CRITICAL THINKING AND ARGUMENTATION

Academic Year: 2015/2016  Trimester | Semester: 2ND semester

Instructor(s): Dr. Patricia Costa

Course Description:

Being able to critically evaluate ideas and to produce strong arguments to defend individuals’ own ideas is a central competence not only for students but also in professional context. Managers need to convey what they believe are the right courses of action and win the support from their employees; project teams’ members need to communicate their ideas to co-workers; the commercial department needs to explain to the financial department why they need to go around established procedures with a particular client’s order.

This workshop will provide the basis for being able to analyze the structure and contents of oral and written arguments. Students will work on several texts and videos during class, and learn to identify common mistakes in argumentation and to produce valid arguments for their own ideas.

This intends to be a very interactive workshop, where students will actively work on selected materials during class. Therefore, students are required to prepare class materials before coming to class. Materials will be available 1 week prior to class.

Course Content:

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<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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| 1     | Introduction to critical thinking and argumentation  
       | Critical thinking as a managerial and business competence  
       | Decomposing the structure of an argument |
| 2     | Validity of propositions  
       | Identify common mistakes and biases in arguments  
       | Detect persuasion techniques and avoid their traps |
| 3     | Arguing for and against ideas: developing written and oral arguments  
       | Plan the construction of an argument and anticipate possible counterarguments |
Course Objectives:

1. To be able to decompose written and oral arguments
2. To evaluate the deductive validity of propositions
3. To create valid arguments and to argue for or against ideas

Grading:

Pass/fail: Students will be evaluated based on their participation and on the quality of their class work.

Bibliography:


Biography:

Patrícia Costa has a degree in psychology from University of Coimbra and a Master degree (in Organizational Behaviour) and PhD (in Psychology) from ISCTE – Lisbon University Institute. Her research focuses on team effectiveness, particularly on team interpersonal processes and affective-motivational emergent states of teams. Her research on team work engagement has been published in top journals. She also works as a consultant and trainer in Organizational Psychology.

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