

UNDERGRADUATE SYLLABUS

BA 203: Critical and Creative Thinking



College of Business and Mass Communication
School of Business
Online D1; Summer 2016

Brenau University Mission Statement

Brenau University challenges students to live extraordinary lives of personal and professional fulfillment. As students pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees or non-degree programs at Brenau campuses and online, each prepares for a lifetime of intellectual accomplishment and appreciation of artistic expression through a curriculum enriched by the liberal arts, scientific inquiry and global awareness.

University Policies on the following subjects can be found under the Resources link in any course menu or under Resources in an instructor's Personal Canvas Profile:

- University Class Attendance and Participation Policy,
- Academic Honesty,
- The Brenau Honor Code,
- Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act,
- Grading System, and
- Communication.

Section 1: Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. James F. Sennett
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Office Location: Fairburn Campus; 314 NW Broad (Hwy 29)
Office Hours: No regular hours in summer; contact Dr. Sennett via email for inquiries or phone/in-person appointments.

Section 2: Common Course Elements

Textbook(s)/ISBN: Trefflinger, D. & Isaksen, S. (2005). *Creative problem solving: An introduction*. (4th ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. ISBN: 978-1-59363-187-1

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce the learner to the basic principles associated with creative thought and critical analysis. This course pays particular attention to the role that critical thought plays in the 21st century world economy. Errors in reasoning, the basis of irrational belief systems, how bias plays a role in critical thinking, as well as an examination of those processes which help to make a person a critical and creative thinker are discussed.

Program and/or LE Learning Outcomes**

1. Scientific and Analytic Curiosity Portal;
Reasoning Outcome: Be able to think critically and solve problems effectively

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Each student will articulate an understanding of the Toulmin Method of Argumentation.
2. Each student will utilize the Toulmin Method in analyzing and evaluating arguments.
3. Each student will utilize the Toulmin Method in constructing arguments
4. Each student will describe and apply the tests for a good argument.
5. Each student will describe and recognize the most common logical fallacies.
6. Each student will articulate an understanding of the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Method.
7. Each student will utilize the CPS Method to generate ideas, focus ideas, and solve problems.

Evaluation Instruments Used

Argument Analysis Essay

Evaluation Instruments Used

Discussion groups and classroom discussions

Argument analysis essays (2)

Argument construction essays (3)

Argument analysis and argument construction essays

Argument analysis and argument construction essays

Discussion groups and classroom discussions

Creative problem solving exercises

Course Evaluation Instruments	Weighting
Discussion Groups (7)	15%
Argument Analysis Essays (4)	25%
Argument Construction Essays (3)	25%
Creative Problem Solving Exercises (6)	35%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assigned Readings and Mini-Lectures

- a. Reading assignments for the entire course are given in the class modules below.
 - i. However, the instructor reserves the right to add to or revise these assignments at any time. Any such changes will be announced on the Canvas website or via email.
 - ii. Reading assignments are from the text and provided materials. These materials or links to them will be provided on the Canvas website.
- b. Each week there will be 1-3 video mini-lectures that you must watch.
 - i. Links to the videos will be provided in the Modules for that week.
 - ii. These mini-lectures will often contain information that is not covered in the text. It is therefore imperative that you pay close attention, take good notes, and review the material carefully in preparation for successful completion of course assignments.
- c. There is no direct grade for reading assignments or mini-lectures. However, the extent to which these have been completed and comprehended will be reflected in all course assignments.
- d. Note: Anything worth reading is worth reading well.
 - i. Please undertake your assigned reading in a conducive environment—quiet, well lit, comfortable (but not too relaxing), and free of distractions.
 - ii. If you find yourself getting sleepy while reading, then get better lighting, assume a less relaxing position (don't lie down or recline when you read), take very short eye breaks every few minutes (look away from the book, focus on more distant objects—but don't close your eyes; you may never open them again!), or get more sleep. Reading is not the problem. Determine what the problem is and solve it.
 - iii. Anything worth reading is worth reading twice. You will be utterly amazed at how much more you pick up the second time you read informational material. Reading assigned material before the subject has been covered in class prepares you to listen, participate, and learn. Rereading it after it has been covered in class helps you understand it (and other material covered in class) more thoroughly and retain it more efficiently. It also helps prepare you for exams and other assignments.

Discussion Questions (DQs) (15%)

- a. Each week's work will include one major Discussion Question assignment.
- b. The class will be divided into groups for these discussions. There will be different groups each week, giving you a chance to interact with all of your classmates during the term.
- c. After the first DQ, the questions will concentrate on material learned in the previous week. Specific instructions will be given for each week's assignment.
- d. Each DQ has a minimum requirement of one substantive original post and two substantive reply posts to the original posts of other group members. This minimum requirement must be met to receive a grade of C or higher for any DQ assignment. (Note: responses to replies to your original post do not count toward the minimum requirement.)
- e. Each DQ is graded on a 20-point scale. Grades will be determined according to the following rubric:

No posts.....	0 points
Posts below minimum and not substantive ...	1–8 points
Posts below minimum and sensitive	9–12 points
Minimum posts but not substantive	9–14 points
Minimum posts and substantive.....	15–17 points
Posts above minimum and substantive	18–20 points

- f. Take Note: According to this rubric, the very best grade you can expect with only the minimum number of posts is 17 points out of 20 (85%).
- g. A substantive post is one that contributes to the discussion by (i) demonstrating an understanding of relevant course materials and (ii) articulating original thought grounded in those course materials.

Argument Analysis Assignments (25%)

- a. During each of the first four weeks, you will complete an argument analysis assignment in which you will apply procedures learned in class to analyze and evaluate assigned argumentative essays.
- b. The specific instructions for these assignments will differ; exact instructions for each will be given and on the Canvas website.

Argument Construction Assignments (25%)

- a. During each of the last three weeks, you will complete an argument construction assignment in which you will apply procedures learned in class to construct an argument for a given position on assigned controversial topics.
- b. The specific instructions for these assignments will differ; exact instructions for each will be given on the Canvas website.

Learning Team Problem Solving Assignments (35%)

- a. Each week (beginning with Week 2) you will work in learning teams to complete a problem solving assignment in which you will apply procedures learned in this class to carry out specific stages of the Creative Problem Solving Method.
- b. The specific instructions for these assignments will differ; exact instructions for each will be given on the Canvas website.

Formal Writing Assignments

- a. Argument analysis assignments, argument construction assignments, and learning team problem solving assignments constitute formal writing assignments and must adhere to APA guidelines for such an assignment. Aids for APA style are available on the Canvas website.
- b. Since these are formal writing assignments, you will be graded on spelling, grammar, and other writing issues. A poorly written paper that has obviously not been proofread or carefully reviewed may be rejected completely. In such a case you will be required to redo the assignment for a reduced grade. If you fail to redo the assignment, you will receive a zero.
- c. Regarding APA requirements for the structure of the paper:
 - i. Though they are part of the formal APA structure, abstracts are not required on the writing assignments in this course. These are short assignments and an abstract is really unnecessary.
 - ii. Also, reference lists at the end of the paper are only required if you used outside sources other than the textbook and the mini-lectures.
 - iii. Properly formatted title pages are required.
- d. Outside sources beyond assigned readings are required on some of these assignments. Such resources must be properly cited and documented according to APA guidelines. These guidelines have been covered carefully in previous classes. I fully expect you to have a good working knowledge of proper citation and documentation.
- e. Use of outside sources without documentation constitutes plagiarism. There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism. Incontrovertible evidence that you have plagiarized will result in disciplinary action according to Brenau's Academic Dishonesty policy.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

- a. This course is conducted through a specially designed Canvas website. Students registered for this course should have access to this website via their Canvas home pages. If the course is not listed on your home page, contact the IT help desk right away (770-538-4774; helpdesk@brenau.edu) right away. Do not contact your instructor; he or she cannot fix this.
- b. All of your assignments will be submitted via the Canvas website. The Canvas website also contains a great deal of specific information about the class that may not be reflected in this general syllabus. It is your responsibility to log in to the Canvas website regularly and keep up with all announcements, assignments, and other materials provided there.
- c. The Canvas website is organized in modules—one module for each week of the course.
- d. Note Well: It is your responsibility to guarantee that you have constant, reliable access to the Internet in order to access course materials and complete assignments. Make sure that you have redundant back-up access that you can utilize with short notice, such as a friend or relative's computer, the local public library, Brenau computer labs, and so forth. Lack of Internet access due to technical failure or for any other reason will not be accepted as an excuse for late or incomplete work.
- e. Argument analysis assignments, argument construction assignments, and learning team problem solving assignments constitute formal writing assignments. Be sure to carefully read carefully the Formal Writing Assignments section in the Assignment Overview of this syllabus.
- f. Discussion Questions are not formal writing assignments and will not be graded with the stringency of the other assignments. However, college level writing and careful attention are still required. These are NOT text messages or emails to friends. If your posts demonstrate carelessness or lack of attention in their composition (typos, grammatical errors, poorly constructed sentences, etc.) you will be graded down and your posts may be rejected altogether.
- g. You are expected to follow all assignment instructions accurately and completely. Assignments that do not follow instructions will be graded down significantly or rejected altogether. If you have any questions about any assignment instructions, contact your instructor immediately.
- h. Read the previous paragraph again. Do not take it lightly. Pay attention to all instructions. Follow all instructions. Follow all parts of all instructions. You will not receive credit for assignments or parts of assignments that do not follow the instructions. It will not matter how hard you worked, how accurate or interesting your work is, or how badly you need a good grade. If you do not follow instructions, you will not receive credit.

Class Schedule (May be altered depending on circumstances.)

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Introduction to the Toulmin Method Introduction to Creative Thinking	Mini-lectures 1a, 1b Textbook, ch. 1 Discussion Question 1 Argument Analysis 1
2	Toulmin Method – Evidence CPS Overview	Mini-lectures 2a, 2b Textbook, ch. 2 Discussion Question 2 Argument Analysis 2 CPS Project Stage A
3	Toulmin Method – Warrant Understanding the Challenge	Mini-lectures 3a, 3b Textbook, ch. 3-4 Discussion Question 3 Argument Analysis 3 CPS Project Stage B
4	Toulmin Method – Backing and Qualifiers Generating Ideas	Mini-lectures 4a, 4b Textbook, ch. 5-6 Discussion Question 4 Argument Analysis 4 CPS Project Stage C
5	Toulmin Method – Constructing Arguments Preparing for Action	Mini-lecture 5 Textbook, ch. 7 Discussion Question 5 Argument Construction 1 CPS Project Stage D
6	Toulmin Method – Rebuttal and Contrary Argument Applying CPS	Mini-lectures 6a, 6b Textbook, ch. 7 Discussion Question 6 Argument Construction 2 CPS Project Stage E
7	Why Arguments Fail CPS Assessment	Mini-lecture 7 Discussion Question 7 Argument Construction 3 CPS Assessment