

**Master Syllabus**  
**College of Business & Economics, University of Hawaii at Hilo**

**BUS 290**  
**Critical Thinking**  
**(rev. Feb - 2015)**

**I. Catalog Description:**

**BUS 290 Critical Thinking (3) (S)**

This course guides students in thinking more clearly, insightfully and effectively. Concrete examples from students' experience and contemporary issues drawn from forums like YouTube, TV, popular magazines, court cases, the internet, political speeches, etc. help students develop the abilities to solve problems, analyze issues, and make informed decisions in their academic, career, and personal lives. Attention is given to the identification and management of the perception process, use of evidence, use of assumptions, emotional influences, and language in various forms of business and social communication.

**Prerequisites:** Sophomore standing

*Justification:* Critical thinking skills including inquiry, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, understanding role of evidence and explanation of outcomes are necessary for business managers needing to make important decisions.

**II. Course Learning Outcomes:**

On completion of this course the student will:

- 1) Understand the role of argument as a means of communication and persuasion.
- 2) Be able to identify critical components in arguments of persuasion affecting them.
- 3) Understand how to evaluate the quality of evidence presented to support a claim.
- 4) Be able to evaluate the reasoning of an argument, including the propriety of logical connections between reasons and conclusions.
- 5) Know how to identify logical fallacies in persuasive communications.
- 6) Identify and understand the role of assumptions in accepting the persuasive reasoning of others.

**III. Course Materials:** The materials required for this class may include a textbook and lecture notes and various readings.

IV. **Teaching Methods** The primary teaching methods for this course include a) writing assignments, both in and out of class, wherein the student analyses and evaluates various forms of argument, and b) extensive class discussions and analyses of these assignments.

V. **Evaluation Tools:** Evaluation of student performance will be conducted by means of written exercises, exams and a team debate.

Approximate grade percentages are:

Exercises	30%
Exams	50%
Debate	10%
Participation	10%

#### VI. Course Content:

**Typical major course topics will include:**

1. What is an argument?
2. Identifying issues and conclusions in an argument.
3. Ambiguity in reasoning.
4. Assumptions in reasoning.
5. Reasons supporting conclusions.
6. Evaluating reasoning.
7. Evaluating evidence in support of reasons.
8. Exploring alternative conclusions.
9. Use of reasoning in debate.

#### VII. Support of Program Learning Objectives

Program Learning Objective	Course Learning Objective(s) Supporting	Targeted Course Performance Level*	Possible Contributions to Program Assessment
Objective 1. Comprehend the fundamental principles of business administration			Course embedded evaluation of performance on exercises and exams.
Objective 2A. Communicate clearly, logically, and persuasively in Writing	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	D	Course embedded evaluation of performance on exercises and exams.
Objective 2B. Communicate clearly, logically, and persuasively orally	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	I	Course embedded evaluation of performance on exercises and exams.
Objective 3. Evaluate and analyze source information, subsequently draw conclusions, and present an argument based upon that analysis			Course embedded evaluation of performance on exercises and exams.
Objective 4. Identify, analyze, and decide on courses of action to resolve complex, unstructured problems, using appropriate tools and technology	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	D	Course embedded evaluation of performance on exercises and exams.
* I = Introduced, D = Developed & Practiced with Feedback, M = Demonstrated at the Mastery, Blank=Not Treated in this Course			

Definitions of Student Mastery Levels set performance levels that are somewhat

parallel to Bloom's Taxonomy.

I = the student can identify examples (and non-examples) of the desired outcome, name the elements involved, and answer "objective, multiple-choice, fill-in-the blank" type of test questions showing awareness. (Objective tests are not necessarily simple, but they are most likely to be used at this introductory level.)

D = the student can describe, demonstrate or construct an example of the desired outcome but with guidance about each step. In some cases, the steps to learn the outcome may be spread among more than one course or activity within a course. Also included here is evaluation of existing examples of the outcome (pro's and con's, etc.) Essay questions and short projects would be used as evidence.

M = the student can demonstrate the outcome given a problem statement and appropriate data and tools. The student would need to synthesize skills learned previously in isolation. The skill demonstration would be sufficiently rigorous that an outside stakeholder (future employer) would be satisfied with it for an entry level position after graduation. Term papers, senior projects and research papers, senior portfolios, and capstone coursework would be used as evidence.