

**CORE FOUNDATIONS AD HOC COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION**

SR-09-10-(03) 49 CFAHC

Recommends that the criteria for the critical thinking course designation (CT) and the associated Critical Thinking Designator Form be approved and that that these criteria specified in this recommendation be reviewed after the first year of implementation

RATIONALE:

Critical thinking (CT) skills are the hallmark of the new core curriculum and an integral part of Core I (First Year Seminar and 6 hours of CT-designated courses). Thus, the criteria for designating a course as Core I (CT) are detailed in the attached document, intended to serve as an aid and to guide faculty in the revision of existing courses and creation of new courses specifically for inclusion in Core I.

FACULTY SENATE CHAIR:

APPROVED BY THE
FACULTY SENATE: _____ DATE: _____

DISAPPROVED BY THE
FACULTY SENATE: _____ DATE: _____

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT:

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

DISAPPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

COMMENTS: _____

CRITERIA FOR CT COURSES

For a course to earn the CT designator the following requirements must be met. The course title should consist of not more than 25 characters only because characters 26 – 30 will be “(CT)”.

A. COURSE CONTENT should focus on at least one of the seven Core Domains¹, and draw on other domains in some form:

1. **Scientific thinking.** *This domain involves investigations that utilize empirical evidence to answer questions, reason in a logical and rational manner, and question beliefs and conclusions until reliable evidence is documented (Schafersman).*
2. **Social, ethical and historical thinking.** *This domain studies patterns of individual behaviors and human interactions; distinguishes between acts that harm other living beings and those which promote the welfare of others; and discerns and justifies reasoned ethical and moral judgments.*
3. **Aesthetic and artistic thinking.** *This domain involves connective and perceptive thinking which facilitates: understanding beauty, significance, unity and quality as social, cultural and historical phenomena; experiencing and valuing beauty, significance, unity and quality on intellectual and emotional levels; understanding and interpreting interdependencies within, between and among bodies of knowledge and modes of thought; insight into the contribution of the elements of artistic production to a coherent whole*
4. **Informational and technical literacy.** *This domain involves accessing, collecting, managing, integrating, and evaluating information in discipline specific manner; it also considers how to personalize technology to meet needs, interests, and learning style.*
5. **Oral, written and visual communication.** *This domain addresses how messages are sent, received, interpreted, and responded to in multiple forms; uses conventional and technology-based media; and demonstrates the ability to decipher, interpret and express ideas using language, images, graphics, icons, charts, graphs, and digital media.*
6. **Multicultural and international thinking.** *This domain recognizes the diversity of people, cultures and environments; respects contributions from multiple global perspectives; and comprehends interconnectedness among and between nations, commerce and people across the globe.*
7. **Mathematical and abstract thinking.** *This domain uses methods to solve problems; interprets formulas, graphs, tables and schematics; represents information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally; and evaluates answers to problems for reasonableness, alternatives and optimal results. (Mathematical Association of America)*

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES should incorporate at least three of the five First Year Seminar course objectives as outlined below to support critical thinking in your discipline:

1. **Reasoning:** *students will be able to demonstrate sound reasoning skills. Students will meet this objective by the analysis and construction of an argument.*
2. **Cultural Judgment:** *Students will be able to use reflective judgment and communicate personal opinions/stances related to ethical standards and resolution of ethical dilemmas and social justice issues. Students will meet this objective through various assignments and projects targeting these themes.*

¹ The domain descriptions are drawn from the domains’ working definitions as articulated in “The Domains Presentation for Faculty Senate v. 6.” <http://sharepoint/sites/gened>. These descriptions are meant to be suggestive rather than definitive.

3. **Representations:** Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from and into a variety of mediums. Students will meet this objective by analyzing, evaluating, and creating texts/performances in a variety of genres.
4. **Information Literacy:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and a proficiency in information literacy.² Students will meet this objective by strategizing about, accessing, evaluating and using information ethically.
5. **Reflection:** Students will be able to develop awareness of their learning processes, developing and adapting them as needed. They will meet this objective by engaging in reflective thinking related to their learning, perhaps by keeping learning journals and writing entries before, during, and after course projects, as appropriate.

C. PEDAGOGICAL METHODS should be appropriate to meet the stated objectives.

Faculty must articulate how their pedagogical methods meet the objectives. Recommended methods might include:

1. **Learner-centered approaches** which may include, but are not limited to, active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class; cooperative learning, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability; and inductive teaching and learning, in which students are first presented with challenges (questions or problems) and learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges. Inductive methods include inquiry-based learning, case-based instruction, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching.
2. **Writing-to-learn WAC techniques** as applied to appropriate literacies (such as writing, video production, map making, etc.)³

D. A variety of **CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS** should be used in order to measure higher-order critical thinking skills in addition to lower-order knowledge/comprehension skills.

1. Assessments should be appropriate and reliable measures of higher-order critical thinking skills in addition to lower-order knowledge/comprehension skills.
 - In assessments of higher-order thinking, students provide direct evidence of their ability to construct/apply their new knowledge to a real-life problem or scenario; students perform, create, produce or do something.
2. Assessments should be used for a variety of purposes:
 - **Diagnostic:** low-stakes, ungraded assessments that identify preconceptions, lines of reasoning, and learning difficulties in order to inform instruction and enable targeted remediation.
 - **Formative:** graded or ungraded assessments that provide feedback to students on their learning to enable them to make adjustments and improve in both basic knowledge and critical thinking.
 - **Summative:** graded assessments that evaluate mastery—i.e. what students do or do not know or skill sets students are or are not able to perform.

² These learning outcomes are based on ACRL's Information Literacy and Competency Standards for Higher Education: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm#ildef>

³ See MU's Writing Across the Curriculum's "What is WAC?" website <<http://www.marshall.edu/wac/info.html>>.

Critical Thinking Designator Form

Title Abbreviation: _____ (CT)

Alpha Designator/Number: _____ **Contact Person:** _____

Please briefly explain (noting where materials are located in the syllabus) how your course meets the following criteria. Please consult the "Criteria for CT Courses" document.

COURSE CONTENT

Core Domain Focus:

Other Core Domains Addressed:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Reasoning

Cultural Judgment

Representation

Reflection

Information Literacy

PEDAGOGICAL METHODS

Variety of methodologies:

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS

Measurements of higher-order critical thinking skills:

Variety of assessments: