Critical Thinking – Working Definition:
“The ability to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and purposes of a text—created by you or someone else—according to accepted standards of reasoning and evidence.”

This Critical Thinking analytic rubric accounts for the following traits:

1. **Purpose:**
   - Does the writer address the assignment’s objectives/parameters/goals?
   - Does the writer recognize the significance or exigency of the problem/issue she is addressing?
   - Does the writer develop an argument with a purpose that is made explicit to the reader?
   - Is there an identifiable thesis that addresses a stated problem/issue?
   - Does the writer unfailingly address and meet the audience’s expectations?

2. **Analysis of Problem/Issue:**
   - Are the writer’s claims, conclusions, and evidence related and synthesized into a cohesive whole?
   - Did the writer select an appropriate method to investigate the problem/issue?
     - Note: “Investigative Methods” take on distinctive forms in different disciplines (i.e. close reading, executive summaries, proposals, recommendations, reports, etc.)

3. **Credibility of Sources/Source Materials:**
   - Is the argument fully supported with relevant and credible evidence?
   - Was the source material adequately evaluated within the essay?
   - Did the writer place a reasonable degree of confidence in the source materials?
   - Do the sources move the purpose and analysis forward?

4. **Conclusions/Solutions:**
   - Are the ideas integrated into coherent and reasonable assertions and conclusions?
   - Are appropriate, conclusive inferences drawn with regard to the stated problem/issue?
   - Does the writer make his reasoning explicit?

5. **Self-Assessment:**
   - Does the writer self-consciously and critically monitor and reflect on her choices as a writer? Her own reasoning?
   - Does the writer move beyond summarizing her essay by explaining instead why he made particular rhetorical choices?
   - Does the writer demonstrate an awareness of her creative process?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait:</th>
<th>Poor/No Attainment</th>
<th>Minimal Attainment</th>
<th>Average Attainment</th>
<th>Good Attainment</th>
<th>Superior Attainment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> Addresses the assignment. Clearly articulates a focus/thesis that addresses a problem or issue. Writes with an awareness of the audience’s expectations.</td>
<td>Disregards assignment. No discernible focus/thesis. Unaware of audience’s expectations.</td>
<td>Seems aware of the assignment’s objectives, but does not consistently meet them. Focus/thesis shifts frequently, making the purpose unclear. Audience awareness feels erratic.</td>
<td>Effort to address assignment. Focus/thesis usually discernable, but occasionally strays off topic. Writes with an eye toward audience, but some inconsistencies prevail.</td>
<td>While the assignment is addressed, some elements may not be fully developed. Focus/thesis is discernable. Demonstrates some awareness of the audience’s expectations and attempts to cater the prose accordingly.</td>
<td>Assignment’s goals are shared by the writer, though the writer does not seem confined by them. Fully controls thesis throughout the essay and consistently meets, if not exceeds, the audience’s expectations.</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis of Problem:</strong> Claims, evidence, and conclusion are synthesized. Appropriate method was chosen for investigating/analyzing the problem/issue.</td>
<td>No attempt to synthesize essay’s components; investigative approach seems unclear. Essay lacks cohesion.</td>
<td>Preliminary attempts to synthesize components; yet, analysis feels sloppy at times. Investigative method occasionally made clear.</td>
<td>Some attempts to synthesize components, but cannot sustain the effort. Discussion of investigative method is identifiable, but underdeveloped.</td>
<td>Synthesizes components with some expertise and begins to formulate a cohesive look at the problem, but lacks some sophistication. Some lapses with investigative method.</td>
<td>Synthesizes components with expertise and formulates a sophisticated, complex analysis of the problem. Investigative method feels deliberate, developed, and complements the analysis.</td>
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<td><strong>Credibility of Sources:</strong> Assertions/conclusions are supported with credible and relevant source materials. Efficacy of sources is addressed within the argument.</td>
<td>Assertions/conclusions are difficult to locate and seem unsupported. No evaluation of source materials.</td>
<td>Assertions/conclusions are identifiable, but are not supported by credible, relevant evidence. Sources seem under evaluated within argument.</td>
<td>Assertions/conclusions are sporadically supported by credible evidence. Some evaluation of source materials, showing their relevancy.</td>
<td>Assertions/conclusions are frequently supported with credible evidence, but some errors in logic are detectable. Development supported by more consistent evaluation of relevant source materials.</td>
<td>Fully-developed assertions and logical conclusions are supported by credible evidence. Unfailingly includes evaluation of relevant sources that point to the complex nature of the argument.</td>
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<td><strong>Conclusions:</strong> Conclusions/solutions are sound and coherent. Inferences seem appropriate. Reasoning is made explicit.</td>
<td>Unclear how conclusions are drawn. Argument feels illogical and/or incoherent. Reasoning is ambiguous.</td>
<td>Attempts to show how conclusions are reached, but argument still lacks logical framework. Reasoning lacks coherency and refinement.</td>
<td>Demonstrates general adeptness in showing how conclusions are drawn; logic is clearer. Reasoning is present, but lacks depth and complexity.</td>
<td>Conclusions and inferences appear reasonable, yet would be stronger and more persuasive with greater complexity. Some attempts to make reasoning explicit.</td>
<td>Conclusions are reasonable and supported with logical inferences; reasoning is clearly articulated. Conclusions highlight complexity/depth of problem.</td>
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<td><strong>Self-Assessment:</strong> Self-consciously and critically reflects on choices made when constructing argument. Moves past summary.</td>
<td>Fledgling attempts to reflect on own reasoning/choices. Relies primarily on summary. Summary overshadows analysis.</td>
<td>Some attempts to reflect critically, but cannot sustain the effort. Summary and analysis are more balanced.</td>
<td>A strong attempt at critical reflection is made. Reflection shows some depth. Summary is present, but not overwhelmingly so.</td>
<td>A fully, self-aware effort made to reflect critically. Choices and reasoning are self-consciously reflected upon. Summary is minimal.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Score:**
- 0: Poor/No Attainment
- 1: Minimal Attainment
- 2: Average Attainment
- 3: Good Attainment
- 4: Superior Attainment

**University Critical Thinking Rubric**