Every day we are confronted with arguments from various sources (politicians, mass media, social media, academic texts, etc.) trying to convince us of some position or other. This is the information age and we are inundated with information of varying quality. To survive and thrive in this age one must be a discerning consumer of information and this requires that we think clearly about what we believe and what we are asked to believe.

This course seeks to develop critical thinking skills by teaching students how to evaluate arguments of others and formulate their own good arguments. Essentially, this is a course in self-improvement, because it is a chance to look inside yourself and examine your own ability to think. In this course you can learn about the difference between good thinking and bad thinking. It is an opportunity to acquire reasoning skills that should serve you well in whatever pursuit you engage in your life.

While many critical thinking skills are subject specific, there are forms of reasoning and properties of good thinking that pervade all subject matters. My primary goal in this class is to help you learn how to think more clearly. To become a critical thinker is to take charge of the ideas that run one’s life. It is to think consciously, deliberately and skillfully in ways that transform oneself. It is to run one’s inner workings and to understand the “system” one is running. A critically thinking mind is like a puppet that discovers the strings and figures out how to gain control of the way they are pulled.