

Diablo Valley College Course

HIST-122: Critical Reasoning in History

Description

Critical reasoning in history is a process of questioning, analyzing, and evaluating oral and written ideas, concepts, and interpretation of the past. This process will include an introduction to the principles of inductive and deductive reasoning. The goal is to learn how to identify historical viewpoints, gather and organize historical information, recognize historical relationships and patterns, and see the relevancy of historical insights as background for an understanding of current events and issues. To achieve this goal, critical reasoning in history involves an understanding and practice of certain definable skills.

Prerequisite

ENGL 122 or equivalent

General Information

Department: Social Science
Division: Social Science
Units: 3.00
Grade Code: Student choice
Repeatability: 0
Max day class size: 30
Max night class size: 30

Number of Hours**Per Semester**

Lecture: 54.00
Laboratory: 0.00
Activity: 0.00

By Arrangement

Lecture: 0.00
Laboratory: 0.00
Activity: 0.00

Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- A. Identify and analyze the structure of arguments.
- B. Evaluate the validity and soundness of arguments.
- C. Demonstrate the nature of and be able to detect and avoid fallacies and fallacious thinking.
- D. Use and identify the limitations of inductive and deductive reasoning in historical writings.
- E. Show the nuances of language.

- F. Write a series of substantial essays that employ such writing strategies as question-framing, analysis, synthesis, and explanation models.

Content

- A. Identifying the thesis. This skill area tests the student's ability to identify the main point of a writer's argument.
- B. Formulating appropriate questions. This skill area examines the student's ability to formulate questions that will lead to a deeper and clearer understanding of an issue or an event.
- C. Distinguishing factual statements from judgmental statements, and knowledge from opinion. This skill area tests the student's ability to make distinction between factual and judgment statements.
- D. Understanding the nature of fallacies and fallacious arguments in historical writings, and how to avoid these errors in reasoning. This skill will introduce the student to the most common informal fallacies found in historical writings.
- E. Identifying vagueness and ambiguity and other semantic problems in historical writings. This skill area will introduce the student to the problem of language in historical writings.
- F. Determining the validity and soundness of information. This skill area tests the student's ability to determine what is valid and invalid, and sound and unsound in historical arguments.
- G. Comparing similarities and differences. This skill area examines the student's ability to compare similarities and differences between or among two or more statements or documents at the same or different points in time, and to organize information into categories.
- H. Recognizing bias and emotional factors: This skill area tests the student's ability to identify bias and prejudice in written and graphic materials and to identify semantic slanting in historical writings.
- I. Understanding values and value conflicts. This skill area examines the student's ability to recognize unstated value assumptions, value priorities, and value conflicts in historical writings.
- J. Identifying ideas, concepts, and ideologies. This skill area tests the student's ability to understand the use of ideas, concepts, and ideologies that affect the tone, organization, point of view and conclusion of an argument.
- K. Understanding historical arguments. This skill area tests the student's ability to understand how historians make interpretation from the facts and use causal, psychological and analogical models to draw inference and make conclusions.
- L. Understanding the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning, and the use and limitation of both in historical writings. This skill area introduces the student to the use of formal and informal logic as it applies to the study of historical arguments.
- M. Practice in the skill of developing essays which approach critical thinking in increasingly complex ways.

Methods

Lecture, Discussion, Distance Education

Assignments

Reading 1: Read the second chapter of the text and be prepared to discuss strengths of the arguments presented.

Reading 2: Read the historical context appropriate to the examples used in the texts in preparation for constructing a written argument.

Writing, problem solving, performance 1: Write an essay on the role of media in the construction of historical interpretations and remark upon the validity of differences among those interpretations.

Writing, problem solving, performance 2: Prepare a pro and con response to the USA PATRIOT Act and discuss its historical roots in US law.

Other: Prepare a research paper using the tools of critical thinking as applied to an issue discussed in class.

Evaluation

Sample One: Define and provide examples of propoganda in mass media in contemporary history.

Sample Two: Compare and contrast the role of corporate media in a free press society with alternative and independent media in the context of understanding historical construction.

Frequency of Evaluation: Evaluations will adhere to the DVC "Fairness in Grading" guidelines and will include as a minimum:

- Evaluation of students within the first quarter of the course and notifying student of the results
- Counting a final examination for no more than one-half the course grade
- Basing final grades on at least three students' tests and/or reports

Sample Textbook. See the current course syllabus or bookcenter.dvc.edu for the actual course textbook.

Book One

Author: Browne, M. Neil, Keeley, Stuart
Title: Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking
Publisher: Diablo Valley College
City: Pleasant Hill, CA
Year: 2012

Book Two

Author: Huff, Mickey, and Project Censored
Title: Censored 2012: Sourcebook for the Media Revolution
Publisher: New York, NY
City: Harper & Row Publishers
Year: 2011

Other

Parenti, Michael. Democracy for the Few, 9th Edition 2011 Bernays, Edward. Propaganda. 1928 (Classic)

Approval Date

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