

The University Of Houston Clear Lake  
 School Of Human Sciences And Humanities  
**Learning Frameworks—PSYC 1100**  
**SEMESTER/YEAR**

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Wanalee Romero Bayou 1508 romero@uhcl.edu 281-283-3423	<u>This Class Emphasizes</u> Communication <b>Connections</b> Curiosity Creativity
<b>Course Information</b>		
<b>Office Hours</b>		
<b>Peer Mentor</b>		
<b>Co-Requisite Course</b>		

**APPLIED CRITICAL THINKING STATEMENT:**

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student’s ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student’s personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this Seminar, students develop the intellectual readiness that will enable them to complete their degrees successfully. In this Seminar students come to understand that a university education is a valuable process through which they become skilled critical thinkers. They become aware of how this skill will help them achieve their own goals and desires. Students first learn in detail what is meant by the concept of critical thinking. Afterwards, students develop this knowledge into a skillset by applying it to the concept of civic engagement in their co-requisite course.

The First-Year Seminar and the co-requisite course become a learning community in which students actively engage the **central question**: “How does critical thinking help us become engaged, purposeful global citizens?” Through this active engagement students become productive users of critical thinking skills who know the value of critical thinking in their courses, their education, and their world.

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Logically and accurately identify your own *point of view* and its underlying *assumptions* and significant implications while fairly examining *points of view* that differ from your own;
2. Develop and clearly demonstrate a deep understanding of relevant and significant concepts and connect to other relevant and accurate information;
3. Identify the breadth of accurate resources and *information relevant* to a *problem* or *research question*.

## FUNDAMENTAL AND POWERFUL CONCEPTS:

Think of these as the twenty-years-from-now ideas. In twenty years, long after you have forgotten my name, these fundamental concepts, if mastered in a deep and personal way, will be tools that you can use to understand the world. During this semester, you can use these concepts to think critically about any of the new ideas or information present in your learning networks.

### **The Fundamental and Powerful Concepts in this course are:**

Critical Thinking, Information, Clarity, Fairness, Assumptions, Implications, Civic Engagement, Citizenship, Voice, and Marginality.

### **The Fundamental and Powerful Concepts in your co-requisite course are:**

**(POLS 2305)** Government, Politics, Power, Function, and Structure.

## TEXTS & REQUIRED MATERIALS

Common Reader

Elder, Linda and Richard Paul (2009) *Critical Thinking: Concepts & Tools*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking: Tomales, CA.

Hoston, William T. (2014) *Listen to Me Now or Listen to Me Later: A Memoir of Academic Success for College Students*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company: Dubuque, IA. [Recommended]

hooks, bell. (2010) *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. Routledge: New York. [Electronic copy of selected essays available on Blackboard.]

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

### **Active Learner Activities CT**

Participation	25%
Portfolio	30%

### **Learning Through Concepts COMM**

Conceptual Toolkit	15%
Collaborative Lectures	15%

### **Belongingness and Personal Responsibility PR**

UHCL Scavenger Hunt	15%
	<b>100%</b>

### **Active Learner Activities [SLO #1]**

**(55 total points)**

#### Participation:

**(25 points)**

We will exercise our critical thinking skills in conversation, so participation counts for a significant portion of your final evaluation in this class. You will not receive an “A” in participation if you never or sporadically contribute to the discussion, even if you have perfect attendance. This class is a two-way conversation: I will be listening to your comments, responding to your questions and queries, as well as soliciting your reactions to specific passages, ideas, and issues; you are expected to do the same for your colleagues in the course. Thoughtful, reflective, and relevant contributions will work in your favor for your final grade. Strive for your participation in all group work and class discussions to be clear, accurate, and fair—and frequent!

In keeping with our theme of civic engagement, it is important that we express our ideas in a respectful manner that advances our conversation. We should all consider not only the comments that we want to make, but the overall classroom dynamic: who is speaking more, who less? How might we best contribute to an atmosphere that enables everyone to participate meaningfully? How do we acknowledge and

negotiate disagreements? Most importantly, consider what a classroom of engaged citizens scholars would look like? How might we collectively create such a space?

On a practical note, checking email, texting, and surfing are behaviors which do not encourage our conversation and are not permitted during class time. **Phones should be off and stored out of sight at all times unless their use is specifically requested by the instructor.** If you use a laptop for taking notes, please respect our learning space and do only that while you are in class.

Effective communication is a highly transferable skill, but one that requires practice. Therefore, your active participation in the course is required. You will also complete a semester-end evaluation of yourself and each member of your reading group that will factor into your participation grade. You are allowed two absences for any reason. After that a full letter grade will be deducted from your semester grade for each absence regardless of the cause. After 5 minutes, attendance will be taken and you will be marked as tardy. Two tardies will count as an absence.

#### Portfolio [SLO #1]

(30 points)

The first portion of each class will be engaged in an in-depth discussion of the assigned reading. You will be placed in a reading group and will prepare written materials each week to facilitate your discussion according to your weekly reading group role. You will receive feedback on how well you applied the Universal Intellectual Standards in your written preparation materials and your work will be assessed as Excellent, Adequate, Poor, or Fails to Meet Expectations.

In addition, at the end of most class periods, you will write in your intellectual journal. In this journal you will link critical thinking to everyday life by reflecting critically on a real-world situation for which you will be given a prompt.

**At the end of the semester you will turn in a portfolio containing each graded assignment and your intellectual journal.** These portfolios should demonstrate your intellectual growth in terms of your confidence in your ability to reason, your fair-mindedness and your intellectual empathy. Your portfolio should also demonstrate your understanding of the Elements of Critical Thinking and your practice of the Intellectual Standards. Your group's evaluation of your contribution to their learning will weigh heavily in your final grade, so be punctual, attentive and thoughtful in your discussions.

#### **Learning Through Concepts [SLO #2]**

**(30 total points)**

##### Conceptual Toolkit Project

(15 points)

You will create your own personalized toolkit clarifying the Fundamental and Powerful Concepts of this and your co-requisite course. You will define and clarify each of the concepts using your own experience and knowledge gained to that point in the semester—think of it as your own ‘personalized’ textbook. This conceptual toolkit will then become your map for analyzing the public policies and issues presented in this course and should provide you with an organizing framework as you study for your co-requisite course.

##### Collaborative Lectures

(15 points)

During the last third of the semester you will participate in a collaborative lecture. I will post a four to six slide policy topic to <http://prezi.com/> one week prior to the lecture date. This prezi slide show will introduce a university, municipal, state, federal or international policy. It will then prompt you to examine this policy by responding to a set of questions using your conceptual toolkit. During class, I will introduce the topic and the students collaborating on the day's lecture will each have five minutes logically to explain the relevance of their slide. Your collaborative lecture will be evaluated on the clarity with which you are able to use relevant fundamental and powerful concepts from your conceptual toolkit to analyze the new information presented.

## **Belongingness and Personal Responsibility [SLO #3]**

**(15 points)**

### Scavenger Hunt Project

In order to ensure the successful completion of your degree at UHCL, you will need to be an engaged citizen of this campus. This means getting involved in things important to you and knowing how (and when) to ask for help. To facilitate this engagement, part of your grade for this course is a UHCL Scavenger Hunt. Connect around campus to accrue points for this portion of your grade throughout the semester.

## **COURSE BUSINESS:**

### **Late Assignments**

All assignments should be turned in on time unless arrangements are made with the instructor or peer mentor prior to the class meeting when an assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized 10% off of the total grade for each day they are late. **Reading Group Preparation materials and homework are only accepted—typed and printed—at the beginning of class on the due date.** If you are concerned about your course progress due to missing assignments, contact your peer mentor or instructor.

### **Blackboard**

If you have a question that is specific to you, please email me, the peer mentor, or the embedded librarian. But if you have a question that is general interest, please post it in the “Questions” Discussion Board Forum. I encourage you to blog or post links in the “Stuff to Share” Discussion Board Forum. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard, especially the tools utilized in this course. Should you run into technical difficulties please contact UTC technical support [support information is on log on screen or call (281) 283-2828].

### **Disabilities**

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary.

Aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact your University’s student disability services center (281) 283-2627.

### **Incompletes**

A grade of “I” is only given in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, providing that you have been making satisfactory progress. A grade contract must be completed and the criteria adhered to.

### **Withdrawals**

**DATE** is the drop date which is the last day to withdraw or drop without a grade penalty. At UHCL, **students are not automatically dropped from classes for absences.** If you need to drop the class, make sure that you take action so that your overall G.P.A. is not compromised.

**Office of Veteran Services**

It is the mission of the CAPT. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Veteran Services staff to help veterans and their dependents flourish in their higher education pursuits. They will act as a liaison between the veteran, the school, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in order to ensure these goals are reached with success. They are located in SSCB 3.201 and their phone number is (281) 283-3071. Veterans are also welcome to contact the First-Year Seminar Peer Mentors who are veterans.

**Six Drop Rule Limitation**

Students who entered college for the first time in Fall 2007 or later should be aware of the course drop limitation imposed by the Texas Legislature. Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does NOT affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session will count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit [www.uhcl.edu/records](http://www.uhcl.edu/records) for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester/session.

**Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Specific policies are clearly outlined in your student catalog, and will not be reproduced here. Please note that I consider any type of academic dishonesty a very serious offense, and will follow the university disciplinary procedures for any violation encountered. Plagiarism of any type may result in an F in the course, or a zero for a paper, regardless of how much coursework has been completed up to that point. Copying the work of another or paraphrasing another person without proper citation is plagiarism. All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UHCL catalog and the Student Life Handbook for the University Academic Honesty Policy. The UHCL Library also has helpful information on avoiding plagiarism. The UHCL Writing Center also has a statement on plagiarism. Another wonderful source is [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org).