

YEAR 2 SEMESTER 3

Paper VI

Introduction to Critical Thinking

OBJECTIVES

- Train students to reason well, improve analytical abilities and make logical decisions.
- Students will be taught to form arguments based on a premise and to also teach students to take a logical stand on contemporary issues, belief systems and ethical positioning.
- To give students a platform where they can articulate political opinion backed with facts and not merely hyperbole.
- Teach the difference between arguments and non arguments that may lead to cluttered thought process.
- Learning to recognise and categorise while stating the implications of an argument, passage or theory/ideology.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This paper will seek to

- facilitate students in identifying and stating arguments but identify main points in a passage or essay and state the reason that support a given choice.
- show students a more open minded approach when discussing bipartisan issues or issues that have grey areas.
- help evaluate arguments in terms of its strength of evidence and rationale; and also learning to write well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, supported by relevant proof which is tested against pertinent criteria and standards.

Part I: Introduction to critical thinking and its processes

UNIT 1

Introduction to critical thinking

- Briefly defining the dynamics of philosophy
- Thought as process
- The concept of critical thinking/thought
- Need, scope and importance of critical thinking
- Decision making and problem solving

UNIT 2

Process of critical thinking

- Process of Critical Thinking –What is your initial point of view, How can you define your point of view more clearly, what is an example of your point of view, the origin of your point of view, what are your assumptions, reasons, arguments, and evidence to support the point of view, other points of view on the issue, your conclusion, decision, solution or prediction, and what are the consequences.
- Stages of Critical thinking –Garden of Eden, Anything goes, Thinking critically

UNIT 3

Arguments

- Nature of arguments
- What is not an argument -phrases of statements and assertions
- Types of arguments – Deductive, inductive, abductive (Hypothetico-deductive)
- Logic and fallacies – Strawman, Ad hominem, Ad ignorantiam, ad populum etc
- Structuring arguments and forming context – ethos, pathos, and logos
- Evaluating arguments
- Validity and truth of arguments, causality and comparison
- Difference between possibility and probability

Part II: Examining critical issues

UNIT 4

Critical Issues 1:

Critically looking at the ideas of:

- The nation state
- Hegemony
- Secularism
- Freedom and liberty
- Globalisation

UNIT 5

Critical Issues 2:

Critically looking at the ideas of:

- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Political Identity

Students will be facilitated in classroom discussions by reading excerpts or articles from newspapers magazines and credible websites, and academic essays and watching videos.

References

- John Chaffee – *Thinking Critically*, 10th Ed. (2010)
- John Chaffee – *The Philosopher's Story*, 5th Ed. (2016)
- Benedict Anderson - *Imagined Communities : Reflections on The Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Op. 1983, Rp. 2015)
- Rabindranath Tagore – *Nationalism* (1917)
- Amartya Sen – *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (2005)
- Peter Barry – *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 4th Ed. (2018)
- Gayatri Chakroborty Spivak – *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988)
- Judith Butler – *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990)
- Ruth Matthews and Jo Lally, *The thinking teacher's tool kit*, Continuum international publishing group, 2010.
- *Power and Contestation: India Since 1989* (Introduction: The Conjunction of the 1990s)
- Merlilee H Salmon, *Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking*, New York Brooks/ Cole Publishing Company 2007.
- Hurley, Patrick J., *Concise Introduction to Logic*, 2006
- John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, June Johnson, *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, c2001, 5th ed.