

Core Review Task Force
Proposed Core Learning Outcomes
Critical Thinking

Introduction: CLO rubrics provide a common set of definitions and expectations for Core learning across the Core and the University. They will be used as assessment scoring instruments for Core assessment.

Most of the rubrics are adapted from the [AAC&U VALUE Rubrics](#). VALUE rubrics are intended to assess learning across the entire undergraduate journey. The Capstone levels represent the performance expected of graduating seniors. It is NOT expected that students will perform at the Capstone level after their first or second year.

The Task Force recommends that Core subcommittees be charged with reviewing and adapting these rubrics to ensure they meet the needs of FSU's core curriculum.

Definition: Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students will accurately evaluate the reasonableness of arguments' evidence and support, and they will construct reasonable arguments using various forms of evidence drawn from multiple sources.

Rationale: The development of critical thinking competencies supports students' acquisition of analytical and evaluative skills essential for inquiry, deliberation, and decision-making in academic and non-academic settings. As students develop their critical thinking skills, they develop more concern about rational standards. They learn to think for themselves, and this helps free them from unwarranted beliefs and bad habits of thought. By developing their critical thinking skills, they become more reasonable and more ready to fulfill responsible roles in society and live fulfilling, successful lives. Effective critical thinking skills and the habits of mind associated with these skills are essential for life-long learning and reasonable, responsible citizenship in global communities.

Background: Critical Thinking consistently ranked among the most important CLOs for all stakeholders. It is a signature CLO for FSU. The Task Force debated folding Critical Thinking into Information Literacy and/or Inquiry and Analysis but ultimately decided to leave it as a separate CLO. In addition to its historical position in the Core and its continuing relevance to all areas of modern life, Critical Thinking is uniquely appropriate for the proposed Reasoning About American Democracy requirement.

Critical Thinking Rubric

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3 2		Benchmark 1
Explanation of Issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of Context and Assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's Position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and Related Outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.