

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

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433 Critical Thinking for Ministry

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I. Cognitive Objectives

- A. To enable the student to know and apply the principles to test deductive inference for validity.
- B. To enable the student to know and apply the test of evidence to support inductive inferences.
- C. To enable the student to understand the functions of language, classify propositions and the nature of definitions.
- D. To enable the student to identify and evaluate the informal fallacies of logic.
- E. To enable the student to understand the place of logic in Christian Theology as well as in Biblical Revelation.

II Outcome Skills

- A. Ability to define cognitive problems...
- B. Ability to select data relevant to problem resolution...
- C. Ability to identify stated and unstated assumptions...
- D. Ability to formulate relevant hypotheses, generalizations and causal theories along with the ability to test the same...
- E. Ability to draw valid deductive inferences as well as test deductive inferences for validity...
- F. Ability to identify verbal arguments...
- G. Ability to express theological ideas clearly and precisely...
- H. Appreciate the scope and competency of a renewed mind...

III. Student Responsibilities

- A. Read ***Critical Thinking: An Introduction*** by Alec Fisher. Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- B. Complete on time any daily assignments.
- C. Participate in class exercises to develop skills by doing exercises.
- D. Write the take final exam.

IV. Grading

- A. Daily exercises and class work
- B. Class participation
- C. Final examination
- D. Reading of the text book by Fisher

V. Class Schedule

February 9 - Theological Foundation of Critical Thinking

February 10 - Basic Consideration for Critical Thinking I

February 11 – Basic Considerations – Informal Fallacies

February 12 - Deductive Arguments and the Rules for their Evaluation

February 13 - Inductive Arguments and the Rules for their Evaluation

VI. Selected Texts on Logic

Clark, Gordon H. ***Language and Theology***. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1980. An historical overview of philosophy of language with a positive statement of his view and understanding of logic.

Copi, Irving M. ***Introduction to Logic***. New York: The Macmillan Company, current edition. This is the standard text used in almost all Introduction to Logic courses in the Universities of America. If you use the book you should skip the section on symbolic logic and even truth tables if you wish to avoid the math.

Fisher, Alec. ***Critical Thinking: An Introduction***. Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2001. This is the text book for this class. It is well conceived in format and covers all the basics in critical thinking.

Poythress, Vern S. ***Philosophy of Science and the Sovereignty of God***. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1976. Theological discussion of logic throughout the book with an appendix dedicated to the discussion.

Runkle, Gerald. ***Good Thinking: An Introduction to Logic***. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., current edition. This is a self-help text in critical thinking. It is the one I recommend to people with no background in logic. The answers to the exercises are provided so that one can check their work. I would recommend again that you skip the section on symbolic logic.

Tagliapietra, Ron. ***Better Thinking & Reasoning***. Greenville, S. C.: Bob Jones University Press, 1995. I reviewed this book for a journal. Its strength is that it uses Biblical materials and ideas. In my judgment it is not broad enough in scope to make a person proficient in logic but it does cover the basics.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking (www.criticalthinking.org) is an excellent source for the discussion of critical thinking. They have many publications available as well as present conferences on the subject