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Welcome to the web course on Academic Knowledge and Inquiry!

Roll over the highlighted terms below to read a definition or explanation.

If you take your journey through this course seriously and **work through** all the exercises and the expositions, you will develop a broad cross-disciplinary understanding of the nature of academic knowledge and inquiry. Within this framework, you will develop the ability to:

- **justify** a position/claim you subscribe to;
- **critically evaluate** a position that you come across, along with any justification that accompanies it;
- pursue a **methodology** appropriate for a given question; and
- participate meaningfully in an academic or public **debate** on a controversial issue.

You will use the Table of Contents on the right to navigate throughout the course. Click on Unit 1 to see an overview of the first unit, or go straight to Section 1.2 to get started on the exercises.

There are several resources located at the top right corner of the site - **Additional Materials**, the **Road Map**, and the **Glossary**. Utilizing these tools as you work through the lessons will help you get the most out of this course.

The material on this website would be useful for students, teachers and anyone who values an educated mind.

[A note for teachers and graduate students]

- Learning is an activity; you learn best by doing, not just by reading and listening.
- Learning involves discovering, inventing, and evaluating ideas, as well as modifying and restructuring the contents of your mind, not just receiving information from outside.
- The strategies of learning that you develop in one course can and should enhance and illuminate what you learn in other courses.

In keeping with these assumptions, "working through" this course involves not simply clicking through the course or passively reading/listening, but experiencing the processes of discovery, invention, and evaluation that lead to a modification and restructuring of your mind through active engagement with the tasks.

defend/substantiate/support/prove/provide evidence for the claim

employ your critical thinking ability to make an assessment of the merit of the claim/justification

strategies to arrive at an answer, including the use of experimentation, instrumentation, statistics, surveys, interviews, case studies, textual analysis, conceptual clarification, thought experiments, explanation construction, and so on.

conflict between the justification for a position and the justification for the opposite position

A collection of readings and exercises to supplement the main activities. They provide more practice and further insight into specific areas of interest.

A visual representation of the concepts covered in this course and their relationships to each other.

A tool which provides definitions and examples of many of the terms used throughout the course. The glossary can be searched alphabetically, but can also be called up term-by-term from the Road Map.

Underlying this course are certain premises on the role of primary, secondary and tertiary education:

- A) Helping learners acquire the capacity to learn independently of teachers and textbooks and to engage in diverse modes of inquiry is more important than providing knowledge and information in the classrooms. (Given the right pedagogy, learners acquire a great deal of knowledge and information as a by-product of the activities designed to develop the capacity for independent learning and independent inquiry.)
- B) Understanding the structure and general principles of knowledge and information is more important than the details and specifics of the content of knowledge and information, although that abstract structure

