

AASC 4301.47F: Senior Seminar – Fall 2017 Syllabus



Course Information

Instructor: Mel Ervin

Campus Office, Hours, and Phone: Because I teach online exclusively, I do not maintain an office on the campus. Typically, course materials (presentations, syllabus, FAQs, instructions, announcements, direct email, feedback, etc.) answer all questions. If necessary, I will be happy to arrange a meeting via telephone or videoconference.

Please email any questions or concerns. During the workweek (Monday-Friday), I will check email at least once daily and respond to your email within 24 hours. My availability during the weekend is limited and unpredictable. Do not wait until the weekend to attempt to contact me!

If you email after 3PM – Friday, you *may* not hear from me until Monday; therefore, I urge you to view each upcoming assignment/discussion early in the week and let me know if I can help with any question(s). I'll be glad to help.

Discussions and assignments are designed to require thorough consideration on your part. You have “24-7” access to all course material. Additionally, all course material is available well in advance of due dates. To ensure your best work, do not wait until the weekend to begin. Doing so, will deprive you of time you need, and me of the opportunity to help. Last minute “technical difficulties” will not be accepted as justification for failure to submit your work.

Additional email: mcervin@lamar.edu When contacting me via this address, please be sure to note your course and section number (AASC 4301.47F). Otherwise, my response will be delayed due to my having to search class rolls.

Required Text:

In addition to weekly reading assignments, you will have an introductory/guiding PowerPoint presentation to view. See the relevant week.

Thinking Critically, 11th Ed. Chaffee. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-285-43011-9.

Course Description

AASC 4301 Senior Seminar is designed to help you develop your critical thinking skills, critically assess your personal, academic, and professional goals, and critically assess your course of study pursuant to the BAAS or BGS degree.

Prerequisites:

Successful completion of: ENGL 1301: Composition I, ENGL 1302: Composition II, and AASC 3301 Lifelong Learning and Portfolio Development.

Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Grading

In this course, you will:

- 1) employ specific steps to improve your critical thinking and writing skills.
- 2) become aware of and apply the thinking process.
- 3) review and apply the characteristics of a critical thinker.
- 4) discover and implement a systematic approach to analyzing problems.
- 5) consider the role of knowledge in undermining and/or supporting one's beliefs.
- 6) critically assess the means whereby you construct beliefs.
- 7) discover and apply the elements of perceiving and interpreting your experiences.
- 8) examine the relationship of direct and indirect experience to your developing knowledge.
- 9) discover elements of chronological, process, comparative, analogical, and causal relationships.
- 10) examine the role language plays in your thinking.
- 11) examine the processes involved in your using thinking patterns to make sense of the world.
- 12) discover what it means to live creatively, the integration of critical thinking and creative living, and the potential impact of a well-considered life philosophy.
- 13) evaluate your reasoning abilities by examining methods of critical reasoning.
- 14) discover and apply the means whereby you can construct intellectually reliable arguments.
- 15) construct a detailed explanation/defense of your course of study pursuant to your BAAS or BGS degree.

Assessment:

Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed according to your:

- completion of assignments.
- participation in discussions.
- completion of reading quizzes.
- submission of a critical analysis of your course of study pursuant to your BAAS or BGS degree.

Lamar University mandates that you complete all required department courses with a minimum grade of "C." AASC 4301 Senior Seminar is a required course, thus **you must earn at least a "C" in this course.**

I encourage you to carefully monitor your grades and your current "Course Grade", which will be an accurate reflection of your work in relation to week-by-week course requirements.

Grading:

Your **final grade** will be determined as follows:

- 20% - Regular Assignments
- 25% - Discussion Requirements
- 25% - Reading Quizzes
- 30% - Final Course of Study Assessment

Grading Scale:

A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=0-59%

Please Note!

Your attempts to participate in class and interact in a meaningful way will prove beneficial during the semester and influence borderline final grade decisions.

Grading and Returning Assignments/Discussions

I will grade assignments/discussions within one week of the submission/due date.

Course Schedule

Here is a quick look at course units. **For detailed instructions, see each week's "To-Do List".**

Week 1: Thinking ([August 28-September 3](#))
Week 2: Thinking Critically ([September 4-10](#))
Week 3: Solving Problems ([September 11-17](#))
Week 4: Perceiving and Believing ([September 18-24](#))
Week 5: Constructing Knowledge ([September 25-October 1](#))
Week 6: Language and Thought ([October 2-8](#))
Week 7: Forming and Applying Concepts ([October 9-15](#))
Week 8: Relating and Organizing ([October 16-22](#))
Week 9: Thinking Critically About Moral Issues ([October 23-29](#))
Week 10: Constructing Arguments ([October 30-November 5](#))
Week 11: Reasoning Critically ([November 6-12](#))
Week 12: Assessing the Course of Study - Preliminary ([November 13-19](#))
Week 13: Assessing the Course of Study - Preliminary ([November 20-26](#))
Week 14: Thinking Critically, Living Creatively ([November 27-December 3](#))
Week 15: Assessing the Course of Study - Final ([December 4-10](#))

Course Policies

Attendance

It is essential that you login to Blackboard often to participate in discussions and learning activities. I strongly recommend that you access Blackboard frequently – at least once every twenty-four (24) hours.

Additionally, I recommend that you bookmark Blackboard so that you may access the site - without routing through Banner/myLAMAR. Here is the web address for Blackboard:

<https://luonline.blackboard.com>

Important Notice: Lamar LEA requires you to change your password regularly. Password expiration notices are sent *fourteen days in advance* and are sent to your official Lamar email address (i.e., your "my.lamar.edu" address). When you receive such a notice, please change your password immediately. The university deems your Lamar email address as the official and required means of email correspondence. **Notifications are not sent to other addresses (i.e., gmail, yahoo, etc.).** Therefore, ***you are responsible for checking your "my.lamar.edu" address regularly. If your password expires, you will be unable to access Blackboard.***

Failure to properly maintain your password will not excuse you from any missed course requirement.

You may be able to regain Blackboard access by resetting your password. Go to : <https://passwordreset.lamar.edu/showLogin.cc> and follow the instructions.

Assignments

You will be required to complete and submit written assignments. Unless the assignment instructions specify otherwise, you **must** compose all assignments using **complete sentences** within **cohesive paragraphs**, which must relate to a **clearly stated thesis** (essay format). Do **not** include outline formatting (i.e., use of A, B, C, 1, 2, 3, bullets, etc.) **or** the assignment instructions in your assignment submissions.

You **must attach assignments** (via the assignment tool) as Microsoft Word files in a doc/docx format.

I have posted instructions for verifying your assignment files are properly attached. See the "How do I ensure that my file has been properly attached?" in the FAQ section of the "Begin the Course Here" section. You will find additional instructions explaining how to attach an assignment and what to do if you continue to have difficulty with attachments. **You are responsible for ensuring and confirming the proper submission of your assignments.**

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Unless you and I have made prior arrangements, I will **not** accept **any** assignment submitted via email.
2. The assignment tool will allow you two (2) attempts to submit each assignment. You are welcome to exercise this second-attempt option; however, I will:
 - 1) automatically grade the second attempt.
 - 2) apply the due date without exception.
3. You have access to assignments/discussions throughout the semester and may submit those prior to the day in which they are due. Because you have access to each discussion/assignment - well in advance - and have access to the course "24/7", **you bear commensurate responsibility to plan ahead and submit your work on time.**
4. I have encountered numerous problems with students attempting to use Internet Explorer to access Blackboard. These problems are particularly obvious when students attempt to attach assignments. Lamar University's Center for Distance Education (Blackboard support) recommends you use the newest version of Firefox as your browser when accessing Blackboard (particularly when attempting to attach an assignment). You may download (free) the newest version of Firefox by visiting <http://www.mozilla.com>

Please follow these format requirements:

1. Submit all assignments as attachments with the proper file extension (Microsoft Word – doc or docx). Do NOT submit other types of files! Do NOT use special characters in the file title.
2. Do not cut/copy and paste or directly enter information into the assignment section!
3. On the first page (only), I require the following information, double-spaced, set to a 1" left margin and a 1" top margin:

- 1) Your name
- 2) My name (Mr. Ervin)
- 3) Course information – to include prefix, course number and section designation
(Example: AASC 4301.47F)
- 4) Assignment due date in this format: day month year
(Example: 22 January 2014)
4. Include an original title. Do not include a cover sheet.
5. Use page numbers that are right justified (1" right margin), accompany your last name
(Example: Waters 1), and are set to a ½" top margin.
6. Double space.
7. Use one-inch margins. (Page numbering must be set to ½ inch top margin.)
8. The required font and point size for all assignments is: Times New Roman 12pt.
9. Run spell check.
10. Run grammar check.

Assignments that do not conform to this format will be subject to significant point deductions or rejected entirely.

Discussions and Discussion Responses

In addition to submitting your individual assignments, you are required to interact with your classmates. We will learn from each other.

You will be required to participate in numerous discussions throughout the semester. Additionally, you are required to respond to at least one (1) classmate's initial post. You must compose substantive responses. "Substantive" responses clearly address the content of the author's (your classmate's) post and relevant course material. **A "good job" or "I agree" response will not suffice!** You can further the discussion by asking questions, providing a connection to other student posts, providing an opinion with support and rationale, etc.

Think of these discussions as the time you would spend in the classroom discussing topics with classmates. Please conduct yourself as a mature, responsible adult. Speak to your classmates as you would in class. I will not tolerate demeaning or derogatory activity on the discussion board. Each person has a right to an opinion, and each opinion should be expressed courteously and respectfully.

You must access each week's material to locate the relevant discussion link.

You must submit discussion posts and responses by directly entering text in the relevant discussion forum. Step-by-step instructions are provided with each discussion link and in the FAQ document.

Reading Quizzes

You are required to complete a reading quiz for each assigned chapter of the text. You may take the quiz at the time of your choosing, but you will have access only during the week the quiz is due.

The quizzes are timed and must be completed in a single sitting. You will not be allowed to retake any quiz.

Read and follow all instructions. Do not attempt to complete the quiz until you've carefully read the assigned material.

Late Work

All assigned work is expected by the specified due date. If there are any special circumstances (and they must be extraordinarily "special") preventing you from submitting an assignment on time, contact me before the assignment is due. **Late assignments will otherwise receive a grade of zero (0).**

In order to pass the course, you **must** submit both the Preliminary and Final Course of Study Assessment.

Course Time Frame

Our course runs on a **Monday-Sunday** weekly schedule. You will find the specific dates and topics for each unit in the "To Do List" each week. Please remember **all requirements are due by 11:59 PM on the specified due date**. Blackboard will deny submission after that time.

As mentioned, I recommend that you access Blackboard frequently – at least once every twenty-four (24) hours.

Email

Because this is an online class, most communication between us will occur online. Understand it is your responsibility to check the announcements and e-mail within the course frequently, so you do not miss pertinent course information. In order to avoid problems previously encountered, we must observe the following e-mail policies:

1. Use the e-mail tool within Blackboard for all e-mail communication. I have listed my alternate email, but require that you use that address **ONLY** if Blackboard is unavailable. Communication will be much easier to maintain if we are able to keep our class e-mail messages together.
2. In order to avoid missing important information, you should check your every e-mail account daily. Although the current version of Blackboard does include a notification feature for e-mail. I suggest you manually select the "mail" link (left column within the Blackboard LMS) at least once every twenty-four (24) hours. Failure to check your mail will result in your missing valuable information. Failure to check your mail will **NOT** relieve you from responsibility for any and all content.
3. Confirm your student records (on file with Lamar University) contain your current, preferred e-mail. Your registered address is the only means available (other than Blackboard) by which I may reach you via e-mail. You are responsible for ensuring correct information on file with the university.

PLEASE NOTE: Even though the current version of Blackboard includes an indicator of new e-mail, I recommend you manually select the "mail" link (left column) in order to check e-mail. You will be held responsible for regularly checking your e-mail within this Blackboard course.

Dropping a class

Instructions for dropping and withdrawing are included in the *Lamar University Class Schedule* each semester. You can drop and withdraw by visiting www.lamar.edu. If you choose to drop the class, **you are responsible for initiating and completing the proper procedures** to have your name removed from the class roll. Please inform me of your decision and contact the Registrar's Office. If you remain on the class roster at the end of the term – but have not completed the course work – I will have no choice but to assign a final grade of "F".

Drop without penalty by: Friday, September 29

Drop with penalty by: Friday, November 3

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SFSWD) offers a variety of services designed to assure students with disabilities equal access to the university's activities, programs and services. Some of the services provided include academic accommodations, assistive equipment, communication access service providers, note-takers, physical access and priority registration. Documentation of a disability from a professional in the field is required to receive services.

Students with disabilities should notify the director of SFSWD prior to registration in any university program. The director will arrange a meeting with the student to determine reasonable academic adjustments/accommodations. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in 105 Communication Building. Students may write to P.O. Box 10087, Beaumont, Texas 77710, call 409.880.8347, fax 409.880.2225 or email SFSWD@lamar.edu. Additional information is available at the SFSWD web site, <http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd>.

Students requiring communication access for audio components of this course must contact the Communication Access Coordinator in order to schedule captioning or sign language interpreters. Students are solely responsible for submitting communication access service requests by emailing cadh@lamar.edu or calling 409-880-8905 V, 409-299-5886 VP.

This course will comply with all accommodations prescribed by the Lamar University Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. If you have a need for a disability-related accommodation, please:

1. contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SFSWD).
2. provide me with the necessary documentation of all prescribed accommodations – on the first day of class or as soon as possible thereafter.

Academic Honesty:

Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The Lamar University Student Handbook states: "Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Punishable offences include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials" (81). One aspect of the handbook's definition of cheating is, "purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm" (82). Plagiarism is defined as, "the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or ideas into one's own offered for credit" (82). Students seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult with the course instructor, recent handbooks like *The Little, Brown, Handbook* and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, or consultants in the Writing Center. Faculty members in the Department of Applied Arts and Sciences investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism.

Students who either cheat or submit plagiarized work in AASC 4301 will fail the course.

The Texas State University System has established the following Disciplinary Procedures for Academic Dishonesty:

- (1) Academic Process. All academic dishonesty cases may be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member. If the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student of his/her right to appeal to the department chair, the dean, and eventually, to the vice president for academic affairs (whose decision shall be final) before imposition of the penalty. At each step in the process, the student shall be entitled to written notice of the offense and/or of the administrative decision, and opportunity to respond, and an impartial disposition as to the merits of his/her case. After completion of the

- academic process, the academic officer making final disposition of the case shall refer the matter to the chief student affairs officer for any additional discipline that may be appropriate.
- (2) Disciplinary Process. In the case of flagrant or repeated violations, the chief student affairs officer may take such additional disciplinary action as he/she deems appropriate. No disciplinary action shall become effective against the student until the student as received procedural due process under *Subsection 5.6* and following exception as provided under *Subsection 5.15*.

Online Etiquette

Please adhere to the same standards of behavior and professional respect online that you would follow in face-to-face communication with others, but most particularly when writing email and when taking part in the discussion board.

Minimum Technical Skills Required

You need to have:

- access to a computer (at home, school, or work). You'll need computer access for extended periods of time.
- broadband internet access (cable modem, DSL, or other high-speed connection).
- the newest version of Firefox is the Blackboard-recommended browser. Known difficulties exist (viewing video, uploading/submitted assignments, etc.) with other browsers – particularly Internet Explorer.
- up-to-date anti-virus software.

You need to be able to:

- navigate websites – including downloading and reading files.
- download and install software or plug-ins such as: Adobe Reader, Microsoft PowerPoint Reader, Adobe Flash Player, Windows Media Player, etc.
- use email – including attaching and downloading documents/files.
- Save files in commonly used word processing formats. You must use .doc or .docx formats.
- copy and paste text and other items in computer documents.
- save and retrieve documents and files on your computer
- locate information in the internet using search engines
- locate information in the library using the online catalog, research tools, etc.

Your computer must be compatible with Blackboard. Please see the [Blackboard Supported Browsers and Operating System](#) page to make sure your system will allow you to use all the tools and features available.

Additional Resources for Your Success

Blackboard Technical Support

Email: blackboard@lamar.edu

Center for Distance Education

Office: John Gray Center, Building B, Room 125

Phone: (409) 880-2222; 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Monday-Friday

Email: cde@lamar.edu

Website: <http://dept.lamar.edu/cde/>

University Helpdesk
409-880-2222

SMARTHINKING connects students to E-structor® Certified tutors anytime, from any Internet connection. <http://smarthinking.com>

TRIO Student Support Services.

The TRIO Student Support Services program provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and serves to motivate students toward successful completion of their college education. The goal of SSS is to increase the retention and graduation rates of its participants.

The TRIO program assists first generation students, low-income students, or students with disabilities. TRIO provides a variety of services for our students such as: tutoring, mentoring, academic, financial or personal counseling, computer labs, a self-help library and many other support services. All services are FREE to students who qualify for the program.

Additional information is available at: <http://dept.lamar.edu/studentsupport>

Student Advising and Retention Services (STARS).

Lamar University's Student Advising and Retention Services (STARS) exists to “create an atmosphere where our staff and students are partners with the goal of assisting students in their academic, personal, and professional endeavors through on-going conversations, proactive advising, and comprehensive academic support services.” STARS provides sustained support, information, and resources for assisting students achieve educational and lifelong goals. STARS services include: advising, tutoring, supplemental instruction, mentoring, academic enhancement workshops, and learning communities.

Additional information is available at: <http://dept.lamar.edu/stars/>

Lamar University Writing Center. The Writing Center seeks “to improve the student writer’s composing skills so that he or she can approach any writing assignment in a progressively more skilled and thus more confident manner.” The center “focuses on improving students’ writing skills and practices through learning sessions that help students recognize and correct their own errors.” Additional information is available at: <http://dept.lamar.edu/writingcenter/index.php>