



**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (AUN),
YOLA, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES,
COURSE SYLLABUS FOR [AUN 300], FALL 2024/2025 ACADEMIC SESSION**

.....

School: School of Arts & Sciences
Department: Department of General Education Studies
Program: Philosophy & Education
Course Code: [AUN 300]
Course Title: **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills**
Course Units: 3 Credits
Course Coordinator: Prof. Umair Dtram (Chair of Gen Ed Dept.).
Course Lecturer: **Wogu, I. A. Power (PhD).**
Semester: **Spring** Semester (2st Semester)
Course Date/Time/Venue: Tuesday's [1.15 - 2.45] (Washington Hall POH)
Thursday's [1.15 - 2.45] (Washington Hall POH)

.....

INSTRUCTORS DETAILED INFORMATION

Name: **WOGU, Ikedinachi Ayodele Power (PhD)**
Rank: Ass. Professor of Pol. Philosophy, Leadership Dev. & Inter. Politics
Office Address: Arts & Science Building Room 301
Telephone Number: +2348034956069
Email Address: ike.wogu@aun.edu.ng

.....

[A] GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course, “**CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS**”, which shall hereafter be referred to as (**AUN 300**), largely comprises of a series of rigorous studies which examines critical thinking processes as an art and as an intellectual discipline and activity which intellectually investigates the disciplined process associated with actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a an essential guide necessary for arriving at valid beliefs, decisions and actions.

[B] MAIN COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE (PHI 300)

In light of the above background to the study of this course, the objective for embarking on this course at AUN, among other things, is as stated below:

1. This course aid the minds of students and researchers – irrespective of the specific courses or discipline – in arriving at the knowledge of the truth.
2. While not entirely down playing the role of the common sense, the course is aimed at teaching students the relations necessary for training the mind with the capacity to formulating **rules** by which a prudent person can regulate or order actions and things.
3. Put in rather simple terms, the course is designed to facilitate instilling critical thinking processes for the ordering and utilizing of the materials of thought for the purpose of arriving at the knolede that is certain. This is an important aim of Critical thinking.
4. Largely, this course equips students with the tools capable to help them effectively take over their minds and their thinking processes.

[C] SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE COURSE (CTPS) @ AUN 300

At the end of teaching this course by the end of the semester, students are expected to know the following:

1. Student's ability for attaining precession, clarity and firmness in their thought and decision processes is assured.
2. A mastery of critical thinking skills ensures that the 21st century students
3. Students would have learnt the critical skills required for implanting and instilling consistency in their minds for enhancing their speaking and writing capabilities.
4. This study will acquaint students largely with the general laws and canons to which reason must conform to, while laying down principles for the unification and the classification of all other sciences.

[D] DETAILED COURSE SYLLABUS FOR AUN 300

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO AUN 300

- i. General Discussion on the Course Syllabus for AUN 300
- ii. General Class Regulations for AUN 300,
- iii. Background Discussion of the Essence of the Course AUN 300
- iv. Basic Introduction to the Course Critical Thinking & Problem Solving Skills

- v. A discussion on some of the basic insights to the Aims and Objectives of the course: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving Skills.

2. MODULE ONE. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TERMS: CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING & RELATED CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING THEORIES (Week 1 & 2)

- i. What is Critical thinking all about
- ii. Major Approaches to Critical Thinking
- iii. The relevance of the study of critical thinking to Students of AUN, etc
- iv. Why is Critical Thinking Important?
- v. Critical thinking Theories 1
- vi. What are Problems?
- vii. What Problem Solving is all about!
- viii. Different Classifications of Problems?
- ix. Effective Problem Solving Strategies
- x. The Relevance of Solving Problems
- xi. Problem Solving Theories 1

3. MODULE TWO: THE NEXUS BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING AND REASONING (Week 3 & 4)

- i. Thinking as a Skill
- ii. An Introduction to Critical thinking
- iii. Identifying Solutions and not Problems.

4. MODULE THREE: THE BASICS OF CRITICAL THINKING (Week 5 & 6)

- i. Claims, Assertions, and Statements,
- ii. Judging Claims,
- iii. Arguments
- iv. Identifying Arguments
- v. Complex Arguments,
- vi. Concisions
- vii. Reasons & Assumptions,
- viii. Flaws and Fallacies

5. MODULE FOUR: BASIC SKILLS FOR PROBLEMS SOLVING (Week 7 & 8).

- i. What is do we mean by a problem,
- ii. How do we solve Problems?
- iii. Selecting and using information,
- iv. Processing Data
- v. Finding Methods of Solutions,

- vi. Solving problems by searching
- vii. Recognizing Patterns,
- viii. Hypothesis, Reasons, Explanations & Inferences,
- ix. Spatial Reasoning,
- x. Necessity and Sufficiency,
- xi. Making Choices and Decisions

6. MODULE FIVE APPLIED CRITICAL THINKING (Week 9 & 10)

- i. Inferences,
- ii. Explanations,
- iii. Evidences
- iv. Credibility
- v. Two Case Studies,
- vi. Critical thinking and Science,
- vii. Applying Analysis Skills,
- viii. Critical Evaluations
- ix. Responding with Longer Arguments

7. MODULE SIX: ADVANCE PROBLEM SOLVING & ADVANCED CRITICAL REASONING (Week 11 & 12)

- i. Combining Skills Using Imaginations,
- ii. Developing Models,
- iii. Carrying out Investigations,
- iv. Data Analysis,
- v. Advanced Inferences

8. MODULE SEVEN: REVISIONS, FINAL TESTS & END OF SPRING SEMESTER EXAMINATION (Week 13 & 14)

[E] METHOD OF LECTURE DELIVERY / TEACHING AIDS

Lecture delivery

- Blended Learning Methods comprising In-class Methods and E-learning Methods of teaching, via the platforms of **[The Canvas LMS]**
- Group Instructions,
- Special Resource Persons may be used from time to time,
- Essential Interactive Sessions,
- Seminar and Paper Presentations
- Group and Guided Research,
- Practical Class Written Sessions.
- Sudden Class Test

[F] FACILITIES, INSTRUMENTS AND TEACHING AIDS

- Overhead projector
- Conducive lecture theatre
- Working PA systems
- Work books and text books, etc.

[G] THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE / METHOD OF GRADING/ ASSESSMENTS

Continuous Assessment;	40 MARKS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Class Test : • Group Participation and Oral Paper Presentations: • Mid Semester Examination • 2nd Class Test 	<p>10.00 Marks</p> <p>10.00 Marks</p> <p>10.00 Marks.</p> <p>10.00 Marks</p>
Term paper writing & presentation/Defense	10.00 Marks
End of Spring Semester Examinations	40 Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonus marks; • Attendance (Marks) 	<p>0 Marks</p> <p>0 Marks</p>
TOTAL MARKS OBTAINABLE:	100 Marks

Essential Grading Scales for PHI102 Students at AUN

S/N	Scores Obtained in %	Letter Grade	S/N	Scores Obtained in %	Letter Grade
1	95 – 100	A	6	75 - 79	C+
2	90 - 94	A-	7	70 - 74	C
3	87 - 89	B+	8	60 - 69	D
4	84 - 86	B	9	0 - 59	F
5	80 - 83	B-			

[H] ON CLASS BEHAVIOUR & ATTENDANCE

Please note the following;

- Attendance to the tune of 80 percent is mandatory to all Students offering AUN 300
- Active participation in all the classes is mandatory for all students offering AUN 300
- All class assignments to be submitted on schedule on the LMS (Canvas) Platform
- Punctuality in all classes shall be observed.
- Phones are not meant to be seen or heard ringing during class sessions.
- Students are expected to have done the **required advanced readings on the topics to be discussed in class before the regular class sessions take place.** Doing so helps students to be in a better position to discuss the issues arising from the reading of the various topics.
- Anyone using a cell-phone or laptop for any reason other than the text under discussion will be asked to leave the class. There will subsequently be other stiffer sanctions.

[I] ON THE SUBJECT OF PLAGIARISM /CHEATING DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER

Plagiarism, the act of using someone else's words, thoughts or ideas as if they were your own, is completely unacceptable. You may quote from someone else or paraphrase some of their ideas, but you must properly cite the work.

[J] ON THE SUBJECT OF STUDENTS COMPLAINTS OR OTHER KINDS OF PROBLEMS

In accordance with the Deans (Prof. Patrick Fay's Philosophy), If any student has any problems with the course or is falling behind for some reason, please come and see me in my office so that we can try and resolve the problem.

I am here to help you get the most from the course. So, please, please, if you have any problem, come and see me.

It is no use informing me of problems the week before the examination; it is too late at that stage.

You may also come and see me about issues apart from the course, such as career planning.

[K] APPROVED TOPICS FOR SPRING TERM PAPERS / ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE (AUN 300: CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING)

Critical thinking essay topics encourage students to analyse, interpret, and evaluate complex issues. Some themes may explore socio-political phenomena, ethical dilemmas, scientific theories, and cultural paradigms, among others. Each topic stimulates a comprehensive, balanced assessment, fostering the development of key skills, such as reasoning, interpretation, and decision-making. Other topics may probe into the workings of global systems, require in-depth analysis of controversial scientific studies, or provoke thoughtful assessments of societal norms and values.

Critical thinking papers allow students to showcase their ability to argue coherently, understand different perspectives, and build a well-reasoned discourse. Thus, critical thinking essay topics are designed not only to test students' understanding and knowledge but also to cultivate a deeper sense of curiosity, logic, and intellectual rigor in addressing complex problems.

1. The relevance of Critical thinking and Problem solving skills as a course of study to AUN students and Nation building.
2. Challenges associated with the teaching of Critical thinking Skills for today's higher institutions in Nigeria.
3. Fall-outs and Detriment of Rising Critical thinkers and Crime rate in Contemporary societies.
4. Teaching Critical thinking and Problem solving as a course in today's Nigerian Universities: Issues, Prospects and Challenges for teachers and learners.
5. Critical thinking and Problem solving is not a course for every student in Nigerian Universities (Discuss).
6. Which should come first, Thinking Critically or Critical thinking?
7. Critical thinking and Problems solving was made for man and not Man for Critical thinking and Problem solving, (Discuss)
8. Effective Leadership in today's polity is a function of effective Critical thinking and problem solving Skills.
9. Leadership in Nigeria lacks viable critical thinkers and problem solvers amongst her leadership and elite class of citizens. (Discuss).
10. The Dearth of Critical thinking and Problem Solving Candidates for Leadership in 21st century Nigerian Politics: A critical evaluation of the 4th Republic.

11. Critical Thinking and Problem solving skills for 21st Century Leadership in Nigeria. (Discuss).
12. A Critical Appraisal of the Art of teaching of Critical thinking and Problem solving Skills as an essential course of study for Nigerian University students: Issues, Challenges and Prospects.
13. Problem Solving Skills VS Critical thinking Skills: which should come first?
14. Gods clarion call to reason with man – as exemplified in Isaiah 1:18 – is an effort in futility! Provide viable and vivid justifications for this position.
15. Not more than 5% of people in the world actually make use of their brains to think critically and reason. With vivid examples, provide justifications for this assertion.
16. Descartes’s famous quotation “*Cogito Ergo Sum*’ should serve as the justification or criterion for asserting man’s existence in today’s society. Discuss this in relation to the essence of the role of Critical thinking.
17. Just as its been argued that Africans cannot really participate in the act of Philosophy, it has also be argued that Africans cannot really participate in the act of Critical thinking, Hence, the rising trend of underdevelopment in Africa: Provide arguments for or against this position.
18. Critical thinking and Problem solving skills is an art best suited for individuals from the Western world: Provide arguments for or against this claims.
19. Critical thinking and Problem Solving Skills is a Panacea for effective political leadership in 21st century Nigeria.
20. Critical Thinking and Problems Solving skills is more inherent in individuals than they are imparted through external factors (Discuss).
21. Critical Thinking Skills and Their Influence on Professional Success. (Discuss).
22. Critical Thinking as a Countermeasure to Conspiracy Theories. (Discuss).
23. Analysis of Critical Thinking in Different Cultural Contexts. (Discuss).
24. Interpretation of Art: A Critical Thinking Approach. (Discuss).
25. Distinguishing Facts From Opinion in Media Reports. A Critical Approach.
26. Critical Thinking: A *Sene quanon* for Everyday Problem-Solving.
27. Examination of Ethical Dilemmas in Popular Films. (Discuss).

28. The Power of Groupthink in Decision-Making Processes. A Critical Assessment of Isaiah 1:18
29. Critical Examination of Ethical Issues in Biomedical Engineering. (Discuss).
30. A critical assessment of the gains of Artificial Intelligence Innovations in 21st Century Higher Education.
31. A Critical Evaluation of AUN's No Dress Code Policy. (Discuss).
32. A Critical Assessment of the Role of Power in 21st century Politics and Organizations leadership.
33. Interrogating the Intersection of Technology and Privacy: A Critical Analysis.
34. Dissecting the Dynamics of Power in Organizational Leadership. (Discuss).
35. Evaluating the Validity of Arguments in Debates.
36. Critically Examining the Marketing Tactics of Fast Food Chains Organizations.
37. Understanding the Techniques of Persuasion in Political Speeches.
38. A Critical evaluations of the Influence of Social Media on Body Image Perceptions.
39. Exploring the Power Dynamics in Corporate Governance.
40. Critically Analysing the Causes and Effects of Income Inequality.
41. Interrogating the Ethics of Genetic Engineering.

Term papers are expected to be submitted 2 months from the date of the first class (30th October, 2024).

[L] AUN 300 ALIGNMENT WITH THE GOALS/VISIONS OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA.

Founded on A DEVELOPMENTAL Philosophy, this course is designed to be broad-based and intellectually rigorous, with the aim of equipping students with relevant Critical thinking skills, conceptual framework and the theoretical sophistication required for making hard and much needed decisions as Leaders and World changers in the 21st century. The Course avails students with Critical thinking and problem solving skills that would help them understanding in a holistic fashion, the different “fragments of reality” which are studied by the various disciplines from the Humanities, Arts, and even unto the

Sciences. All these are required to making the AUN student fully prepared to take up the leadership positions in the quest to becoming a total graduate and ultimately a world changer.

[L] CONTEMPORARY ISSUES / INDUSTRIAL RELEVANCE OF AUN 300 TO AUN STUDENTS

1. **[AUN 300]** channels Philosophical and Practical Critical thinking & Problem Solving Leadership tools, concepts and ideas necessary and essential for engaging the myriad of leadership challenges confronting the African continent today.
2. It also equips AUN students with theories and critical thinking skills for conducting qualitative and quantitative social research on Leadership and everyday issues affecting the 21st century man, his community and the industry.
3. **[AUN 300]** prepares a crop of oriented leadership thinkers who, having passed through the furnace of rigorous philosophical leadership training, will also be able to prove their mantle in Post Graduate studies or in any other field of work anywhere in the world.

[M] RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR (AUN 300) INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY, LOGIC AND HUMAN EXISTENCE.

1. Uhuegbu, C. C.; Ukpokolo, I. E.; **Wogu**, I. A. (2011). *Advances in the History and Philosophy of Science* (Ed). Lulu Enterprise, Inc. [pp. 527]. ISBN 978-1-105-0581.
2. Wogu, I. A. (2010) A Preface to Philosophy, Logic and Human Existence, Pumark Nigeria Limited lagos
3. Lawhead, W. (2002) THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY: An interactive approach. McGraw Hill.
4. Russell, B. (2000) HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY, Rutledge London.
5. Stumpf & Fieser, (2003) PHILOSOPHY, History and problems, sixth edition. McGraw Hill.
6. Wiredu, K. (2004) Ed, A COMPANION TO AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY. Blackwell Pub.
7. Gregory Bassham, William Irwin, Henry Nardone, James M. Wallace 2nd Edition. (2002) CRITICAL THINKING. Mc Graw. Hill.
8. Bell, A. (2002) INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC, University press, PLC.
9. Layman, S C. (2004) THE POWER OF LOGIC, third edition, Mc Graw Hill.
10. Bauder, M. (2002) Philosophy, THE POWER OF IDEAS, Mc Graw Hill.
11. Miller. L, Jensen. J. (2004) QUESTIONS THAT MATTER, An invitation to philosophy. Mc. Graw Hill.
12. Nicholas. B, & Tames, E.(2002) THE BLACKWELL. COMPANION TO PHILOSOPHY, Blackwell Publishing.
13. Sartre, J. P. (2003) BEING AND NOTHINGNESS, Routledge London.
14. Luper, S. (2002) EXISTING, An introduction to existential thought, Mayfield publishing company London.

15. UDUIGWOMEN, A, Ozumba, G. (2000) Philosophy & Logic, A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC, Prathiel Nig. Enterprises.

ADDITIONAL READINGS