

## CRITICAL READING, THINKING AND WRITING SPRING 2011

Dr. Casey Cothran

Email: cothranc@winthrop.edu

Website: <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/cothranc>

Twitter: drcothran

Office: 237 Bancroft Hall; (803) 323-4632

Office Hours: 9:00-12:00 TR, and by appointment

Class: MW 2:00-3:15 (Kinard 201)

Section: CRTW 201-006 (#21213)

Turnitin.com Info:

Class Name: CRTW S11 2:00

Class ID: 3718632

Class Password: ilovepapers

### **Texts:**

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York, NY: Penguin, 2005.

Harris, Muriel, ed. *Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall  
Nosich, Gerald. *Learning to Think Things Through* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.

### **Course Description and Goals:**

CRTW 201 is a 3 credit course that focuses on critical reading, critical thinking, and deliberative/argumentative writing. It builds upon skills acquired in WRIT 101 and HMXP 102. Students will read, write, and discuss, in an effort to further develop their skill as college writers and as critical thinkers. Course goals include:

1. To learn that the complex process of critical thinking is a part of all we do and that the process relies on such skills as observing, listening, reading, and writing.
2. To use writing, reading, speaking, and critical thinking to foster intellectual growth in an academic environment.
3. To recognize critical thinking and problem solving strategies in different academic disciplines and for different audiences.
4. To evaluate arguments, evidence, and the contexts in which they appear.
5. To prepare for writing by carefully analyzing evidence.
6. To plan, organize, and develop essays based on introspection, general observation, deliberation, research, and the critical reading of mature prose texts drawn from varied disciplines.
7. To learn to revise effectively by completely rethinking, restructuring, and rewriting essays.
8. To recognize individual writing voices and learn how those voices can be adapted to fit different audiences and rhetorical situations.

9. To improve oral communications skills through class discussions and small group activities. See a complete listing of course goals for the Department of English at <http://www.winthrop.edu/english/undergraduate/index.htm>.

CRTW is a Touchstone course designed to meet goals 1, 3, 4, and 7 of that program.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Knowledge: By the end of the semester, students will be able to  
identify and define filters, barriers, and impediments to critical thinking  
identify and define the elements of reasoning  
identify and define the standards of reasoning  
identify and define the character traits of a critical thinker

Skills: By the end of the semester, students will be able to  
apply the elements of reasoning to analyze their own thinking and the thinking of others  
apply the standards of reasoning to analyze their own thinking and the thinking of others  
use critical reading strategies to analyze a variety of texts  
plan, draft, and revise critical writing in a variety of rhetorical contexts and disciplines  
discuss their thinking and the thinking of others in a variety of oral forms  
(e.g. discussions, group presentations, etc.)

Attitudes: By the end of the semester, students will be able to  
integrate critical thinking character traits into their academic and personal lives  
recognize and appreciate the differences between critical and noncritical thinking in both themselves and others

### **Course Requirements:**

Paper 1, "A Critical Thinking Process Essay"	15%
Paper 2, "News Media Evaluation Essay"	15%
Group Presentation of Assigned Reading	10%
Researched Argumentative Essay	25%
Final Exam	15%
Thinking Journal and Class Participation	20%

### **Grading Standards**

A description of letter grades for writing assignments can be found at <http://www.winthrop.edu/english/rubric.htm>. Numerically, grades are as follows:

93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 and below	F

**Student Conduct Code:** As noted in the Student Conduct Code: “Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals.” The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the “Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy” in the online *Student Handbook* (<http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>).

**Additionally, please refrain from texting during class.** Anyone caught texting, on Facebook, or generally playing with a phone or laptop may be thrown to the dragons, set upon by slaving wolves, or subject to the loss of points on his/her daily grade. Ouch!

### **Instructor Accessibility**

You can expect me to be available as a resource from which to draw and to obtain feedback. I am very responsive to email questions as long as I know who the email is from and have all information necessary to provide a complete answer. Please be sure to “sign” your emails as oftentimes email names are confusing at best (e.g., brownb1@winthrop.edu could be Bob Brown or Beth Brown). Please make sure to speak slowly and comprehensibly if leaving a voicemail so that I can decipher the name, message, and return phone number as well.

What you cannot expect of me is to be available 24/7. While I do check my email and voicemail regularly, including weekends (if I am in town), I do not necessarily check them more than once a day or late in the evenings. Please plan your time accordingly to maximize the probability that you will receive a response in time for it to be useful.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

All work in this class that uses outside sources must be documented correctly in the MLA documentation style. Please review the English Department’s policy on Using Borrowed Information at <http://www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm>. You are responsible for reviewing the Code of Student Conduct in your *Student Handbook* and the description of plagiarism in *The Prentice-Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage* and handling source materials correctly. If you turn in plagiarized work, I reserve the right to assign you a failing grade for the course. The University Policy on Plagiarism is explained at <http://www.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/Judicial/judcode.htm> under section V, “Academic Misconduct.”

We will be using [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) this semester; papers not submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) will not be graded. Be sure to sign up soon!

### **Attendance Policy**

Winthrop policy is that students who miss more than 25% of the classes in a semester cannot receive credit for the course.

### **Late Paper/ Assignment Policies**

Every day an assignment is late (including weekend days) is five points off the final grade. Daily writing assignments may be turned in early, but not late, unless you have an amazing excuse.

### **Accommodations**

Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact Services for Students with

Disabilities at 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from Services for Students with Disabilities, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

### **Technology Requirements**

I conduct most of my business with students using e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail account, go to 15 Tillman immediately to set it up. All class e-mail will be sent to your campus e-mail address, so make sure you set it to forward to any off-campus account you use (e.g. Comporium, AOL, Yahoo!, etc.) You must have a working Winthrop POBox e-mail address by the third day of class. All students must subscribe to the class listserv.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

You will be notified by email if the syllabus or schedule needs to be changed. Please read all emails from me so as to be aware of any potential changes.

**You can find the syllabus and additional course materials on my website:**

**<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/cothranc>**

### **Class Schedule:**

Note: assignments are due on the days next to which they appear.

<b>Date</b>	<b>In-Class Discussion</b>	<b>Homework</b>
Monday January 10	Introduction	
Wednesday January 12	Critical Thinking in the Modern World	Read and reflect on David Foster Wallace's graduation speech "This Is Water" (Cothran webpage/email)
Monday January 17	MLK Holiday: No Class	
Wednesday January 19	Critical Thinking in the Modern World Discuss "Extra Credit" Assignment	Read and reflect on Alan Lightman's essay "Prisoners of the Wired World" (Cothran webpage/email)
Monday January 24	Nosich, Chapter 1	LTTT: 1-33; Do exercise 1.5
Wednesday January 26	Nosich SEEI	LTTT: Read 33-41
Monday January 31	Impediments; discuss 1.24	LTTT: Do the "Cothran version" of exercise 1.24 (Spend one day looking for all 8 impediments, and give an example of each.)
Wednesday February 2	Nosich, Chapter 2	LTTT: Read 49-80; Do exercise 2.1

Monday February 7	Nosich, Chapter 2 (cont'd)	LTTT: Do exercises 2.6 a, b and 2.9 c
Wednesday February 9	Nosich, Chapter 2 (cont'd)	LTTT: Answer question in grey box on p.74
Monday February 14	<b>Paper 1 Due</b>	
Wednesday February 16	Nosich, Chapter 3, fundamental and powerful concepts	LTTT: Read 89-130
Monday February 21	Thinking about your chosen field	LTTT: Answer 3.5; bring a textbook from a course in your major to class
Wednesday February 23	Nosich, Chapter 4	LTTT: Read 139-169; Answer questions from two of the grey boxes that appear throughout LTTT Ch. 4
Monday February 28	Nosich, Chapter 4 (cont'd)	LTTT: Do the "Cothran version" of exercise 4.18 (Spend one day looking for all 8 standards, and give an example where each one either is or is not met.)
Wednesday March 2	Come to class prepared to discuss your viewing experience with your peers	Watch a news show and take notes, keeping the standards in mind
Monday March 7	<b>Paper 2 Due</b>	
Wednesday March 9	Medium and Metaphor	Postman: Introduction, In 1985, Foreward, pages 1-15
Monday March 14	SPRING BREAK	
Wednesday March 16	SPRING BREAK	
Monday March 21	Epistemology ... what is that, exactly?	Postman: 16-63
Wednesday March 23	The Peek-a-Boo World	Postman: 64-82
Monday March 28	Show Business <b>GROUP 1 PRESENTATION</b>	Postman: 83-98
Wednesday March 30	"Now... This" <b>GROUP 2 PRESENTATION</b>	Postman 99-113

Monday April 4	“Shuffle Off to Bethlehem” <b>GROUP 3 PRESENTATION</b>	Postman: 114-124
Wednesday April 6	“Reach Out and Elect Someone” <b>GROUP 4 PRESENTATION</b>	Postman: 125-141
Monday April 11	“Teaching as an Amusing Activity” <b>GROUP 5 PRESENTATION</b>	Postman: 142-154
Wednesday April 13	Solutions?	Postman: 155-163 (Finish Book)
Monday April 18	Nosich, Chapter 5: Writing a Critical Thinking Essay	LTTT: Skim 175-207, keeping your essay topic in mind.
Wednesday April 20	Writing Workshop; MLA Format Review	Bring a typed rough draft to class for Writing Workshop
Monday April 25	<b>Researched Argumentative Essay Due</b>	
Tuesday May 3	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> 11:30 – 2:00	

### **Group Project**

Read and research the topic/chapter in Postman that your group has been assigned. Then prepare a presentation for the class. Your group will be required to teach and lead class discussion for the entire class period. Note: Your presentation should be more than just a lecture on the material.

**Present the material, but in a way that a) engages the class b) makes the ideas relevant to the modern-day reader and c) encourages critical thinking on the topic.**

On the day of the presentation, the group will turn in:

- 1) A short “essay” describing the ideas they plan to present to the class. (This essay must include a bibliography in MLA format citing research sources.)
- 2) A lesson plan that details *how* they will present the material and *why* they have chosen that particular method of presentation
- 3) A “log” (This should record the times the group met, who attended each meeting, the time spent in the library, planning the presentation, typing up the findings, etc.)

Additionally, each individual student will turn in:

- 1) A self evaluation, explaining their contribution to the project
- 2) An evaluation of each of the other group members, detailing their contributions
- 3) An evaluation of the group as a whole: How well did everyone work together? Did everyone contribute equally?

Suggestion: Meeting with me (as a group, before you’ve begun planning your presentation) can really help you to organize your ideas.