

Challenging Students to Think Critically

AUTHOR

Mark Baskin

COURSE

CAMPUS

Kosovo

METHOD

Project

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

Guidelines for developing assignments that encourage critical thinking. Document outlines several components along with example prompts/assignment descriptions that can help guide faculty in developing their own assignment.

GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Critical Thinking: Analyze or construct arguments considering their premises, assumptions, contexts, and conclusions, and anticipating counterarguments
- Communication: Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms

CHARACTERISTICS

- ☐ Collaborative
- ☒ Experiential
- ☒ Reflection
- ☒ Writing Intensive
- ☐ Use of AI

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

Assignments ask students to answer tough questions:

Students answer challenging, controversial, and multi-faceted questions. For example, is terrorism just another form of political participation? How is religious based terrorism different from other forms of terrorism? Can forces in the global economy be harnessed in support of achieving a more peaceful or prosperous world?

Assignments ask students to produce real-world products:

Assignments often culminate in the production of a real-world document or situation such as a policy memos or a United Nations summit simulation.

Assignments ask students to view problems from multiple perspectives:

Students consider and address problems from more than one perspective. For example, write from an ethical perspective and from the perspective of the government of the country you are studying. Illustrate the way these issues play out in two different types of countries. Discuss how these structures are viewed by different schools of Global Political Economy.

Assignments ask students to think for themselves:

Using relevant evidence, students are asked to formulate their own opinions and draw their own conclusions.

Assignments provide the structure for success:

Assignment prompts walk students through the steps involved in addressing a problem or answering a question. Students are provided with a structure or outline which increases the chances they will successfully cover important aspects of the problem and also learn how to fully scope a problem. For example, what is the problem that must be overcome? What is the significance? Should the problem be addressed at a national or global level? Who should address these issues: government, civil society, the private sector?