



**COB 111.002**

## **Critical Thinking – Freshman Success Seminar**

**BA 338**

**Tuesdays/Thursdays 2-2:50 pm**

**Fall 2013**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer L. Flanagan, PhD  
College of Business and Technology, Business Admin. & MIS

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\*Emails answered within 24 hrs, not answered  
between Fri 5pm-Mon 9am

**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 2:50 – 4 pm

\*Also available by appointment. Times are subject to change – please see my website for updated hours.

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### **About the Instructor:**

Greetings! I am Jennifer Flanagan, instructor for this course. I graduated with my BS in Business Administration from TAMU-C in 1998, my MBA from Texas Woman's University in 2004, and I graduated with my PhD in Educational Psychology (BA minor) in December of 2009. I am also a certified Texas Educator (grades 4-8 Math and 4-8 generalist).

Before teaching, I worked for 4 years as an HR/Payroll manager and Retail Manager. I began teaching in 2002 (5<sup>th</sup> grade) and taught for 4 years (Math, Science, and Social Studies, grades 5-12), as well as coaching for 2 years (tennis and cheerleading). I left teaching in 2006 to pursue my PhD full time and stay home with my son. I began teaching at TAMU-C in the Spring of 2005 as an adjunct faculty, and began teaching full time in 2006.

I live outside of Commerce with my husband (Cleon, 1998) and two sons (Bryan – 10, Brayden – 4).

*\*\*\*We are also expecting a baby girl the first part of September (by 9/13, but you never know!). I will be unavailable via email for a few days during the time I am in the hospital, so PLEASE WATCH YOUR EMAIL – I will keep all of you posted on my progress!! I also will NOT have office hours for the 2 weeks following the birth, but will be responding to emails once I'm home. The schedule should accommodate for my absence with guest speakers and alternate assignments.\*\*\**

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### **Required Materials:**

- **TEXTBOOK:** *Keys to Success - Quick*. Carter, C., Bishop, J. and Kravits, S.L. (2012). ISBN: 978-0-13-254171-8.
- Blue book (available in bookstore) or small spiral notebook, 8 ½ X 11
- Student Planner (available at the student center, library, hot spots)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course provides a study of Theory and Application of Learning and Critical Thinking, designed to ease the transition from high school to university life and provide important academic, intellectual, and social skills to help ensure a successful first year in college. The course is designed to assist students in increasing their knowledge of and skill in critical thinking and acting behaviors. Concepts studied include perception, memory, creativity, and problem solving as they relate to critical thinking. The effects of attitudes, values, logical fallacies, and thinking errors on critical thinking and problem solving are examined. Assignments require students to apply critical thinking skills to real-life situations.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize and appreciate TAMU-C's uniqueness by positively engaging in supporting and encouraging other students.
2. Develop an understanding of the complex issues and choices confronting college students, such as course and career choices and identify problem behaviors that can interfere with student success.

3. Understand the levels of the critical thinking process through problem solving activities.
4. Exhibit higher levels of academic skills that will lead to their success at TAMU-C, such as time management, career exploration, and goal setting through various techniques.
5. Be familiar with the range of university events that are available to students.
6. Clarify how they learn and be able to apply active learning techniques.
7. Express what is expected of students so they can be successful at TAMU-C.
8. Understand the importance of excellent written and verbal communication by demonstrating academic honesty and integrity.
9. Access information from the web and library and understand the meaning of plagiarism and how to avoid it.
10. Engage in the dynamics of group activities to increase individual satisfaction and team performance.
11. Construct well written papers with minimum grammar and syntax errors.
12. Develop four-year degree plans that accurately reflect degree requirements.
13. Calculate GPA and the impact grades have on cumulative GPA.

**GENERAL POLICIES FOR CLASSES:** All students enrolled at the University will follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. See Student's Guide Handbook, Rules and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct at <http://web.tamuc.edu/studentLife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

**Civility Requirement:** The instructor reserves the right to manage a positive learning environment and thus will not tolerate inappropriate conduct in the course. If the instructor feels that you have not attended class adequately, habitually arrive late and unprepared, that you have cut class during speeches; left class in the middle of a session, that you have not contributed appropriately in class, or that you have complained about assignments and grading policies, your final course grade may be reduced accordingly. Additionally, the instructor expects every student to maintain a professional level with respecting opinions of the instructor, students, and guest speakers. In this regard, hand-held devices such as cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, and CD players must be turned off during class. The instructor can and will confiscate any devices that are disruptive to the class. Understand that this factor of your grade is highly subjective. In extreme cases, the instructor reserves the right to drop students from the class.

**Academic Integrity:** In this course the need for collaboration is undeniable if you are to excel, even in cases of individual work. There is a fine line in this process. You are encouraged to seek the help and advice of others. However, you *must* do your own work. My personal policy, which will guide this course, is: I trust you to behave honestly and ethically in all circumstances. Please ask me if you have questions about what is proper and what is not.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Instructors "are expected to uphold and support student integrity and honesty by maintaining conditions that encourage and enforce academic honesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as 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 material." See 13.99.99.R0.10 Academic Honesty at [http://www.tamuc.edu/administration/Rules%26Procedures/rules\\_procedures.asp?RID=97](http://www.tamuc.edu/administration/Rules%26Procedures/rules_procedures.asp?RID=97).

**PLAGIARISM:** Some people seem to believe that anything found on the Internet is free to use as they please. The "cut and paste" option also makes it quite tempting. However, information on the web must be properly cited just as you would any "hard copy" periodicals.

The following web site provides valuable insight relating to what constitutes plagiarism and how it may be avoided: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. To avoid plagiarism an individual must give credit wherever he or she uses:

- 1) another individual's idea, opinion, or theory
- 2) facts, statistics, graphs, and drawings that are not common knowledge
- 3) quotations of another individual's spoken or written words
- 4) paraphrase another individual's spoken or written words

Any deviation from the guidelines concerning quotes and citations constitutes plagiarism, as it suggests that you are trying to submit someone else's work and creativity as your own. In accordance with the Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct Section 5.b [1, 2, 3], the penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion.

**FIRST TIME ECOLLEGE USERS:** eCollege is generally very user friendly; however, should you have any questions or concerns about it, you may want to complete an eCollege orientation. You can access the online eCollege Orientation by clicking on the following link: <http://online.tamuc.org/>

**Technical Support:** If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the eCollege Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Help Desk can be reached by sending an email to [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) or by calling 1-866-656-5511. Additionally, you can click on the "Help" button located at the top of each page for more information.

**SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** 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**  
Gee Library, Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148    [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

#### **POLICIES RELEVANT TO COB 111 STUDENTS:**

**Course Evaluation:** The final course grade will be based on the following components:

<b>Component Title</b>	<b>Points</b>
Critical Thinking Writing Assignments (4)	20
Attend at least 4 University/Campus Sponsored Events or Activities	10
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	15
Activities and Assignments	10
Class Attendance and Participation	15
Competency Aptitude Assessment (GCAA)	15

**Total Points Possible** **100**

Course Final Grade Scale

A = 100-90    B = 89-80    C = 79-70    D = 69-60    F = 59 & Below

#### **Course Requirements:**

- Critical Thinking Writing Assignment:** Each student will write four (4) 1-paged critical analyses that describe how attending events on campus contributes to the student's success as a college student, as well as other topics as deemed necessary by the instructor. These papers should be organized with Introduction, Main Points, and Summary. Pick a few significant elements from the event to focus on in your critical analysis.
  
- Attend at least 4 University/Campus Sponsored Events or Activities:** Each student will attend at least 4 events on campus which should be used for the Critical Thinking Writing Assignments. One event should be a "Cultural Event" (art show, concert, play, etc.); 1 should be a "University-Wide Event" (guest speaker, breakout entertainment, colloquium, convocation, etc.); 1 should be an athletic event (varsity sport or intramural sport); and 1 can be of the student's choosing of any university/campus sponsored event or activity.

□ **Competency Aptitude Assessment (GCAA):** As part of Texas A&M University – Commerce’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), students will be required to go to the computer lab as designated on the syllabus schedule and complete an electronic portfolio. Representatives from the QEP will be there to guide you through the process. It is important that you are ON TIME. Additionally, this is the only day you can complete this assignment, so unless you have a University-designated excuse (please see the student handbook), you **MUST** attend on this day at this time!!!! If you miss it, you will not have an opportunity to make it up!!!

□ **Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam:** Each student will take two online exams through eCollege. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions from the text book and materials related to the course lectures and workshops.

□ **Class Attendance, Participation, and Miscellaneous Activities and Assignments:**

❖ Class Attendance and Participation is critical to your success in this course, just as it is critical for your job. The attendance policy is simple: Come to class every day. Come to class on time. Come to class prepared. The instructor reserves the right to implement punitive policies if attendance is not acceptable. You get **two free absences** in this class, so save it and use it judiciously. If you miss more than six classes, you cannot make an A. It is simply impossible. If you miss eight classes, you cannot make a B. If you miss ten class periods, you cannot make a C. If you miss fourteen or more days you will automatically receive an F for the course. Per University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01, effective September 1, 1996, students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance policy stated in the catalog, Student’s Guidebook, and/or faculty syllabus. The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. You will be allowed to make-up work for classes you miss only if your absence is excusable. Excusable absences are defined in the current University Catalog.

❖ Miscellaneous Activities and Assignments are vital to developing a support community at TAMU-C. Students will be expected to complete degree audit and plan, calculate GPA, develop resume, maintain a planner, maintain journal/notes, and other assignments as instructor sees fit.

**COB 111 – Critical Thinking**  
**Course Schedule Tuesdays/Thursdays**

Week	Tuesdays	Thursdays
1  8/27 and 8/29	Intro to the course/Review of the syllabus	Chapter 1 – Welcome to College Review of eCollege (Event Papers, Degree Plans, Exams, turnitin, etc.)  <i>Introduce yourself online in the Student Lounge – graded assignment due Sunday, 9/1 by 11 pm</i>
2  9/3 and 9/5	Chapter 2 – Goals and Time Weekly To-Do List/ Planner Due – graded assignment	Campus Scavenger Hunt – graded assignment (make sure you are ON TIME!)
3  9/10 and 9/12	<b>Get to know the Library</b> – Sara Northam  <b>Meet at the library for Scavenger Hunt (for a grade!!!) – we will meet at the front desk area at 2 pm!!!</b>	<b>Meet in Computer Lab – Global Competency Aptitude Assessment (GCAA)</b> <b>Meet in BA 345 (BE ON TIME!)</b>  <b>**This assignment MUST be completed on THIS DAY ONLY!!!**</b>
4  9/17 and 9/19	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Ms. Tina Lancaster Management Information Systems	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Ms. Tina Lancaster Management Information Systems
5  9/24 and 9/26	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Dr. Kurtay Ogunc Economics and Finance	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Mr. George Smith Your College Career
6  10/1 and 10/3	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Ms. Susan Lampe CBE Advising  Advising issues, holds, university policy/CBE policy	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Kimberly Herron Financial Aid
7  10/8 and 10/10	<b>Guest Speaker</b> - Samantha Reece Career Development  Overview of resumes, business attire, job fairs, networking	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Deirdre Hill TRIO  <b>JOB FAIR TODAY!</b>  <b>*Event Paper 1 – Your choice Due by midnight (dropbox in eCollege)</b>
8  10/15 and 10/17	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Rick McCraw Counseling Center	Chapter 4 – Critical, Creative and Practical Thinking
9  10/22 and 10/24	Chapter 5 – Reading and Information Literacy  <b>*Event Paper 2 – University Due by midnight (dropbox in eCollege)</b>	Chapter 6 – Listening and Note Taking  Cornell Notes  Bring to class on 10/29 – Resume!! – graded assignment!!

<b>10</b> <b>10/29 and 10/31</b>	Chapter 12 – Careers and More  Career Awareness: resume writing, research careers based on skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience related to major  Turn in your EDITED resume at the end of class!! – graded assignment	<b>Mid-term Exam taken via eCollege – meet in computer lab (Chapters 1, 2, 12, 4, 5, and 6)</b>
<b>11</b> <b>11/5 and 11/7</b>	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Getting to know about Accounting Department of Accounting	<b>Guest Speaker</b> – Dr. Srinivas Nippani Economics and Finance
<b>12</b> <b>11/12 and 11/14</b>	Chapter 3 – Learning how you learn	In Class activity on Communication in the workplace – graded assignment IN CLASS!!!  <b>*Event Paper 3 – Cultural Due by midnight (dropbox in eCollege)</b>
<b>13</b> <b>11/19 and 11/21</b>	Chapter 7 – Memory and Studying	Chapter 8 – Test taking
<b>14</b> <b>11/26 and 11/28</b>	Chapter 9 – Diversity and Communication  <b>*Event Paper 4 – Athletic Due by midnight (dropbox in eCollege)</b>	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>
<b>15</b> <b>12/3 and 12/5</b>	Chapter 10 - Wellness and Stress Management	Chapter 11 – Managing Money
<b>16</b> <b>12/10 and 12/12</b>	<b>Final Exam taken via eCollege – meet in computer lab (Chapters 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11)</b>  <b>** Time might change – will announce when Final Exam Schedule is released**</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>  <b>Enjoy your Holiday Break!</b>

***\*\*Class will continue to meet on a weekly basis throughout the rest of the semester, with activities and assignments being proctored. These are considered as part of the “Activities and Assignments” component and will be calculated in the course grade accordingly.***

***\*\*\*All assignments will be scanned through turnitin.com automatically when submitted to the dropbox.***

***Please Note:*** The instructor reserves the right to change this schedule as circumstances may dictate. All changes will be announced in class or via email.

Please go to this link for campus events: <https://ems.tamuc.edu/MasterCalendar/MasterCalendar.aspx>

## Critical Thinking Grid

	<b>4 - Exemplary</b> If applicable, consistently does all or almost all of the following	<b>3 - Satisfactory</b> If applicable, consistently does most or many of the following	<b>2- Below Satisfactory</b> If applicable, consistently does most or many of the following	<b>1 - Unsatisfactory</b> If applicable, consistently does all or almost all of the following
<b>Purpose</b>	--Demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment's purpose	--Demonstrates an understanding of the assignment's purpose	--Is not completely clear about the purpose of the assignment	--Does not clearly understand the purpose of the assignment
<b>Key Question, Problem, or Issue</b>	--Clearly defines the issue or problem; accurately identifies the core issues --Appreciates depth and breadth of problem --Demonstrates fair-mindedness toward problem	--Defines the issue; identifies the core issues, but may not fully explore their depth and breadth --Demonstrates fair-mindedness	--Defines the issue, but poorly (superficially, narrowly); may overlook some core issues --Has trouble maintaining a fair-minded approach toward the problem	--Fails to clearly define the issue or problem; does not recognize the core issues --Fails to maintain a fair-minded approach toward the problem
<b>Point of View</b>	--Identifies and evaluates relevant significant points of view --Is empathetic, fair in examining all relevant points of view	--Identifies and evaluates relevant points of view --Is fair in examining those views	--May identify other points of view but struggles with maintaining fairmindedness; may focus on irrelevant or insignificant points of view	--Ignores or superficially evaluates alternate points of view --Cannot separate own vested interests and feelings when evaluating other points of view
<b>Information</b>	--Gathers sufficient, credible, relevant information: observations, statements, logic, data, facts, questions, graphs, themes, assertions, descriptions, etc. --Includes information that opposes as well as supports the argued position --Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from that information	--Gathers sufficient, credible, and relevant information --Includes some information from opposing views --Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from it	--Gathers some credible information, but not enough; some information may be irrelevant --Omits significant information, including some strong counter-arguments --Sometimes confuses information and the inferences drawn from it	--Relies on insufficient, irrelevant, or unreliable information --Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counter-arguments --Confuses information and inferences drawn from that information
<b>Concepts</b>	--Identifies and accurately explains/uses the relevant key concepts	--Identifies and accurately explains and uses the key concepts, but not with the depth and precision of a "4"	--Identifies some (not all) key concepts, but use of concepts is superficial and inaccurate at times	--Misunderstands key concepts or ignores relevant key concepts altogether
<b>Assumptions</b>	--Accurately identifies assumptions (things taken for granted) --Makes assumptions that are consistent, reasonable, valid	--Identifies assumptions --Makes valid assumptions	--Fails to identify assumptions, or fails to explain them, or the assumptions identified are irrelevant, not clearly stated, and/or invalid	--Fails to identify assumptions --Makes invalid assumptions
<b>Interpretations, Inferences</b>	--Follows where evidence and reason lead in order to obtain defensible, thoughtful, logical conclusions or solutions --Makes deep rather than superficial inferences --Makes inferences that are consistent with one another	--Follows where evidence and reason lead to obtain justifiable, logical conclusions --Makes valid inferences, but not with the same depth and as a "4"	--Does follow some evidence to conclusions, but inferences are more often than not unclear, illogical, inconsistent, and/or superficial	--Uses superficial, simplistic, or irrelevant reasons and unjustifiable claims --Makes illogical, inconsistent inferences --Exhibits closed-mindedness or hostility to reason; regardless of the evidence, maintains or defends views based on self-interest
<b>Implications, Consequences</b>	--Identifies the most significant implications and consequences of the reasoning (whether positive and/or negative) --Distinguishes probable from improbable implications	--Identifies significant implications and consequences and distinguishes probable from improbable implications, but not with the same insight and precision as a "4"	--Has trouble identifying significant implications and consequences; identifies improbable implications	--Ignores significant implications and consequences of reasoning

4 = Thinking is exemplary, skilled, marked by excellence in clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logicity, and fairness

3 = Thinking is competent, effective, accurate and clear, but lacks the exemplary depth, precision, and insight of a 4

2 = Thinking is inconsistent, ineffective; shows a lack of consistent competence: is often unclear, imprecise, inaccurate, and superficial

1 = Thinking is unskilled and insufficient, marked by imprecision, lack of clarity, superficiality, illogicality, and inaccuracy, and unfairness