

## Connections and Extensions, CrCrTh 601, Fall 17

To see comments about yourself, move from **commenter to commenter** and you will be in the same place in the order. --- stands for a gap in commenting (often because of my snafu about access to the hangout).

### Alex Domenikos

#### Peter

C: Asking questions from a young age  
E: Expanding knowledge on Critical Thinking

#### Alexandra

C: Working with autism, as I have Aspergers  
E: Being more assertive with your students.

#### Casey

C: Being inquisitive from a young age

#### Courtney

C: A father who is big on philosophical debates

#### David

E: Your work in the SATs

#### Deborah

C: Learning to question tradition and willingness to learn  
E: Your debate class

#### Janell

C: Questioning whether what we are taught in school is the actual truth. Wanting to work together with others to find a solution to common problems.

#### Kate

E: I'm interested in learning more about your journalist career and how it influenced your studies.  
C: Wanting to use critical thinking to help solve societal problems in the world.

#### Rachel

C: Wanting to use critical thinking to find the truth in an era full of sensationalism

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#### Andrew

C: Applying critical thinking to careers that don't usually utilize it, such as landscaping.

#### April

C: A wide variety of different job types over the years.

### Alexandra

Peter - I really enjoyed how you described critical thinking. The idea of the spring made me understand it a bit better. I was suprised to hear how early you started your critical thinking. It makes me think of my students and how this is something I should foster.

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Casey- I really like how you questioned your teachers, yet went back to teaching. I am glad that your students have a teacher that went through a rough time with their own and they will not get another bad teacher.

Courtney- I like that you used your critical thinking to do something outside of the box. I am glad they have someone who edits the tests who is very critical with their thinking.

David- I also blindly trusted teachers growing up, it is such a large pro and con. I wonder how your military background plays into your critical thinking.

Debra- Listening to how your culture views critical thinking was so interesting. I too come from a very traditional culture ( Greek ) and understand the restrictions of culture and what you're "supposed to act like"

Janell - I love that you talked about how your children are your questioners. That is something I hope to be able to foster into my children one day. It is so important to teach others how to question.

Kate- Listening to you talk about critical thinking in the corporate world is very cool. I also wonder how critical thinking is viewed in Australia and if it is something that is fostered at a young age.

Rachel - I never thought about reading books of people who think differently about a subject. That is a really great idea and a way to branch out of the norm.

Alex- I liked how you spoke about how you believe that critical thinking will help with your exploration in history. That is a very interesting way of looking at it. I bet that thinking critically will help you debunk the parts of history that people tend to question.

Margarita- I really like that you are taking this masters to help you with your profession, I believe that thinking critically will help you a lot with law school.

Andrew - It is really great that you had so much time critical thinking when you were younger. I am sure that plays a huge job in your current profession now.

April - Hearing about how you found the program was wonderful! I love that you turned something that was surly frustrating into something good!

### **Andrew Castagna**

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Alexandra C- the willingness to step out side your comfort zone and become an effect critical thinker E- watch and listen to other critical thinker

Casey C- I like how you question things E- Maybe find a book that talks about managing Generation Z

Courtney C- I like how you challenge other people E- When you have some down time check out the show Genies on NATGO

David C- I also like to be challenged E- check out a few TED talks on youtube about testing or math

Debra C- your goal of self actualization E- you might want to read the road less traveled by scott peck

Janell C- i like how you want to tweak or develop solutions for current situations that are happening around us E- watching TED talks are always great.

Kate C- in your work you find problems and then you help analyze them and solve them E- maybe take a look at the book Fish by Stephen Lundin very quick and easy read

Rachel C-I like have you want people to challenge you. I too liked to be challenged E- look at TED talks about challenging yourself

Alex C- I too want to better myself E- watching and reading articles put out by the history channel and NATGO may spark some of the material you are looking for.

Margarita C- I too feel comfortable challenging people I know E- reading people is a great tool in becoming comfortable with those situations... maybe read "working with emotional intelligence"

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April C- i agree that more schools should be offering this types of courses E- if you haven't watched a TED talk on youtube I think you would like it.

### **April Bair**

Peter:

C- critical thinking in science and the concept of "fact" and Stumbling into critical thinking course as a bioproduct not an

intentional ambition are experiences I connect with.

I also drove people nuts asking questions all the time(still do).

E- Rappahannock County Virginia had a unique critical thinking exploration of light pollution's effect on viewing the Milky Way and how involved they should be in neighboring county politics. I think you would be captivated by the letters to the editor over the year or so of debate.

Alexandra:

C- I also taught in autism classrooms. Also an only child. She

E- Are you familiar with Elizabeth Montessori? ( not the contemporary American popularized style of education but with her original work) Her methods are very useful in giving children space but not conceding any authority.

Casey

C- Critical of the world around me.

Fortunately I was encouraged that

I have also been pulled in by the useless and nebulous "critical thinking"

E- What do you think of the phrase "Instill and intrinsic love of learning"?

Courtney: My critical thinking has also lead me to editing. It's a place where my constant questioning is considered a virtue.

E- Do you think about how students with ambiguous brain will misinterpret test questions or have you thought about a guide to navigating through questions students perceive as ambiguous?

David:

C- I identified with your expressed desire to encourage students to ask questions.

E- Have you read Ender's Game? It addresses critical thinking as both a pro and con of military service.

Deborah

Living around the world I've been very interested in how different types of thinking are praised in discouraged.

E-Are you familiar with Soroptimist International?

Janelle:

I love that you see questions as healthy and that there are so many paths to humanity even in the same set of experiences.

E- You used the term "push back". Is critical thinking always "pushing back"?

Kate:

My first UMB CCT course I was in Japan so I feel the time zone logging in with morning energy instead of afternoon energy.

E- Have you thought about how engaging first thing in the morning might result in processing this course differently than doing it pm?

Rachel

c- I love your passion and energy searching for different ways to be challenged and your enthusiasm to be challenged.

E- it would be interesting to see a Venn Diagram or other comparison between your thoughts on "curious" v. "Critical "

Alex.

C- How cultures learn from their mistakes is a subject that fascinates me.

E- You suggested that critical thinking might be a solution to repeating atrocities of the past and right inequalities but some people would say that critical thinking and morality are separate. Two people can think critically about the same thing and come to contrary opinions. Are you suggesting we think critically but all accept the morality?

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Andrew:

C- I connected with your comments about being solution oriented and reaching the client especially the phrase "seeing opportunities instead of problems".

E- Do you think most people attach a negative connotation to the word "problem"? What other synonyms for "problem" do you think are more negatively or positively charged?

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## Casey Andrews

Peter

C: I also got yelled at by a teacher for asking too many questions (and kicked out).

E: Annie Dillard, in *The Maytrees*, has some of the most beautiful prose about the night sky that I've ever read (it's a novel, so the rest is plot). In the middle is one particularly profound quote.

Alexandra

C: I'm also a teacher! I definitely identify with the difficulty of teaching students critical thinking/understanding it yourself in order to do it.

E: One of my favorite teaching books (you might have read it so apologies if so) is super comprehensive and is called *The Skillful Teacher*.

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Kate

C: I appreciated what you said about "new types of thinking".

E: I wonder how it feels to work strictly in corporate settings (especially as you said your background was more creative)?

Rachel

C: I thought it was fantastic that you were an adventurous young person - I definitely feel that I was as well.

E: If you haven't already read it, a really interesting non-fiction piece that challenges structures of prose/non-fiction is *Citizen* by Claudia Rankine.

Alex

C: I agree that critical thinking is helpful to apply to some other areas of interest (for you, history). I find that to be the same for myself.

E: I wonder how you envision critical thinking to fit into your idea of challenging inequalities? (I agree with this idea, just curious!)

Margarita

C: I really appreciated you saying that it's easier to challenge people you know than those you don't know. I wholeheartedly agree.

E: What makes you want to be a lawyer? How did you know from such a young age?

Andrew

C: It was great to hear you speak about the connections you draw from critical thinking to landscaping. I worked on a farm for many years and it's an under appreciated art to choose/organize/arrange growing things!

E: I think (though I can't cite a specific text) that there are some interesting readings/books out there that speak to ecological systems and business/research, which might be something you'd be interested in looking into.

April

C: It's interesting that you were working to find a common thread between your work experiences. I liked listening to you talk about that!

E: What does the "right question" or "creative thinking" look like in schools, to you? I'd love to hear about it!

## Courtney

Peter + C = I connected with you always asking questions as a child because I was similar.

+ E = I would love to hear how teaching critical thinking has helped you develop your own skills.

Alex + C = I really liked and connected with your self-awareness and desire to improve as a critical thinker. I relate to being an only child and not having someone to challenge as a child.

+ E = How did you come to realize that critical thinking was important to you and that you wanted to build your skills?

Casey + C = I connected with the fact that you acknowledge critical thinking may be something that can't be taught but that we can encourage and give people the tools.

+ E = Would love to hear more about how you came to be a critical thinker through your life experiences.

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David + C = I connect with the fact that you apply critical thinking to editing and that you appreciate being challenged by others (your students).

+ E = Would love to hear more about how you respond to your students when they challenge you and why you became a teacher.

Debra + C = I was really interested by the fact that you weren't introduced to critical thinking in your culture and that you took the initiative to learn how to think critically.

+ E = I wondered if you have any ideas about how you will bring what you learn about critical thinking back to your home country.

Janell + C = I connect with feminism being a big motivator to think critically in your life.

+ E = I wondered how you encourage your kids to think critically and how you respond to them when they push back and ask questions.

Kate + C = I connect with the thought that we need to develop new ways of thinking to break old assumptions.

+ E = As you were talking about your adult life and career, I wondered about your earlier background and childhood and how it made you a critical thinker.

Rachel + C = I connect with the fact that you build your critical thinking skills by reading literature from different viewpoints because I find that is one way I enjoy soaking up different opinions.

+ E = I would love to hear more about what you do currently as a career or what led you to want to pursue this program.

Alex + C = I connect with you wanting to use your critical thinking skills to make an impact on today's world.

+ E = How do you think you'll apply your critical thinking skills to make a change?

Margarita + C = I relate to you not being outspoken and wanting to feel more comfortable questioning people you don't know well.

+E = How will critical thinking help you in your career as a lawyer?

Andrew + C = I connect with the fact that your parents helped you become a critical thinker and love that you said you view problems as opportunities.

+ E = Wondered why you sought out this course and what you hope to gain from it.

April + C = I connected with your reaction to this program's description--I felt the same way when I found this program and read about it, that it was built for me.

+ E = I wondered how having so many different careers in your life of such a great variety has helped you understand yourself and other people better.

## **David**

Alexandra - I am also a middle school teacher and would like my students to become critical thinkers. So I wanted to learn more about critical thinking myself.

Casey - I am also a teacher and would like my students to become critical thinkers. So I wanted to learn more about critical thinking myself.

Courtney - I also copy edit SAT problems and see the value of critical thinking while going through questions.

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Debra - I also grew up with a respect for elders and not questioning them.

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Kate - With your background, I can see how critical thinking is important to your work.

Rachel - I would like to hear more about how you enjoy reading people that you don't agree with. I agree that people don't do that enough.

Alex - I would like hear more about your background and where your passion for inequality comes from.

Margarita - My wife is also a lawyer and see first hand how much she uses critical thinking.

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April - I also work in schools and would like my students to become critical thinkers. So I wanted to learn more about critical thinking myself. I really like your point about emphasizing asking the right questions.

## Debra

### Peter

C= I did not intentionally pursue critical thinking. It was something that I chance upon by other means and soon, the concept of questioning norms intrigued me enough to enter the field.

### Alexandra

C= I grew up being agreeable as well because the alternative of causing friction was uncomfortable to me

E= I think playing devil's advocate to explore other alternatives of thought instead of outright disagreeing is a great way to build up habits of critical thinking for individuals who usually prefer to avoid confrontational situations

### Casey

C= I am interested in exploring the impact of critical thinking to communities and other individuals. Hopefully, be able to teach it to others.

E= While I can agree with the concept of questioning, I still believe that the expertise of others in their field should be respected and listened to as my understanding of it is less than theirs.

### Courtney

C= The way that people think and why they do has been a growing interest and would like to continue to learn and explore this.

### David

C= Wanting to be a better critical thinker so that we are able to coach others as critical thinkers especially those who are in their formative years

E= Based on my experience, it is important to take into consideration their background and experience in the process of teaching critical thinking to others

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### Janell

C= Wanting the future generation to question status quo and feeling drawn to psychology, communication and media

### Kate

C= The realization that with new problems, there is a need for new ways of thinking

E= I am interested in knowing further of her experience in the corporate sector of training and development

### Rachel

C= I agree that critical thinking developments should be more readily available as the need for it is growing in today's society.

### Alex

C= Wanting to make an impact on society by looking at problems differently

E= I am curious to know how he would convince holocaust deniers as it is something he is deeply passionate about and there is a contention from both parties

### Margarita

C= Growing up as someone who is not outspoken and trying to break out of that mold. I am more comfortable talking to people I know than sharing my thoughts with strangers too.

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## Janell Hofmann

Peter - C = questions of adults, E =

Alexandra- C = work requires me to be adaptable E =

Casey - C = agree in trying to find a shared understanding of Critical Thinking for students especially as it can be an overused word in ED E = I encourage you to follow the work of Kerry Gallagher - she is also another educator in Boston and I think you will like her work -<http://www.kerryhawk02.com/>

Courtney - C = psychology and education were (are) paths that always interest me, but I too never found my way directly to them, but instead still feel very connected to those fields in my work. E =

David - C = I am motivated to take these courses for my own self development

Deborah - C = travel and learning about other cultures helped me too

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Kate = thinking about solutions - assumptions, new thinking, new problems is of huge interest to me.

Rachel - I love when you said you loved to be challenged or have deep talks. I agree - there are not too many people out there willing to go deep!

Alex - I agree that critical thinking is more important now than ever!

Margarita -- I like how you identified that you are a critical thinker without needing to be outspoken.

Andrew - I love the parenting question: What's your opinion? Amazing way to build connection and raise critical thinkers!

April - I felt the same way when I read the course description. It's so unique and such a great combination of fields I love.

### **Kate Mills**

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Rachel - C - the idea of being a critical thinker and reading books from the other point of view

Alex - C - follow your passions, being big on history and the potential for this to give you a new view on history. I also want to solve social problems.

Margareta - I too studied law, it's interesting you say that you shy away from challenging people that you don't know - I am the opposite! I prefer not to challenge people that I am friends with/know well because I don't want the argument, but love challenging those I don't know because - hey, they don't know me!

Andrew - love that you created a club, that you took action when you saw something that you didn't like. It's too easy to sit still and watch. Love your view on problems being opportunities and also connect with you wanting to do this course to self-develop.

April - I really liked what you say about looking for a cohesive thread in your life with all those disparate backgrounds. Also the focus on asking the right question is crucial. If we spent as much time focusing on questions as we do on solutions we would be going in a very different direction.

### **Margarita**

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Alexandra,

I think it's great that you want to get better at critical thinking in order to develop your professional life, and teach your students.

Casey,

I like how you emphasized about the importance of schools teaching students how to think critically, in order to be able to be agents of change.

Courtney,

I can relate when you mentioned that you were taught to be critically since a young age.

I consider it very important for not just teachers, but also parents to incite their kids to think critically.

David,

Your comment regarding how in the military your trust them to do what they tell you to do was very interesting, and it emphasizes the notion that we are programmed, in a way, to trust institutions and conform to what the norm is.

**Peter**

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Alexandra

C = I can't yell at them. Professionally, I'm not good at pushing back against colleagues

E = What special insights about everyone do you get by connecting in ways with autistic children?

Casey

C = Can you give anyone critical thinking?

E = Extend the processes by which one "centers" someone around their voice to centering around their critical thinking?

Courtney

C = Path in life is to question other people

E = Provide exercises for this class based on your editing of test questions

David

C = I like pupils challenging me

E = Where can critical thinking be incorporated in the military? (That is, trusting superiors is asked for but not always positive in results.)

Debra

C = On debating team

E = A map of cultural differences of lesser degree would be interesting, e.g., within Asian countries and within USA and between anglophone countries

I like this chapter on cultural differences: Kondo, D. K. (1990). *The eye/I. Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 3-48.

Janelle

C = I want children to ask why

E = How to support children to look after health and safety around sport (following your i-rules?)

Kate

C = Australian; enjoyed CCT

E = Does business see that it needs a mix of people? Is it the case in every field, e.g., instruction, that a mix of people improves the operations?

Rachel

C = Wasn't taught how to look for different perspectives

E = Extend autobio intros to include interviews of parents (if still with us)-- How did your father get to be someone who engaged his daughter in deep thinking?

Alex

C = Likes to find the truth

E = How to shift people on the issue of inequalities?

Margarita

C = We have had a number of Colombians in CCT (more than from other LatAm countries)

E = What perspectives do you get from moving across cultures/countries in your upbringing?

Andrew

C = Working on developing a large garden

E = What might be the relationship between moving other students to do something active/fun and moving people to question their thinking?

April

C = Always been a Critical thinker

E = Link up with others who have worked in ABA who have a critical thinking disposition to suggest/make improvements to ABA.



## Rachel Taylor

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Alexandra,

You mentioned that you don't do critically thinking well and you are an agreeable person. I admire that you are diving in to something you feel you are not strong at and are willing to challenge yourself. I think that flexibility and willingness shows that you have the capacity for strong critical thinking.

Casey,

I agree with you about the curricula that include "critical thinking." I don't see most people learning how to effectively think critically in our education system. I do, however, think critical thinking is a skill that can be taught, but that does not mean everyone has the capacity to excel in that skill.

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David,

You have such a great opportunity as an educator to pass on critical thinking skills to a younger generation. I believe it just takes one teacher to teach you how to think critically, and that skill could possibly last those students a lifetime.

Deborah,

I think it's great that you are willing to be kind of a dissenter of your culture and are willing to jump into critical thinking and bring that back to your community.

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Kate,

It's great that you are willing to hone your journalism skills with the critical and creative thinking program. Some of my experiences with journalists have been rather negative, and it may be because of the onslaught of bloggers who kind of pose themselves as journalists and therefore have never received the right training and ethics in journalism.

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Alex,

It seems like you have a true interest in using your skills to better yourself as well as the world. I see critical thinking as a powerful skill, and it's great you are using that power for good.

Margarita,

I admire that you are attempting law school in the states and that you are using this program to hone your skills in that area.

Andrew,

Sounds like you are interested in applying creative and critical thinking skills to various areas in your life. Additionally, I feel my parents are also very influential on my way of thinking.

April,

I felt very similar to you about how this program is built for you. I was thrilled when I found the program, and I am also excited to apply to the full program.