**Critical Thinking and Methods of Inquiry**  
**LDSP 250.01, Spring 2014**  
**Prof. Joanne B. Ciulla**

Class: Jepson Hall Room 102  
M/W 1:30-2:45  
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Phone: 287-6083  
Email: jciulla@richmond.edu  
Office Hours: By Appointment

**Purpose**

We live in a society that mass-produces information. Since some of it is false or misleading, we need to critically appraise the quality of all the information that we encounter – whether it comes from the Internet, the media, or the classroom. The ability to think critically and solve problems is important for leaders, followers, and life in general. Critical thinking is a fundamental leadership competency. Leaders must often make decisions about things that are outside of their expertise. They must make good judgments the quality of experts, information, and arguments. Leaders must also know how to develop their own persuasive arguments and understand how to work in and with complex systems.

Critical thinking is about language, truth, logic, argumentation, and self-knowledge. Perhaps the most important feature of critical thinking is that it develops imagination and vision. Some people become leaders because of their personality, desire, or “people” skills.” Others become leaders because of their ideas and ability to create a vision, plan for the future, and anticipate and solve problems. This course aims to teach students how to seek the truth, think, and communicate using persuasive well-grounded written and oral arguments.

**Course Objectives**

In this course students will learn how to:

- Critically read, listen, speak, and write
- Separate bad information from good information
- Analyze arguments and construct cogent arguments
- Anticipate and solve problems in complex systems
- Reflect on their own world view
- Develop disciplined methods of inquiry

**Course Description**

The academic components of this course are critical reading, listening and writing, epistemology, informal logic, systems theory, and research methods. Students will analyze ideas in the leadership literature, critique and construct arguments, and apply systems thinking to real world problems. They will examine the ways that powerful groups and people sometimes shape our notions of truth. They will also use their imagination and understanding of logic to write, direct and perform a comedic one-act play about leadership.

**Required Texts**

3. Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in search of an Author: A Play Yet to be Written*. Trans. Edward Storer, Sidney
4. Blackboard Readings (BB)

**Requirements and Grading**

- (10%) Exam I
- (15%) Exam II
- (10%) Exam III
- (10%) Analysis I
- (20%) One Act Play and Performance
- (10%) Analysis II
- (15%) Systems Research Paper
- (10%) Class Participation

**Policies for Participation in This Class**

Exemplary class participation consists of specific and insightful discussion of the readings, input from homework assignments, good questions concerning the class materials, and overall contribution to the class’s learning. It also includes integrity in the way that you do your assignments and exams; how you work with project partners; adherence to class times, and other conditions and instructions laid out in this syllabus and the attached course assignments. You will be graded on participation for each class with a 1,2,or 3 (a zero if you do not attend).

All electronic devices must be turned off at the beginning of class. You may not use your computer in class, unless stipulated by the professor. Unless there is a pressing physical need to get up during class, students should not leave the room until the class is over. All of the above conditions will affect your participation grade. This syllabus should be regarded as a contract. Due dates for papers and exam dates are set, so please mark them down on your calendar. **Late papers will not be accepted, even if they are the result of computer problems.** This means do not do your assignments the night before they are due – stuff happens! Papers should be handed in hard copy unless you receive permission from the instructor to email them. Note that all of your grades will be entered as percentages. Final grades are not rounded up or down and all grades are non-negotiable. The values are as follows:

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**Course Outline**

*Not all class readings are listed. There will be additional readings for some classes. Readings with BB after them are on Blackboard.
I. Thinking About Truth and Reason

Jan. 13 Introduction:
Left brain /right brain exercise

Jan. 15 The Nature of Truth
Read: René Descartes, “Meditation I,” From The Meditations, tr. John Veitch, 1901. BB
On Bullshit by Harry Frankfort (2005) BB

Jan. 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No Class

Jan. 22 Good and Bad Reasoning I
Read: Cavender/Kahane 1-12
Do exercises 1-1, 1-2, & 1-3

Jan. 27 Good and Bad Reasoning II
Read: Cavender/Kahane 12-30
Do exercises 1-4 & 1-8

II. Thinking About Arguments Using Words and Numbers

Jan. 29 Writing and Criticizing Arguments I
Read: David R, Morrow and Anthony Weston, A Workbook for Arguments, 2011, 3-19 BB.

Feb. 3 Writing and Criticizing Arguments II
Read: Read: David R, Morrow and Anthony Weston, A Workbook for Arguments, 2011, 20-38 BB.

Feb. 5 How to Lie With Statistics
Read: Huff, 9-68
Analysis I due

Feb. 10 How to Lie With Statistics
Read: Huff, 69-101

Feb. 12 Exam I

III. Thinking Fallaciously

Feb. 17 Fallacious Reasoning I
Read: Cavender/Kahane 33-50

Feb. 19 Fallacious Reasoning I
Read: Cavender/Kahane 50-56
Do all of the exercises

Feb. 24 Fallacious Reasoning II
Read: Cavender/Kahane 59-72

Feb. 26 Fallacious Reasoning II
Do exercises: Cavender/Kahane, 73-77
Do all of the exercises
Analysis II due

Mar. 3 Fallacious Reasoning III
Read: Cavender/Kahane 79-97
Do exercises 5-2 & 5-3

Mar. 5 Exam II

Mar. 10-12 Spring Break

IV. Thinking About Logic and Humor

Mar. 17 An Example of Comedy
Read: Luigi Pirandello, Six Characters in search of an Author: A Play Yet To Be

Mar. 19 One Act Play Brainstorming
Read: TBA

Mar. 24 Playwriting Continued
Read: TBA

V. Thinking About Methods of Inquiry

Mar. 26 Critical Thinking Game
A card game that tests knowledge of logic and research methods.
One Act Play Due
Mar. 31 Historiography
Read: Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical research and Writing* (2013), Ch.1 BB

Apr. 2 Social Science Methods
Read: TBA

**VI. Thinking About Systems**

Apr. 7 The Nature of Systems
Read: Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure* (1996) Ch. 1&2 BB

Apr. 9 Complexity in History
Read: Fred Spier, *Big History and the Future of Humanity* (2011) Ch. 6 BB

April 14 A System’s Failure

Apr. 16 Discussion of Systems Papers
**System Papers Due**

Apr. 21 Exam III

Apr. 23 Course Conclusion
Common Syllabus Insert

**Disability Accommodations**
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html

**Honor System**
The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/

**Religious Observance**
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

**Syllabus Insert**

**Awarding of Credit**
To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.
http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
Common Syllabus Insert

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