

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 3304 Critical Reasoning**

Summer II 2026
Mon-Fri; on your own time.
Via Blackboard

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Summer Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cool stuff will happen in this class, but it will happen because of you.

This is a course on argumentation and reasoning designed to develop critical thinking skills. We will study different types of arguments, learn how to identify and evaluate inductive and deductive reasoning, learn how to identify fallacies within an argument, and learn the construction of sound arguments. The purpose of this course is to help you develop your reasoning skills so that you can contemplate clearly and communicate accurately about issues that concern you. Our main focus will be on the nature and use of arguments, and you'll learn to both analyze the arguments of others and construct valid and convincing arguments (and rebuttals) of your own.

As this is a web-delivered class, the majority of your work will be reading. There will be a quiz at the end of each week covering the reading assignments. The pace in summer school is rapid, but manageable – if you read one chapter per day, you'll be just fine. The questions for the quiz are taken directly from the book, and you may use the text to answer the questions.

I highly recommend renting the ebook/Kindle version of the text; it's the least expensive option, and there are free Kindle reader applications for iPhone/iPad, Android, Mac, and PC.

Some of these ideas are tricky. I encourage you to reach out to me via email if there's anything that's eluding you.

Bret

Communication Program Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.

SLO 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.

SLO 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Communication Program

Marketable Skills

- 1) Proficiency in public speaking in a variety of venues and formats,
- 2) Effective writing skills, and
- 3) Demonstrated ability to use technology to deliver messaging.

PREREQUISITES

None.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

Demonstrate the ability to narrow broad questions into clear issues

Identify and articulate warrants, claims, arguments, and fallacies

Exemplify intermediate-level mastery of the vocabulary of logic and argument

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Chapter Quizzes | 50% |
| 2) Argument assignment (midterm) | 20% |
| 3) Final Paper | 30% |

I will post both the mid-term and final assignments on Blackboard AT LEAST one week prior to the due date.

Required Textbooks for this class:

Critical Thinking: A Students Introduction. 6th edition
 Gregory Bassham, McGraw-Hill, publishers

Materials Required:

None.

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	July 6	Introduction. Diagnosis questions. Review Syllabus.
2	July 13-17	Read Chapters 1-4. Reading quiz AVAILABLE on June 8. Deadline to complete on Blackboard: JUNE 12
3	July 20-24	Read Chapters 5-8.

- Reading quiz AVAILABLE on June 15. Deadline to complete on Blackboard: JUNE 19
- 4 July 27-31 MIDTERM ARGUMENT ASSIGNMENT DUE VIA EMAIL JUNE 20.
Read Chapters 9-12.
Reading quiz AVAILABLE on June 22. Deadline to complete on Blackboard: JUNE 26
- 5 Aug 3-Aug 7 FINAL PAPER ASSIGNED 8/3
Read Chapters 13-15. Reading quiz AVAILABLE on June 29.
Deadline to complete on Blackboard: JULY 3.
- 6 Aug 11 Final Paper DUE
- 7 Aug 12 FINAL EXAM

August 11th: **FINAL PAPER DUE via email by 11:59pm**

FINAL EXAM will be delivered online via Blackboard.

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Chapter Quizzes | 50% |
| 2) Argument assignment (midterm) | 20% |
| 3) Final Paper | 30% |

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY

Attendance (which means online participation) is 10% of your grade. That’s the difference between an “A” and a “B”...or an “F” and a “D.”

TARDINESS

Class **BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME**. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin **BEFORE** the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS* – ON THE HOUR. PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!

*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three-hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.
