COURSE DESCRIPTION: A course providing a non-formal examination of the nature of good reasoning. Students will examine and learn the nature of cognitive argument, the role of inductive and deductive reasoning, and the effects of non-cognitive aspects of language on the cognitive. Students will examine informal fallacies and apply what is studied to examples of reasoning in such areas as science and law.

This course aims to provide you with tools for thinking clearly. Most of us are bombarded by excessive quantities of information. With the tools of informal logic we can better sift out good reasoning from bad reasoning in the presentation of that information. The critical thinking skills presented in this class will help you evaluate the information you receive from a large range of everyday sources: websites, movies, television, magazines, books, newspapers, advertisements, friends, lovers, and college instructors. The often comic stuff of everyday life will provide our material. Understanding good (and bad) reasoning will enable you to think and communicate more clearly and more successfully. We will keep the human element in mind; an empathic understanding of the audience is essential to effective argument.

READINGS:
Assigned reading from the web.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Students will learn to recognize the types of reasoning employed in a wide range of everyday situations.
2. Students will learn to recognize a range of possible manipulations or fallacies in reasoning employed in a range of everyday situations.
3. Students will learn to recognize and make clear arguments.
4. Students will learn to write more clearly and effectively, to create arguments with claims that provoke interest, evidence that supports the claims, and a clear sense of the limits and possible objections to the claims.
5. Students will learn to speak, converse, and negotiate more clearly and effectively.

LEARNING STRATEGIES INCLUDE:
- Brief lecture
- Large and small group discussion
- Exercises
- Short papers

EVALUATION IS BASED ON
- Exercises, one third of grade
- Papers, one third of grade