

COH 111 (Section 004): Critical Thinking

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Texas A&M University - Commerce
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Phone: 903-423-9996
Location: Business Administration (BA) 257
Monday: 3:00pm-4:50pm

COURSE SYLLABUS

This course introduces students to theories of learning & critical thinking & provides a learning framework to apply them to their college & life experiences. Concepts studied include research & theory on how people learn, critical thinking, problem solving, perception, learning styles, memory, creativity, & how attitudes & values affect the learning & thinking processes. The course also shows students how to apply these theories & research findings to help develop practical skills in time management, reading, note taking, test taking, & other areas that will help them be more successful students & lifelong learners. (1 semester hour)

OBJECTIVES:

- To gain an overview of the customs, organization, & academic disciplines within an institution of higher education.
- To increase one's effectiveness in practical matters such as time management, organization, & planning.
- To develop general skills in critical thinking, creative problem solving, & other necessary tools for success in college & beyond.
- To learn & employ sound practices in research, study, & practice.
- To gain a specific understanding of the conceptual & practical demands of study in the visual arts.
- To familiarize oneself with the faculty & programs of study within the Department of Art at Texas A&M University – Commerce.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Tardiness, leaving early & absences will result in grade reduction: Two late arrivals will equal one absence. Each absence will result in the final course grade will be lowered one full letter grade. After the fourth absence, the final course grade will result in a failure of the course. If you are not **present & prepared** for class or critique you will be counted as absent for the day. Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Students who do not attend at least one of the first two class meetings of the course & who have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, may be dropped from the course. The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class session, & is central to success in this course. Demonstrations, lectures, assignments, & discussions will be scheduled for many class periods. Students who are absent due to illness should contact me &/or leave a message on my voice mail.

GRADING FORMAT:

A = 100 – 90: Excellent work, work meets the requirements & goes above & beyond expectations.
B = 89 – 80: Work meets all requirements to a high degree, & is presented in a meaningful fashion.
C = 79 – 70: Work is average, meets all requirements minimally, presentation is “satisfactory.”
D = 69 – 60: Work is below average, concepts are missing or not fulfilled, presentation lacks quality.
F = 59 – 50: “F” Work receives a failing grade, unacceptable & insufficient work.

GRADING: Your grade will result from an evaluation of the following criteria: projects / assignments, participation in group discussions, presentations, professional practices. Attendance will be considered into your grade; after four absences the resulting grade will be a failure of the course.

1. READING THE TEXTBOOK AS ASSIGNED ON THE COURSE SCHEDULE

It is imperative that students in COH 111 read the textbook in accordance with the assigned dates. Information drawn from the textbook will be invaluable in acclimating you to college life, & topics covered in it will often frame the activities in class. Please do not ignore this important component of COH 111.

2. ATTENDANCE. (20 points) Students in COH 111 will receive 20 points if they have 3 or fewer absences; conversely, they may risk failing this course when more than 4 unexcused absences are accrued. Please consult the Student Guide for the differences between excused & unexcused absences, as well as the heading in this syllabus entitled, "Course & University Procedures/Policies."

3. PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT IN ALL ACTIVITIES OF THIS CLASS (20 points)

Engagement, participation, & a positive attitude are important in a course of this kind, as they are in any area of college & life. It is especially important that first-year students begin the process of integrating into both the university & the department's community of scholar/artists.

4. TWO CRITICAL ESSAYS RESPONDING TO UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES (30 points each; 60 points total)

Students in COH 111 are expected to attend on-campus university events or activities as part of their first-year experience. They will write two critical essays on each, explaining what they learned from these events & how attending each event contributed to their being a more successful & educated college student. These papers are expected to demonstrate critical & analytical thought expressed in clear & proper language.

First critical essay due Monday, October 3, at the beginning of class. This essay must be an informed critical response to the Annual Art Faculty Exhibit in the University Gallery from August 29-September 09. It must describe the show in general & focus critically on the work of at least three members of the faculty. You must discuss the content & intent of your chosen works, so it would be a good idea both to interview the faculty members & to research information about him or her. Please be sure to attend the opening on Tuesday, September 6, from 5-7:00 p.m. The essay must be in Word format, double-spaced in Calibri font, size 11pt, & a minimum of 2 pages in length. **(30 points)**

Second critical essay due Monday, December 5, at the beginning of class. The second essay must be chosen from the following kinds of events. It must record the specific name of the event, its date & time, & discuss in an informed & critical manner the enrichment it furnished you & other attendees. The essay must be in Word format, double-spaced in Calibri font, size 11pt, & a minimum of 2 pages in length. **(30 points)**

Cultural events outside the visual arts, including concerts, performances, plays, or other venues featuring the literary or performance arts.

Athletic events such as varsity or organized intramural activities.

University-Wide academic events, including guest speakers at university events, presentations at honor or learned societies, breakout entertainment, colloquia, symposia, etc. If you choose a university-sponsored social event, gathering, or club activity, it must be an organization that has open registration & enrollment.

A presentation in this class by a member of the art faculty. If this option is chosen, you will summarize the intent of the talk & examine the ways in which the faculty member expressed ideas (content) in his or her work through visual means. Focus in particular on what you learned about the creative process.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Carter, Carol, et al, *Keys to Success*. 1st edition. Pearson, 2012. [ISBN-13 978-0-13-254171-8; ISBN-10 0-13-254171-8] Available at the on-campus Texas Bookstore, East Texas Bookstore (1606 Lee Street), and online.

Spiral-bound academic planner/calendar (freshman students receive planners during orientation)

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Cheating & illegal use of copyrighted material is not tolerated & zero tolerance in this class. Be sure that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, misrepresenting absences or tardiness on sign-in sheets or roll calls, etc.). Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression in college & may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class, &/or the University, & a failing grade.

LATE WORK: All assignments / projects must be completed on time for full credit. Failure to complete any assignment on time will result in a drop of full letter grades, such as response papers, in-class exercises, or other class work. If the time line states that a project is due at the beginning of class, turning it in at the end or after class is considered late. Full participation by showing completed work during all critiques is required along with active participation through shared ideas & commentary.

CLASSROOM COURTESY: Please leave the classroom clean. Regardless of the condition you find it in, we request that you leave it clean for the next person. This is a shared space & we all need to work together to keep it a clean & productive environment.

ACCOMMODATIONS 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 & Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132 | Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY:

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC

46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

OTHER GUIDELINES: The instructor & the Department of Art are not responsible for student work left in workspaces, installation spaces, the critique space, the shops, or the classrooms. Projects/materials are not to be stored in the group working space. Each student is responsible for ensuring that his/her projects & materials are safely stored, displayed, installed, & removed from the classroom & critique space.

Students must check their school email accounts regularly. Students are responsible for any information, deadlines, & updates emailed to their webmail accounts.

Students should check with the instructor or another student outside of class time when they miss a class (prior to missing the class if possible), as in- & out-of-class exercises are spontaneously assigned. Students should bring a doctor's note for any class from which they expect to be excused.

Please address any concerns, problems, & questions regarding this class to the instructor as they arise. Outside class, the instructor is available by appointment, or through email. Students can expect a response to email within 24 hours.

Always be open-minded when considering new ideas & constructive criticism.

Do not use cell phones, music devices or headphones during class time. No text messaging. Also please turn cell phones off or ringers off during class time, **before you arrive to class.**

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR: Be advised that you can & will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. Students who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, & functions of the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by University authorities for misconduct, as set forth in the applicable rules of the Board of Regents & the University & state law governing such actions.

Our classroom is a forum for learning, a place where all of us should feel safe, comfortable, & enlivened. Each of us should look forward not only to coming to class but to learning the fascinating history of art. Towards this end, all are expected to be courteous & respectful of each other.

Common sense, professionalism, & the Golden Rule should prevail, but let it be known that the following activities will not be tolerated under any circumstance:

It is forbidden to sleep, drowse, or close one's eyes during class.

Cell phones, computers, pagers, & other personal electronic devices may not be used—or in sight—while class is in session.*

Place backpacks, pouches, purses & other items from your desks when class is in session; permissible items are pens, pencils, the textbook, notes, water, sodas, & similar beverages.

No one will engage in disruptive or distracting behavior of any sort.

Aggression, threatening behavior (whether implied or physical), disrespect, & needless argumentation directed at anyone in the classroom may result in immediate expulsion &/or failure of the course.

No one may exit the classroom without prior permission or polite notification of the instructor.

Neither chronic tardiness nor exiting the classroom early is permitted, & excessive infractions may result in expulsion from &/or failure of the course.

Distracting consumption of food or beverages when the class is in session.

For classrooms with front & back exits: Please avoid entering or exiting the classroom through the front doors after the class has begun.

Whispering, talking to each other, or otherwise engaging in distracting behavior while the instructor is lecturing, answering questions, or involved in dialogue with students.

Please understand that violations of these protocols are taken seriously & may result in expulsion from the class &/or a final grade of F. Please also understand that the instructor will not hesitate

to summon the University Police when student conduct is deemed threatening or belligerent to the instructor or other students.

***Cell phones, computers, & other electronic devices:** Unless there is a verifiable disability necessitating their use, there is a complete ban on the use of electronic devices in this classroom while class is in session. First violations will result in a warning; continued violations will result in expulsion from the class, that is, **failure of the course**. Students who must take an emergency call will leave the classroom to do so.

PHILOSOPHY: Texas A&M University -Commerce is an institution, which encourages the intellectual & personal growth of its students as scholars & citizens. As an educational institution, the University recognizes that the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, & the development of individuals requires the free exchange of ideas, self-expression, & the challenging of beliefs & customs. In order to maintain an environment where these goals can be achieved safely & equitably, the University promotes civility, respect & integrity among all members of the community. As stated in the Standard of Ethical Conduct, students are expected to exhibit high standards of behavior & concern for others.

COURSE STRUCTURE (METHODS OF INSTRUCTION): This class meets once a week for a period of 1 hour & 50 minutes each session. It potentially encompasses brief lectures, projects, group discussion / critique, reading / writing exercises, & online exercises. Participation is required & is imperative to your final grade.

GRADES OF INCOMPLETE ("X"): University guidelines on Incomplete Grades have recently changed, as described in *Student's Guidebook* & *Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures* (Supplements System Policy 13.02). In short, students are eligible to receive an "X" only if they been unable, because of circumstances beyond their control, to attend classes during Finals Week or the preceding three weeks. If a student meets these criteria, he or she must still petition the instructor & the instructor's department head by filling out & submitting a "Plan for Completing the Grade of X." Whether or not a petition is valid will be determined by the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

EXTRA CREDIT: A maximum of five points will be added to the student's final average for volunteer work in the University Gallery. Two hour's work will be equal to one point. During summer terms, when the University Gallery is closed, extra credit may be earned by special projects or assignments arranged in consultation with the instructor. Please understand that when you sign up for extra credit, there is the full expectation that you will show up at the designated time & place. If you cannot show up at your scheduled time, you must notify the Department of Art office in advance so that someone else can be found to take your place. **If you are a "no-show," then the points you expected to earn towards the final grade in this class will instead be deducted from it. Further, as a "no show" you will be ineligible to receive any other extra credit, even if you have already put in voluntary time.**

ACADEMIC PLANNING AND TIME MANAGEMENT:

Academic planning assignment due Thursday, September 12. (10 points)

Please follow these instructions to the letter:

Obtain or purchase an academic planner, preferably a planner with an academic year schedule (2014-2015) rather than a calendar year. (Students receive complementary planners during orientation.)

Study carefully each of the syllabuses and handouts from your classes (art courses and other classes alike) and enter into the calendar all assignments, exams, quizzes, term and research papers, final examinations, and deadlines for each and every one of your classes. Yes, it is understood that we live in a digital age and that many

of us rely in part on our hand-held smart phones and similar devices to schedule our time. Nevertheless, the volume of assignments and deadlines involved in an academic semester is best committed to the large format and easy accessibility of an academic planner. Do not forget to put your name and contact information in the planner when you turn it in. Since I will have the planner in my possession from September 12-18, be sure that you have noted any assignments due within that period of time and a few days beyond.

Print paper copies of all of your syllabuses, punch them with a 3-hole puncher, insert them into an inexpensive loose-leaf binder, write your name on the binder, and turn it in with the academic calendar at the beginning of class on September 12. **(10 points)**

Degree plan assignment due Monday, September 25. (10 points) Go online to myLEO and locate your current degree plan in Degree Works. Print it and submit it at the beginning of class on September 25. You will receive in-class instructions on how to navigate myLEO. Be sure that your name is visible on the document so that I know whose plan I am looking at.

“What if?” degree plan assignment due Monday, October 9. (10 points) Go online to myLEO Degree Works and generate a “what if?” degree plan in a major that is different from your own. It does not matter what the major is, and generating the “what if?” analysis will not affect your current major. Print it and submit it at the beginning of class on October 9, being sure that your name is clearly visible on the copy.

Resume assignment due Thursday, November 21. (10 points) Students in COH 111 will prepare, print, and submit a resume that targets a profession in their chosen field and emphasizes their unique achievements and qualifications for such employment. Turn it in at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 20. Students may seek the help of the Office of Career Services (Student Access and Success Center) or use the office’s online templates: http://www.tamuc.edu/studentLife/campusServices/careerDevelopment/documents/CareerDevHandbook_2012.pdf.]

Other websites with free resume-building templates are:

Microsoft Office Resume Templates: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/resume-template-TC030004143.aspx>

Google Docs Template Gallery: <https://docs.google.com/templates>

FINAL EXAMINATION/SUMMARY. Monday, December 12, 3-4:50pm (20 points)

The final examination and summary of the course will cover various topics of COH-004, with special emphasis on the readings from the textbook, Carol Carter, *Keys to Success*.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance at the Opening Reception of the Annual Faculty Exhibition on September 6, 5-7:00pm Students receive no grade for this requirement, but attendance and participation is mandatory. Please remember that one of your critical essays will consider the works exhibited in this show, so please make every effort to learn about the work of the faculty while you have the chance to do so. The exhibition runs from August 29-September 09.

Creation of an ePortfolio for the Global Scholar Program. (Instructions will be provided in two informational sessions in September – see the syllabus.)

Participation in the Library Tutorial of October 3. Students receive no grade for this requirement, but attendance and participation is mandatory.

Attendance at all scheduled “field trips” to university offices, facilities, or events (refer to these activities on the syllabus)

Reminder: no more than 4 unexcused absences from class or you risk failure.

(Each additional unexcused absence will result in the loss of a letter grade; excessive absences will result in either being dropped from or failing the course.) Unexcused absences from class are defined in the *Student Guide* (consult by going to the university’s homepage) and are understandable from a common-sense point of view.

Students should immediately inform the instructor of any excused absences, either before or afterwards, and ask what material was missed and how to make it up.

Students in COH 111 must turn in all assignments in a timely manner. All assigned work must be completed and turned in on time to receive credit for this course. Incomplete assignments will result in failure of the course. Moreover, all work must be turned in at the assigned dates and times. It will be the instructor's prerogative to accept late work

or not, and this will depend on cases of extreme and extenuating circumstances that can be documented to the instructor's satisfaction

Required class meeting times are highlighted in bold type. Important events opportunities are indicated in grey.

8/29 (Monday) Greetings & introduction to the course.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 1 ("Welcome to College") & Chapter 2 ("Goals & Time")

Class topics: Adjusting to college life; FAQs; strategies for academic success; time management; planning; introduction to Degree Works

9/6 (Tuesday) Opening Reception: *Annual Faculty Exhibition*, 5-7:00 p.m., University Gallery. The exhibition runs from August 29-September 09.

9/5 (Monday) Meet in Ferguson Social Sciences Building room 311 today to attend the first of two informational sessions on the Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA), a component of the Texas A&M Commerce's Global Scholar Program.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 3 ("Learning How You Learn")

9/12 (Monday) Meet in Ferguson Social Sciences Building room 311 today to attend the second of two informational sessions on the Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA).

ACADEMIC PLANNER ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 4 ("Critical, Creative, & Practical Thinking")

9/19 (Monday) Class Topics: Critical Thinking; Learning Styles & Intelligences

9/25 (Monday) Guest Speaker. Ms. Marty Marsh Jacobs, Licensed Counselor, will discuss the services of the A&M-Commerce Counseling Center

Class topics: Working with Degree Works; college survival skills

DEGREE PLAN ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 5 ("Reading & Information Literacy")

9/29 (Tuesday) Johanna Warwick, *Monuments to Strangers*. University Gallery, 5-7:00 p.m. The exhibition runs from September 29-October 28.

10/3 (Monday) Library Tutorial. Meet in Room 146 of Gee Library for the Library Research Tutorial. Ms. Megan Beard, Research & Instruction Librarian, will demonstrate the online resources

for research at Texas A&M University-Commerce. (Room 146 is tucked away by The Bistro on the first floor.)

FIRST CRITICAL ESSAY DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 6 ("Listening & Note Taking")

10/9 (Monday) Class topics: Critical Thinking

"WHAT IF?" ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 7 ("Memory & Studying")

10/12 (Wednesday) Fall Career Fair, Rayburn Student Center, 1-3:00 p.m. Visit the Office of Career Development online to learn more about this opportunity to speak with prospective employers. (Please note that registration & professional attire are required to attend this event.)

10/17 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 8 ("Test Taking")

10/24 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 9 ("Diversity & Communication")

10/25 (Tuesday) Opening Reception: Ginger Owen & Vicki Van Ameyden, *Heritage Habits*. University Gallery, 5-7:00 p.m. The exhibition runs from October 25-November 18.

10/31 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 10 ("Wellness & Stress Management")

11/3 (Tuesday) Opening Reception: Rex Peteet, *Capturing that Moment*. University Gallery, 5-7:00 p.m. The exhibition runs from November 03-December 09.

11/7 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 11 ("Managing Money")

11/14 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

Readings for the week: Carter, *Keys to Success*, Chapter 12 ("Careers & More")

11/21 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

RÉSUMÉ ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

11/28 (Monday) Faculty Speakers Series:

11/30 (Wednesday) Opening Reception: *Annual Holiday Sale*. University Gallery, 5-7:00 p.m. The art sale runs from November 30-December 02.

12/5 (Monday) Review & Summary of the Course

SECOND CRITICAL ESSAY DUE TODAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

12/12 (Monday) FINAL EXAMINATION, 3-4:50pm, Art 111

SUMMARY OF GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND THEIR DEADLINES:

September 12 (Monday)	Academic planner assignment due today. (10 points)
September 25 (Monday)	Degree plan assignment due today. (10 points)
October 3 (Monday)	First critical essay due today. (30 points)
October 9 (Monday)	"What if?" degree plan assignment due today. (10 points)
November 21 (Monday)	Resume assignment due today. (10 points)
December 5 (Monday)	Second critical essay due today. (30 points)
December 12 (Monday)	Final Examination, 4-5:45 p.m.. (20 points)
Class Participation:	20 points maximum.
Attendance:	3 or fewer absences (20 points)
Total Points:	160 points.

CALCULATION OF FINAL GRADE:**160 - 144 points = A****143 - 128 points = B****127 - 112 points = C****111 - 96 points = D****95 - 0 points = F****Events Calendar:**

When students claim there is nothing to do in Commerce, it is usually because they have failed to check the various calendars kept by university offices. Always check the central calendar of the university for events and activities:

<https://ems.tamuc.edu/MasterCalendar/MasterCalendar.aspx>

Other divisions within the university keep calendars as well, including the Office of Career Development:

<http://web.tamuc.edu/studentLife/campusServices/careerDevelopment/calendarOfEvents.aspx>