

PHIL 2020 Day 3 Week 2

Critical Thinking Applications

What is critical thinking?

- Critical thinking is the process of examining, analyzing, questioning, and challenging situations, issues, and information of all kinds.
- How can we apply critical thinking to larger projects, like research assignments and papers?
 - Problem/goal identification.
 - Diagnosis.
 - Exploration.
 - Action.
 - Reflection.

Why is critical thinking important?

- It identifies bias
- It is oriented toward the problem, issue, or situation being addressed
- It gives you the whole picture
- It brings in other necessary factors
- It considers both the simplicity and complexity of its object
- It gives you the most nearly accurate view of reality
- It is most likely to help you get the results you want

Tips for preparing a larger project

- Become aware of the different points of view or schools of thought on an issue.
- Recognize assumptions.
- Examine information for accuracy, assumptions, biases, or specific interests.
- Consider the context of the information, problem, or issue.
- The historical, ethical, legal, or socio-political context is often important, and may be where your best contribution happens.

How to think about assumptions

- Identify the assumptions behind the problem.
- Challenge those assumptions.
- Imagine alternatives, different answers or points of view on the same problem.
- Critique the alternatives.
- Reframe the problem and solution.

Examples for discussion:

- Imagine you are a student in Mass Media, you are interested in the recent news stories of school shootings. How might this be a paper topic?
- Biology students often are asked to work in a lab collecting data. If you are a biology student collecting data on metals present in mammal organs, what might be the context you could write about in a paper?
- Imagine you are a Computer Science major. You are great at programming, but you might want to look at a broader ethical issue related to computers. Think about how you might do a paper?
- Discuss how your own major invites critical thinking in paper topics?

Examples

- Mass Media students writing on the ethics of reporting school shootings and the psychological effects of reporting on school shootings from the reporter's perspective
- Biology student discussing the environmental context that results in heavy metals in water which was evident in her biology research on metal in mammal organs
- Computer Science student discussing ethics and robots, from the historical/literature perspective (Isaac Asimov), programming ethical principles into robots to modify their behavior, and the ethics of how robots are used
- Disability law and employment law as they relate to people with stutter/stammer
- University policies and “universal design” for students with disabilities