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ENG 110: Critical Reading, Critical Thinking

Ipek University
Fall 2014
Room 406

ELL/IR/POLS/PSY:
Wed 10-10:50, Fri 9-10:40

ECON/MAN/HIST/VCD:
Wed 11-12:40, Fri 11-11:50

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Office: 104

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Critical thinking is the ability to think with clarity, rationality, flexibility, and self-awareness, and to consider multiple perspectives, explore interesting questions, and seek connections. Accordingly, **critical reading** means to analytically read a text on thematic, stylistic, and conceptual levels; to research, assess, and synthesize sources, and to engage with the ideas of diverse scholars and writers. In this course, you will examine compelling, thought-provoking texts to analyze multiple perspectives, construct and evaluate arguments, assess reasoning, understand connections between ideas, and solve problems. Learning to be a critical reader and thinker means learning to become a better listener, observer, and interpreter of the world around you.

The first part of this course will focus on critical reading and thinking skills, taught by Autumn Watts (Academic English). The second part will entail independent, problem-based learning, and will be collaboratively led by an interdisciplinary faculty team: Doğan Aydın Serel (Management), Yeliz Cengay (Political Science), Autumn Watts, and Tuğba Uzeryildiz (Psychology).

Required Texts

Pirozzi, R., Starks-Martin, G., & Dziewisz, J. (2012). *Critical reading, critical thinking: Focusing on contemporary issues* (4th Ed). Edinburgh Gate: Pearson. Additional readings may be assigned by the course instructors.

Blackboard Course

All students must enroll in the ENG 110 Blackboard Course: www.ipek.blackboard.com.

1. COURSE ASSESSMENT

In addition to assigned readings, coursework will consist of reading, writing, speaking, project, and other tasks:

Tasks	Graded Component	Weighting
Reading & Writing Tasks	Reflection Journal Forum Discussion	20%
Speaking Tasks	Team Debate Video Blog	20%
Engagement Tasks	Participation Peer Assessment	10%
Project Tasks	PBL Tasks Final Portfolio	50%
Total		100%

2. COURSEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Reading and Writing Tasks (20%)

Reflection Journal. You will keep an online journal to record daily reflections, observations, and questions about the world around you.

Blackboard Forum. Each week, you will post a critical response (at least 250 words) to an assigned prompt on our course Blackboard Forum (due before class) at www.ipek.blackboard.com. You will also be required to thoughtfully respond to the posts of your peers.

Please note: All written work must be typed. Please use Times New Roman, size 12, double spacing, and format your essay as per MLA/APA style guidelines. If there are any concerns that the work submitted is not your own, you will be asked to discuss/rewrite your assignment in the presence of the instructor.

Speaking Tasks (20%)

Team Debate. In teams, you will prepare and participate in a debate on a contemporary issue. You will be responsible for researching your own sources and preparing your debate strategy **one week in advance** of your debate.

Video Blog. For your video blog (vlog), you will record a 1-3 minute short film using your laptop camera or smartphone. The vlog can be as creative as you wish; however, it must reflect an engaged, thoughtful, critical interpretation of the assignment. The vlogs will be posted on Blackboard.

Engagement Tasks (10%)

Participation. Throughout the course, you will be expected to contribute to the classroom discourse community by engaging with your peers in respectful but intellectually lively dialogue, listening attentively, encouraging others, and investing sincere effort and good will.

Peer Assessment. As a discourse community member, your thoughtful, constructive feedback on your peers' work develops your communication and critical thinking skills and offers valuable insight. Your peers will also share feedback on the quality and dynamics of your own contributions to Peer Workshops and group discussions.

Project Tasks (50%)

Problem Based Learning (PBL) Tasks. During the second part of the course, you will work in teams to complete a series of tasks using interdisciplinary perspectives under the guidance of your course instructors in each respective field.

Final Portfolio. Your final portfolio will present your task outcomes and showcase your best work in the course, accompanied by self-reflection on your process and learning. The self-reflection will also evaluate your own contributions and performance in the course.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Reading and Writing Task Objectives

1. To improve ability to assess and respond to a text
2. To improve written communication skills
3. To improve observation and reflection skills
4. To improve clarity, coherence, and depth in student writing
5. To explore ideas in preparation of discussions or assignments
6. To encourage student dialogue beyond the classroom

Speaking Task Objectives

1. To improve critical thinking skills
2. To improve oral communication skills
3. To improve text analysis and summarizing skills
4. To improve reading comprehension skills
5. To improve information technology skills
6. To practice synthesizing info for the intended purpose

Engagement Task Objectives:

1. To encourage horizontal, independent learning
2. To improve ability to actively and critically listen to instructor and peers
3. To improve quality of contribution in focused discussions of texts / ideas / arguments
4. To improve ability to identify main points and supporting points
5. To improve ability to distinguish between fact and opinion

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Deadlines

You are expected to meet deadlines and turn in work on time. In the case of failure to turn in a project/activity or any other task assigned on time, 5% will be deducted on a daily basis. **Assignments more than 2 days late will not be accepted and will automatically receive a zero.**

Oral presentations/debates/discussions have fixed dates and cannot be rescheduled or made up in the event of absence. If you do not attend your discussion/presentation on the assigned date, you will receive a zero.

Tutorials

The main aim of the AE program tutorials is to encourage the students to become autonomous learners by being a part of an academic environment where they can defend their arguments, ask for support and clarification and explore the points they need to work on with the help of their instructors. You may receive tutorials whenever you feel a need; however, you should contact your instructor in advance to make an appointment. Office hours may be used for tutorials to discuss the course, your academic progress, or for getting extra help.

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend a minimum of 70% of total course hours. Attendance is counted from the first class. Students who exceed the attendance limit will automatically receive an 'F' grade for the course.

Students involved in university organized activities, such as sport or cultural activities, during lesson time, may have their attendance credited for the missed lessons, provided they bring a letter of notification from their department.

Students may submit a written petition for their absence, and clearly stating which assignment/exam they are requesting to make-up. The petition should be addressed to the Academic English Program. If students have a medical certificate they should attach it to their petition. Make-up exams will be arranged for those students whose petitions are approved by the university. Other reasons for absence will be considered and responded to on an individual basis.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism can be defined as: "The use of somebody else's ideas, viewpoints, findings or works in a paper, project, report, or any similar document which is presented as part of a course requirement, without proper acknowledgment of the source."

For many students, avoiding plagiarism is a difficult skill to learn. For this reason, your instructor will explain how to avoid plagiarism by quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing properly. However, **you are responsible for not plagiarizing and will be held accountable if you do.** Should the final draft of your

assignment still have serious problems with plagiarism, or if it is copied from another student or written by or with someone else, you will receive a failing grade, probably an 'F'. Disciplinary action may also be taken.

Preparation and Engagement

For every class period, you are expected to bring ALL necessary materials (textbooks/reading texts/worksheets etc.) and to prepare the required assignments **ON TIME**.

Since the course relies heavily on discussion, active participation is essential for the success of the entire class.

Students are expected to speak in English in class.

Academic Courtesy and Professionalism

While in class, you need to be respectful towards your classmates and your instructor in order to benefit from an optimal learning environment. One of the aims of this course is to explore and share ideas in a safe space, so the rights of others to express their views must be respected. Anyone who fails to honor the professional, respectful behavior expected in this classroom may be asked to leave or face other disciplinary action.

Emails

Please note that you are expected to check your Ipek University email daily for information or news about the course.

6. OPEN DOOR POLICY

I encourage you to contact me (awatts@ipek.edu.tr) or visit my office (104) if you have any questions or concerns about your work in this course, about academic life, or other issues. I am always happy to meet with you individually or suggest referrals if your needs fall outside my professional scope.