

Critical thinking in Global Challenges

'Welcome to the course'

Hello and Welcome to Critical Thinking in Global Challenges.

Im Celine Caquineau, and Im Mayank Dutia,

Welcome and thanks for joining us.

Over the next 5 weeks, we will introduce you to the essential concepts of critical thinking, and develop your critical thinking skills using different examples from real life questions and challenges that face us today

Critical thinking is the ability to gather and assess information in a logical, balanced and reflective way to reach conclusions that are justified by reasoned arguments.

We live at an exciting time where information on virtually any subject is widely and easily available in many different ways.

It is crucial to be able to evaluate and assess all this information to think for ourselves and think independently.

We are also faced with perhaps the most challenging global issues we have ever faced, from the threat of global epidemics, changes in the global climate, and growing pressures from an increasing human population.

These are complex challenges, with no 'correct' right or wrong solutions, and yet it is very important to understand and think about these issues in a rational and balanced way.

However, this is not a course on global challenges – we will give you some pointers to show you where you can learn more about these global issues, but the focus of this course is on a pragmatic approach to critical thinking.

By end of the course, you will be able to better understand where information comes from, the nature of evidence and how to make and assess arguments. Throughout the course you will have numerous opportunities through varied exercises to practice and enhance your critical thinking skills.

Here is the plan for the course over the next 5 weeks:

In week 1, you will learn about the key concepts involved in critical thinking.

In week 2, you will learn how to assess evidence given to support arguments and theories.

In week 3 and 4, you will learn how to assess arguments using current global challenges as a basis to practice your critical thinking skills.

Finally in week 5, you will learn own to develop your own arguments.

The course consists of short weekly lectures, associated with review quizzes. Each week there is an additional exercise for you to practice and assimilate the key concepts covered in that week.

In weeks 3 and 4, we will ask you to focus on one of four global challenges.

We have selected 4 themes that we hope you will find stimulating, the challenge of Obesity worldwide, the change in global Climate , the human Population growth, and the threat from infectious diseases in the modern world.

The relevant background information for each of these global challenges will be provided by our colleagues, Dr John Menzies, Dr Kim Picozzi and Dr Richard Milne, with their expertise in

these different areas. We hope you will choose one of these 4 themes to focus on, and apply your critical thinking skills to some of the evidence and arguments in these areas.

In week 5, there is an optional final assignment, for those wanting to complete the certificate award (statement of completion) for this course.

We hope you'll enjoy doing this course! We would like to hear how you are getting on and what you are doing, through the discussion forum for this course. Please log in to the discussion forum often, to post your thoughts and questions, and discuss ideas with your fellow students from all over the world.

It is now time to start the course, with Mayank's overview of the Essential concepts in critical thinking.