course grade may be reduced accordingly. Additionally, the instructor expects every student to maintain a professional level with respecting opinions of the instructor, students, and guest speakers; as well as in terms of dress code (no hats, no sagging, no over-exposure of body parts etc.). In this regard, hand-held devices such as cell/smart phones, iPods, MP3 players, and CD players must be turned off during class. The instructor can and will confiscate any devices that are disruptive to the class. Understand that this factor of your grade is highly subjective. In extreme cases, the instructor reserves the right to drop students from the class.

Academic Integrity: In this course the need for collaboration is undeniable if you are to excel, even in cases of individual work. There is a fine line in this process. You are encouraged to seek the help and advice of others. However, you *must* do your own work. My personal policy, which will guide this course, is: I trust you to behave honestly and ethically in all circumstances. Please ask me if you have questions about what is proper and what is not.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Instructors "are expected to uphold and support student integrity and honesty by maintaining conditions that encourage and enforce academic honesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material." See 13.99.99.R0.10 Academic Honesty at <https://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/13.99.99.R0.10AcademicHonesty.aspx>.

PLAGIARISM: Some people seem to believe that anything found on the Internet is free to use as they please. The "cut and paste" option also makes it quite tempting. However, information on the web must be properly cited just as you would any "hard copy" periodicals.

The following web site provides valuable insight relating to what constitutes plagiarism and how it may be avoided: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. To avoid plagiarism an individual must give credit wherever he or she uses:

- 1) another individual's idea, opinion, or theory
- 2) facts, statistics, graphs, and drawings that are not common knowledge
- 3) quotations of another individual's spoken or written words
- 4) paraphrase another individual's spoken or written words

Any deviation from the guidelines concerning quotes and citations constitutes plagiarism, as it suggests that you are trying to submit someone else's work and creativity as your own. In accordance with the Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct Section 5.b [1, 2, 3], the penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion.

POLICIES RELEVANT TO COB 111 STUDENTS:

Course Evaluation: The final course grade will be based on the following components:

Component Title	Points
Critical Thinking Writing Assignments (4)	20
Attend at least 4 University/Campus Sponsored Events or Activities	10
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	15
Activities and Assignments	15
Class Attendance and Participation	15
Class Service Project	10
Total Points Possible	100

Course Final Grade Scale

- A = 100-90
- B = 89-80
- C = 79-70
- D = 69-60
- F = 59 & Below

Course Requirements:

- **Critical Thinking Writing Assignment:** Each student will write four 1-paged critical analyses that describe how attending events on campus contributes to the student's success as a college student, as well as other topics as deemed necessary by the instructor. These papers should be organized with Introduction, Main Points, and Summary. Pick a few significant elements from the event to focus on in your critical analysis.
Students are expected to understand and utilize APA Formatting, which is required for every written assignment in this course. Please take the time to see our Doc Sharing folder for a Power Point presentation concerning APA Formatting. An extensive resource is also available within the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. All written assignment submitted to the eCollege dropbox will be scanned automatically through Turnitin.

- **Attend at least 4 University/Campus Sponsored Events or Activities:** Each student will attend at least 4 events on campus – which should be used for the Critical Thinking Writing Assignments. 1 event should be a “Cultural Event” (art show, concert, play, etc.); 1 should be a “University-Wide Event” (guest speaker, most CAB activities, colloquium, convocation, etc.); 1 should be an athletic event (varsity sport or intramural sport); and 1 can be of the student’s choosing of any university/campus sponsored event or activity. At least 24-hours’ notice (pending confirmation) must be given to instructor regarding intended events to attend. Campus events may be found at: <https://ems.tamuc.edu/MasterCalendar/MasterCalendar.aspx>.
- **Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam:** Each student will take two online exams through eCollege. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice, short answers, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions from the textbook and materials related to the course lectures and workshops.
- **Class Attendance, Participation, and Miscellaneous Activities and Assignments:**
 - ❖ Class Attendance and Participation is critical to your success in this course, just as it is critical for your job. The attendance policy is simple: Come to class every day. Come to class on time. Come to class prepared. The instructor reserves the right to implement punitive policies if attendance is not acceptable. You get **two free absences** in this class, so save them and use them judiciously. If you miss more than four classes, you cannot make an A. It is simply impossible. If you miss five classes, you cannot make a B. If you miss six class periods, you cannot make a C. If you miss more than seven classes you will automatically receive an F for the course.
 - ❖ Miscellaneous Activities and Assignments are vital to developing a support community at TAMU-C. Students will be expected to complete degree audit and plan, calculate GPA, develop resume, maintain a planner, maintain journal/notes, complete surveys, and other assignments as the instructor sees fit. One major component is the **Service Project** which is used to promote active learning and social responsibility through planning and orchestrating a community initiative.
- **eCollege – Online course access:** The instructor urges students to familiarize themselves with eCollege by going thru the eCollege student’s tutorial or orientation process (SOT). This will ensure that each student will have sufficient knowledge on how to accomplish the requirements of the course. It is NOT the Instructor’s responsibility to teach students on how eCollege works. **The instructor assumes that each student has a working knowledge of eCollege and has a MyLeo e-mail address.**

First time eCollege users: eCollege is generally very user friendly; however, should you have any questions or concerns about it, you may want to complete an eCollege orientation. You can access the online eCollege Orientation by clicking on the following link: <http://online.tamuc.org/>. The home page will give you directions on how to proceed from there. Your login is your Campus-wide ID # and your password is the same as you use for your MyLeo.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a “Browser Test,” login to eCollege, click on the „MyCourses” tab, then select “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

Technical Support: If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the eCollege Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Help Desk can be reached by sending an email to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or by calling 1-866-656-5511. Additionally, you can click on the "Help" button located at the top of each page for more information.

Week Of	1 st class meeting (Monday)	2 nd class meeting (Wednesday)
January 13 th	Chapter 1 – Welcome to College Overview of Course Syllabus and Assignments (Event Papers, Degree Plans, Exams, etc.)	Degree Evaluations, What-If Analysis and Degree Requirements University Catalog [Intro in Students' Lounge by Jan. 19th]
January 20 th	Chapter 2 – Goals and Time Develop 4 year degree plans that reflect degree requirements, course rotations, and prerequisites. Bring student planner or your own personal planner to class.	Set and Achieve Realistic Goals Effectively Manage Time Weekly To-Do List/ Planner Due Syllabus Quiz
January 27 th	Chapter 3 – Learning How You Learn [Brainstorm service project idea]	Library visit MEET IN LIBRARY THIS DAY
February 3 rd	Panel of Guest speakers – In class visit	Chapter 5 – Reading & Information Literacy Learning from print and online materials
February 10 th	Multiple Intelligences & Pathways to Learning, Personality Spectrum *Event Paper 1 Due	Chapter 6 – Listening and Note Taking Note taking: assess strengths and weaknesses, utilize two different styles and evaluate them
February 17 th	Note taking systems How developed are your listening and note-taking skills?	Chapter 8 – Test Taking Preparation for testing, test anxiety, strategies for success
February 24 th	Mastering different types of test questions Mid-Term Exam Review *Event Paper 2 Due	Mid Term Exam Taken via eCollege, (Chapters 1,2,3,5,6, & 8) MEET IN COMPUTER LAB THIS DAY
March 3 rd	Chapter 4 – Critical, Creative and Practical Thinking	Effective problem solving and decision making TRIO – In class visit
March 10 th	Spring Break – No Class	Have fun and be safe!
March 17 th	Chapter 7 – Memory & Studying	Strategies for improving memory and study performance *Event Paper 3 Due
March 24 th	Chapter 9 – Diversity & Communication	Cultural competency, communication and personal relationships
March 31 st	Chapter 10 – Wellness & Stress Management Staying healthy in mind and body	Counseling – In class visit
April 7 th	Chapter 12– Careers & More Career Awareness: resume writing, research careers based on skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience related to major	Career Development – In class visit Overview of resumes, “business attire”, job fairs, networking
April 14 th	GPA Calculation Learn how to compute GPA Resume Due	Chapter 11 – Managing Money Living within your means, budgeting, using credit cards wisely
April 21 st	Financial Aid Office – In class visit Implications of GPA for academic standing and financial aid	*Event Paper 4 Due
April 28 th	Final Exam Review Q&A – University Citizenship	
May 5 th	Final Exam Taken via eCollege (Chapters 4,7, 9-12) MEET IN COMPUTER LAB THIS DAY	The university's final exam schedule will confirm exact day and time of final exam.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to change this schedule as circumstances may dictate. All changes will be announced in class or via email.

Critical Thinking Grid

	4 - Exemplary If applicable, consistently does all or almost all of the following	3 - Satisfactory If applicable, consistently does most or many of the following	2- Below Satisfactory If applicable, consistently does most or many of the following	1 - Unsatisfactory If applicable, consistently does all or almost all of the following
Purpose	--Demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment’s purpose	--Demonstrates an understanding of the assignment’s purpose	--Is not completely clear about the purpose of the assignment	--Does not clearly understand the purpose of the assignment
Key Question, Problem, or Issue	--Clearly defines the issue or problem; accurately identifies the core issues --Appreciates depth and breadth of problem --Demonstrates fair-mindedness toward problem	--Defines the issue; identifies the core issues, but may not fully explore their depth and breadth --Demonstrates fair-mindedness	--Defines the issue, but poorly (superficially, narrowly); may overlook some core issues --Has trouble maintaining a fair-minded approach toward the problem	--Fails to clearly define the issue or problem; does not recognize the core issues --Fails to maintain a fair-minded approach toward the problem
Point of View	--Identifies and evaluates relevant significant points of view --Is empathetic, fair in examining all relevant points of view	--Identifies and evaluates relevant points of view --Is fair in examining those views	--May identify other points of view but struggles with maintaining fairmindedness; may focus on irrelevant or insignificant points of view	--Ignores or superficially evaluates alternate points of view --Cannot separate own vested interests and feelings when evaluating other points of view
Information	--Gathers sufficient, credible, relevant information: observations, statements, logic, data, facts, questions, graphs, themes, assertions, descriptions, etc. --Includes information that opposes as well as supports the argued position --Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from that information	--Gathers sufficient, credible, and relevant information --Includes some information from opposing views --Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from it	--Gathers some credible information, but not enough; some information may be irrelevant --Omits significant information, including some strong counter-arguments --Sometimes confuses information and the inferences drawn from it	--Relies on insufficient, irrelevant, or unreliable information --Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counter-arguments --Confuses information and inferences drawn from that information
Concepts	--Identifies and accurately explains/uses the relevant key concepts	--Identifies and accurately explains and uses the key concepts, but not with the depth and precision of a “4”	--Identifies some (not all) key concepts, but use of concepts is superficial and inaccurate at times	--Misunderstands key concepts or ignores relevant key concepts altogether
Assumptions	--Accurately identifies assumptions (things taken for granted) --Makes assumptions that are consistent, reasonable, valid	--Identifies assumptions --Makes valid assumptions	--Fails to identify assumptions, or fails to explain them, or the assumptions identified are irrelevant, not clearly stated, and/or invalid	--Fails to identify assumptions --Makes invalid assumptions
Interpretations, Inferences	--Follows where evidence and reason lead in order to obtain defensible, thoughtful, logical conclusions or solutions --Makes deep rather than superficial inferences --Makes inferences that are consistent with one another	--Follows where evidence and reason lead to obtain justifiable, logical conclusions --Makes valid inferences, but not with the same depth and as a “4”	--Does follow some evidence to conclusions, but inferences are more often than not unclear, illogical, inconsistent, and/or superficial	--Uses superficial, simplistic, or irrelevant reasons and unjustifiable claims --Makes illogical, inconsistent inferences --Exhibits closed-mindedness or hostility to reason; regardless of the evidence, maintains or defends views based on self-interest
Implications, Consequences	--Identifies the most significant implications and consequences of the reasoning (whether positive and/or negative) --Distinguishes probable from improbable implications	--Identifies significant implications and consequences and distinguishes probable from improbable implications, but not with the same insight and precision as a “4”	--Has trouble identifying significant implications and consequences; identifies improbable implications	--Ignores significant implications and consequences of reasoning

4 = Thinking is exemplary, skilled, marked by excellence in clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logicity, and fairness

3 = Thinking is competent, effective, accurate and clear, but lacks the exemplary depth, precision, and insight of a 4

2 = Thinking is inconsistent, ineffective; shows a lack of consistent competence: is often unclear, imprecise, inaccurate, and superficial

1 = Thinking is unskilled and insufficient, marked by imprecision, lack of clarity, superficiality, illogicality, and inaccuracy, and unfairness

Critical Thinking Worksheet

Overall Score _____

If applicable, score the element (1-4)	Element of Reasoning	Comments
	Purpose: Does the student demonstrate a clear understanding of the assignment’s purpose?	
	Key Question, Problem, or Issue: Does the student clearly define the issue or problem, accurately identify the core issues, appreciate their depth and breadth?	
	Point of View: Does the student identify and evaluate relevant significant points of view? Does the student demonstrate fairmindedness toward the problem?	
	Information: Does the student gather sufficient, credible, relevant information (statements, logic, data, facts, questions, graphs, assertions, observations, etc.)? Does the student include information that opposes as well as supports the argued position? Does the student distinguish between information and inferences drawn from that information?	
	Concepts: Does the student identify and accurately explain/use the relevant key concepts?	
	Assumptions: Does the student accurately identify assumptions (things taken for granted)? Does the student make assumptions that are consistent, reasonable, valid?	
	Interpretations, Inferences: Does the student follow where evidence and reason lead in order to obtain defensible, thoughtful, logical conclusions or solutions? Does the student make deep (rather than superficial) inferences? Are the inferences consistent?	
	Implications, Consequences: Does the student identify the most significant implications and consequences? Does the student distinguish probable from improbable implications?	

4 = Thinking is exemplary, skilled, marked by excellence in clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logicity, and fairness

3 = Thinking is competent, effective, accurate and clear, but lacks the exemplary depth, precision, and insight of a 4

2 = Thinking is inconsistent, ineffective; shows a lack of consistent competence: is often unclear, imprecise, inaccurate, and superficial

1 = Thinking is unskilled and insufficient, marked by imprecision, lack of clarity, superficiality, illogicality, and inaccuracy, and unfairness