

Syllabus

Critical Thinking: Patterns, Puzzles, and Strategies

Heritage Academy
A University-Model School®

The mission of Heritage Academy, a Certified University-Model School®, is to partner with Christian parents to prepare college-worthy, character witnesses for Jesus Christ.

I. Purpose and Content

The structure and content of this lighter elective course is intended to be interactive and exploratory in nature. With the guidance of a teacher, students will discuss and explore various philosophical ideas and practical tools and strategies that they may then use as anchors or tools for approaching various puzzling scenarios. An Introductory Unit to the Course will invite students to consider the “why” behind the importance of Critical Thinking. Students will explore answers to the questions: What does it mean to be human? Am I the product of intention? If so, what is that intention? How can I become synchronized to it? Why would I want to become synchronized to it?

Class time will include lecture, discussion, note-taking, personal reflection, philosophical exploration, thought experiments, game exploration, and interactive experiences exploring application. At-home study may also include each of these and reading assignments as well. Assessments will vary in nature and will typically correspond to units, which may be taught by various people.

Homework will be significantly lighter than that of a core course - no more than 40 to 45 minutes each Tuesday and Thursday, with only 20 - 30 minutes on the weekend. Class time will include lecture, discussion, note-taking, personal reflection, thought experiments, game exploration, and interactive experience exploring application. At-home study may also include each of these and reading assignments as well. Assessments will vary in nature and will typically correspond to units, which may be taught by various people.

II. Worldview Integration

Heritage Academy is committed to teaching all subjects in such a way that students develop a biblical worldview out of which to think and act. The following key essential truths will be examined and integrated into students’ study of what it means to be a critical thinker:

- God is the source of life. By Him, all things were created. In Him, all things hold together (Colossians 1:17).
- All people are created by God and uniquely designed to reflect God’s image. God is a Trinity, (three persons in one), and all people reflect his image by being spirit, soul, and body (Genesis 1:27, I Thess. 5:23). Having spirit, soul, and body, people are equipped to engage with the world with their spirits, their minds, and their wills.
- Knowledge about the world, heart attitudes, and styles of engagement render people either foolish or wise.
- Wisdom, health, and life-giving achievement can be cultivated by people who become students of God’s world, His Word, and his creation principles, and who are willing to embrace their place in God’s world, in keeping with God’s intention.
- Humans are made to be image-bearing, decision-making, rulers over creation but under God, designed for a purpose that finds its finest expression when we become worshippers who are living connected to the vine and offering ourselves as agents of renewal in the Kingdom of God.

“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit”

(Proverbs 14:8).

“In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will find a place of refuge” (Proverbs 14:26).

III. Required Texts and Materials

Please reference *Required Text Book List* and *Course Supplies List* for the appropriate academic year to identify the textbooks and supplies students will need for this course. Both the Required Text Book List and Course Supplies List are accessible online.

IV. Course Guidelines & Students Responsibilities

A. Attendance

Attendance is imperative as concepts will be more difficult for the student to learn if he/she is absent. Students are expected to attend class and contribute positively to the classroom environment.

Tardiness is disruptive to other class members. Please arrive on time and prepared. All absences and tardies are considered unexcused unless accompanied by a note from a parent or guardian. Please remember that three tardies generate one absence.

As communicated in Heritage Academy’s Family Manual, a passing grade awarded at the end of the semester generally requires that a secondary student has attended at least forty-two class periods during the semester. Failure to meet this minimum attendance requirement may result in an F being awarded and recorded on the student’s transcript.

B. Absences and Late Work

In the case of planned absence(s), homework that is due during the student’s absence must be completed and submitted to the instructor in advance.

When a student is unexpectedly and unavoidably absent due to ill health, past-due assignments must be submitted within two course periods after the student’s return to school. **When an unexpected absence must occur, please be sure to notify the school office and the instructor of the students’ absence as quickly as possible, preferably before the involved class occurs. This contact may occur by phone or by email.**

Late work that is submitted simply “late” will be graded and penalized with a **ten percent grade reduction for each course period that it is late**; homework will not be accepted more than three course periods (1 week) past its due date, unless previous arrangements between the teacher and the student’s parent have been agreed to in light of peculiar circumstances that are occurring beyond the family’s control.

C. Student Conduct and Preparation for Learning

For the sake of promoting a safe and focused learning environment, the student is expected to do the following throughout the course of the semester:

- 1) Arrive on time to each class period with the appropriate class materials available for access (e.g., organized notebook with dividers and filed materials, paper, writing tools, texts, and other tools as directed)
- 2) Arrive prepared to submit completed at-home assignments at start of each class period.
- 3) Arrive ready to listen, learn, take notes, and participate in teacher-directed classroom discussions and activities.
- 4) Ask for clarification or further explanation when a concept or direction remains unclear.

- 5) Demonstrate a spirit of cooperation, kindness, and respect toward the teacher and fellow classmates, in keeping with Heritage Academy's Code of Conduct.
- 6) Help keep the classroom area clean and orderly.
- 7) Refrain from horseplay or irresponsible behavior, particularly during laboratory exercises.
- 8) Cooperate with the parent-educator and the Heritage Academy teacher to complete homework in a timely fashion
- 9) Communicate concerns regarding schoolwork to both the Heritage Academy teacher and the parent-educator, so that these concerns can be addressed quickly.
- 10) On the whole, conduct himself or herself in a manner that is worthy of Christ and reflects the life of the Holy Spirit in him/her: ". . . that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (Colossians 1:12).

D. At-Home Investment

Daily home-assignments will be outlined on the weekly Home-Communication Sheet the student will receive each Monday. The student can expect to invest approximately one to three hours each week completing coursework at home in preparation for class periods. Course assignments may include any of the following:

- **Reading:** Students may be assigned to read from handouts, specific websites, and a possible textbook.
- **Responsive Writing/Journaling/Personal Reflection**
- **Brain Exercises**
- **Scripture Memorization:** terms, Scripture verses, etc.
- **Dialog:** Student may be instructed to discuss and/or explore certain topics or concepts with a parent. These assignments will be given purposefully and should not be dismissed.
- **Test preparation:** Students may be instructed to review notes, texts, previously completed tests, scripture verses etc, in order to make preparation for test-taking.
- **Other Assignments:** additional types of assignments may be given throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.

F. Assessments

Tests and completed projects/assignments throughout the semester will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge. Throughout the course of the semester, several quizzes may also occur; a few of these quizzes may be unannounced. A cumulative semester exam, fifty minutes in length, will also occur during the last week of the semester.

G. Grades

1. Grade Apportionment

In-Class Participation and Expression	25%
Assigned Activities	45%
Unit Assessments	30%

2. Grading Scale

100-95	A	79-77	C+
94-90	A-	76-73	C
89-87	B+	72-70	C-
86-83	B	69-60	D
82-80	B-	59 or below	F

The course grade the student is awarded at the end of the semester will indicate the grade that will also appear on the student's transcript. To maintain eligibility for promotion forward into to the next course in Heritage Academy's science sequence, the student must achieve a percentage grade of 70% or above, translating to a letter grade of C- or above, and fulfill attendance requirements.

VI. Parent Responsibilities

A. Embrace the University Model

University-Model Schooling at Heritage Academy is driven by two guiding principles:

- ◆ to preserve and strengthen God-ordained family relationships
- ◆ to offer students the opportunity to achieve a high degree of academic excellence.

Heritage Academy operates as a University-Model School[®], designed for families who want their students to flourish from a life anchored in the home yet still gain from the best aspects of traditional, classroom education. Courses offered at Heritage Academy occur every-other-day so that students may realize the benefits of qualified teachers and a focused learning community, yet continue to experience home as the primary, consistent base where parents remain their foremost guides for spiritual, social, academic, and character formation.

Parents, please consider ways you may maximize the benefits University-Model Schooling offers to your family. How can you as parents utilize the at-home study time this model provides to nurture deeper relationship and model and impart the faith, values, and life-patterns you desire your student to embrace?

B. Fulfill Parent Role: *Guide for Dependent Study*

Within the University-Model School[®], **parents commit to fulfill a specified role related to each course** in which their student is enrolled, as prescribed by the course's description. Each role identifies specific responsibilities that the teacher relies on the parent to perform, thus facilitating effective home/school partnership whereby students are assured of receiving needed support. For this course, Heritage Academy has designated parents the role of "**Guide for Dependent Study.**"

This role recognizes that many courses at this level will begin to cover subject matter that may be unfamiliar to many parents. At the same time, the student is at a dependent age where disciplined study habits and strategies for managing time must be developed, not by parental force, but through positive encouragement and through the student's growing awareness of personal consequences. In order for this class to be successful, I as a teacher am depending upon you as parents to ensure that your son or daughter keeps up with the course material and to communicate with me should any difficulties or concerns arise.

C. Monitor Gradelink and View Seven-Week and Thirteen-Week Gradelink Reports

As your student earns grades for completed tests, quizzes, and various projects and homework assignments, these will be recorded on **Gradelink.com** for you to view at your convenience. My general goal will be to post grades online within a week of their being awarded.

In Gradelink, missing assignments will also be noted. Please take time to follow your student's progress on Gradelink so that you can quickly recognize and explore/address areas of patterns of difficulty or concern that may appear and affirm positive accomplishments.

Gradelink Reports, which will include parent-directed comments related to your student's behavior and progress in class, will be ready for parents to view at the seven-week and thirteen-week point in the semester.

Please contact the office if you have not received your Gradelink login information.

D. Attend Parent/Teacher Fellowship

I hope you will take time to come to Parent/Teacher Fellowship scheduled during the 7th week of each semester. This will give you and I brief opportunity to connect face-to-face and discuss your student's progress, making the most of the partnership that is so vital to students' success within the University Model[®].

VI. Contacting the Instructors

Teacher contact information will be provided on the weekly communication sheets that will be distributed in class; it may also be found in the school directory.