

**830:401 Advanced Topics in Human Cognition**  
**Tools for Better Thinking**  
**Professor Julien Musolino**  
**SEC 212, MW5 (3:20-4:40)**

**Prerequisites:** 830:301 (Sensation and Perception) or 830:305 (Cognition)  
Jr/Sr 830 Major or permission of instructor.

Being a critical thinker is key to forming accurate beliefs and making sound decisions. The beliefs we hold and the decisions we make, in turn, can have enormous consequences for virtually every aspect of our individual and collective lives. Today, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, these observations take on particular urgency. And yet, nature did not provide us with an instruction manual on how to best use our powerful brains. Figuring out how we judge, form beliefs, and make decisions, has been a painstaking scientific endeavor and is still very much an ongoing project. Nevertheless, we have learned a lot about how the mind works over the last several decades. These important discoveries, however, have not yet been incorporated into a broad educational curriculum so that students can gain a better understanding of the mind; the instrument that allows them to understand the world. The purpose of this course is to introduce and discuss some of the key findings in cognitive science relevant to critical thinking in a way that is engaging, theoretically motivated, and practically relevant. What are the hallmarks of critical thinking and the domains to which it can be applied? What obstacles get in the way of sound thinking and what are the consequences? Perhaps more important, how can we become better thinkers?