



**UNCO 111.06E Theory and Application of Learning and Critical Thinking  
Freshman Success Seminar  
Global Frontier Program  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2012  
TR 9:30-10:20am, room EDS 133  
August 28-December 14, 2012**

**Instructor:** Marilyn R. Thompson, MFA

**Office Location:** Art Building- room 210

**Office Hours:** To be posted on office door

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<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>
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**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

- *Required reading:* Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Little, Brown and Company; Hachette Book Group; [www.HachetteBookGroup.com](http://www.HachetteBookGroup.com)
- Academic planner/calendar

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to theories of learning and critical thinking. It provides a learning framework to apply these skills and theories to their college and life experiences. Concepts studied include research and theory on how people learn, critical thinking, problem solving, perception, learning styles, memory, creativity, and how attitudes and values affect the learning and thinking processes. The course also shows students how to apply these theories and research findings to help develop practical skills in time management, reading, note taking, test taking, and other areas that will help them be more successful students and lifelong learners. (1 semester hour)

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. To develop general skills in critical thinking, creative problem solving, and other necessary tools for success in college and beyond
2. To gain an overview of the customs, organization, and academic disciplines within an institution of higher learning
3. To increase one's discipline in practical matters such as time management, organization, and planning
4. To gain a specific understanding of the conceptual and practical demands of study in the visual arts
5. To learn and employ sound practices in research, study, and practice

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

Instruction will include lectures by instructor, class discussions, field trips, group activities, and a series of guest speakers

### **Grading**

**Reading:** It is required to read the assignments on the course schedule in accordance with the assigned dates. The Final Exam will be based on content covered in the readings and class.

**Participation and involvement in all activities of this class (20%):** class participation is mandatory. 10 points per class can be earned for participation in discussions. Attending classes regularly helps students to become successful in college. Arriving to class late or leaving early will result in loss of points.

**3 critical response papers on class or university-sponsored activities (60% of the final grade: each paper is valued at 20%):**

1. First paper due **September 25** at the beginning of class
2. Second paper due **October 30** at the beginning of class
3. Last paper due **November 20** at the beginning of class

Students are expected to attend on-campus university events or activities as part of their first-year experience. Students will write three typewritten papers (minimum 2-3 pages in length, double spaced) on each, explaining what they learned from these events and how attending each event contributed to their being a more successful and educated college student. These papers are expected to demonstrate critical and analytical thought expressed in clear and proper language. Papers must address events from the following categories:

- Athletic Events (varsity or intramural games, demonstrations at the Morris Recreation Center, etc.)
- Cultural Events (concerts, performances, plays, art exhibitions, or other venues featuring the visual, literary, or performance arts). This category can include the talks given by the art faculty.
- University-Wide Academic Events (guest speakers, presentations at honor or learned societies, breakout entertainment, colloquia, symposia, convocation, etc.)

### **Final Exam (20% of the final grade)**

The Final Examination will cover various topics discussed in class, with special emphasis on the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell.

Grading scale: 90%-A, 80%-B, 70%-C, 60%-D and 59%-below F

**Grading: All assignments must be completed if the student is to pass the course**

**Extra Credit:** Attending and writing an extra event paper of 2-3 pages in length can earn up to 5 extra credit points that will be added to the final exam grade.

**Grade of incomplete (X):** University guidelines on incomplete Grades have recently changed, as described in Student's Guidebook and Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures (Supplements System Policy 13.02). In short, students are eligible to receive an "X" only if they

have been unable, because of circumstances beyond their control, to attend classes during Finals Week or the preceding three weeks. If a student meets these criteria, he or she must still petition the instructor and the instructor's department head by filling out and submitting a "Plan for Completing the Grade of "X". The Dean of the College of Humanities/Soc Sci/Art will determine whether or not a petition is valid.

#### **Other Requirements and Expectations**

- **Attendance at any scheduled "field trips" to university offices, facilities, or events (see the syllabus)**
- **No more than 2 unexcused absences from class**  
(Each additional unexcused absence will result in the loss of a letter grade; excessive absences will result in either being dropped from or **failing the course.**) Refer to The Student Guidebook.
- **Students in COH 111.007 will turn in all assignments on time.**
- **All assignments must be completed and submitted in good faith in order for the student to pass the course.**

### COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

#### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

Please feel free to contact me through email or stop by during my office hours. I encourage classes to interact with me as much as possible, especially if a student feels challenged by the academic content of a course or has missed classes.

**Email:** [Marilyn.Thompson@tamuc.edu](mailto:Marilyn.Thompson@tamuc.edu) **Office Hours:** To be posted on office door.

### COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

#### **Course Specific Procedures:**

**Late assignments:** Late assignments due to unexcused absences from class will not be accepted. All assigned work must be completed and turned in at the assigned dates and times to receive credit for this course. It will be the instructor's prerogative to accept late work or not, and this will depend on cases of extreme and extenuating circumstances that can be documented to the instructor's satisfaction.

**Class attendance and participation:** Participation is **required**. It is important to come to class prepared so you can take part in the group discussions and activities. You will be called upon even if you do not raise your hand. Be an active learner. Come prepared for the group discussions. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and arrive on time. University guidelines on attendance are outlined in *The Student Guidebook*, available through the Office of the Dean of Students and by searching the University's web site.

Each student in this course is allowed unexcused absences amounting to two class periods. Unexcused absences require no explanation. Excused absences are defined in *The Student Guidebook* and various university policies, but policy employed in this class is as follows:

1. Participation in pre-approved University activities such as athletic events, sponsored field trips, and travel for specific University-related academic reasons;
2. Verifiable legal proceedings;
3. Documented cases of illness, injury, or emergencies (all original, written, documentary form should be presented to instructor 5 days of the absence(s))

**When a student accrues more than two unexcused absences the instructor has the prerogatives (1) to reduce the final letter grade for each additional absence, and, for**

**excessive absences, (2) to expel the student from class, drop the student from class, or assign the student a final grade of F.**

When an excused absence causes a student to miss an assignment or exam, it is the student's responsibility to inform—or to have someone else notify—the instructor within 2 days of the scheduled event. Missed assignments should be made up within one week of the originally scheduled due date. If a student has not requested, provided documentation of an excuse, and completed the missed assignment within 7 days of the original deadline, the grade will turn to zero and the student will fail the course.

Being tardy or leaving class early counts as one/half of an absence. Students are required to report tardies and early exits from class either to the instructor (in person) or as notation on the sign-in sheet. Make sure you always sign the roll sheet when attending class to avoid being marked absent. Chronic tardiness and early departures may result in the consequences outlined above for excessive absences.

**Cell phones, pagers, computers, and other electronic devices:** Unless there is a verifiable disability necessitating their use, there is a complete ban on the use of electronic devices in this classroom while class is in session. Students who must take an emergency call will leave the classroom to do so.

**Technology Requirements**

Students must have access to the Internet, word processing software, and a printer. The university provides several computer labs for these purposes. Students should possess basic skills in conducting research through library and Internet sources.

**Plagiarism:** Do not take credit for someone else's work. According to Texas A & M University-Commerce, "the university does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource materials. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course."

**Classroom Behavior and Protocol:** Our classroom is a forum for learning, a place where all of us should feel safe, comfortable, and enlivened. All are expected to be courteous and respectful of each other. Common sense, professionalism and civility should prevail, but let it be known that the following activities will not be tolerated under any circumstance:

- It is forbidden to sleep, drowse, or close one's eyes during class.
- Cell phones, computers, pagers, and other personal electronic devices may not be used while class is in session.
- It is forbidden to conceal oneself in a way that disguises one's identity (hats, hoodies, sunglasses, etc.) or activity.
- No one will engage in disruptive or distracting behavior of any sort.
- Aggression, threatening behavior (whether implied or physical), disrespect, and needless argumentation directed at anyone in the classroom may result in immediate expulsion and/or failure of the course.
- No one may exit the classroom without prior permission or polite notification of the instructor.
- Neither chronic tardiness nor exiting the classroom early is permitted, and excessive infractions may result in expulsion from and/or failure of the course.
- Distracting consumption of food or beverages when the class is in session.

- Whispering, talking to each other, or otherwise engaging in distracting behavior while the instructor is lecturing, answering questions, or involved in dialogue with students.

**PLEASE understand that violations of these protocols are taken seriously and may result in expulsion from the class and/or a final grade of F. Please also understand that the instructor will not hesitate to summon the University Police when student conduct is deemed threatening or belligerent to the instructor or other students.**

### University Specific Procedures:

#### *ADA Statement*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce, Gee Library 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 or Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

#### *Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*)

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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#### **Class Schedule and Assignments:**

##### **August 28 & 30:**

**Tuesday:** Introduction, Syllabus, and greetings

Academic planner

**Thursday:** Time management

University web site

##### **September 4 & 6:**

**Tuesday:** Writing Lab

**Thursday:** Texas A&M-Commerce Counseling Center

##### **September 11 & 13:**

**Tuesday:** Meet at Gee Library: Sarah Northam

**Thursday:** Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Introduction & Ch. 1

##### **September 18 & 20:**

**Tuesday:** Work on writing assignment

**Thursday:** Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 2

**September 25 & 27:**

**Tuesday: Career Development: (Resumes)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Event paper due**

**Thursday: Write resumes & writing lab**

**October 2 & 4:**

**Tuesday: Reading & Note Taking**

**Thursday: Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 3**

**October 9 & 11:**

**Tuesday: Test taking**

**Due: Cornell Method and Mind mapping (copy of class notes in the Cornell Method and Mind Mapping Method along with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your note taking ability)**

**Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 4**

**Tuesday: Work on 2<sup>nd</sup> writing assignment and go to writing lab**

**October 16 & 18:**

**Tuesday: Communicating & Group projects instructions**

**Thursday: Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 5**

**October 23 & 25:**

**Tuesday: Money Management & Health**

**Thursday: Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 6**

**October 30 & November 1:**

**Tuesday: 2<sup>nd</sup> Event paper due**

**Guest Speaker: International Studies, Dr. Kenneth Clinton**

**Thursday: Work on Group projects**

**November 6 & 8:**

**Tuesday: Four-year Degree plan**

**Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 7**

**Thursday: Work on Group projects**

**November 13 & 15:**

**Tuesday: Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch. 8**

**Thursday: Work on Group projects**

**November 20:**

**Tuesday: 3<sup>rd</sup> Event paper due**

**Critical Thinking discussion: *Outliers*: Ch.9**

**Thursday: Thanksgiving holiday**

**November 22: Thanksgiving**

**November 27 & 29:**

**Tuesday: Group project presentations**

**Thursday: Group project presentations**

**December 4 & 6;**

**Tuesday: Discussion: *Outliers* & Final Exam review**

**Thursday: Final Exam**

**December 10 – 14: Finals Week: Work in study groups for your other class finals**