

**Office of Academic  
Planning and Assessment**

A Report of the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

2015-2016

## Description of the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)

The CAT is a nationally normed, short-answer essay test designed to assess critical thinking and problem solving skills. The CAT was developed at Tennessee Tech University, with support of the National Science Foundation. The CAT is administered each academic year to approximately 500 students in upper division courses (3000- and 4000-level). Over a three-year period, each academic college at SHSU will participate in the CAT and submit tests for scoring. The student data presented within this report reflect student performance regarding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Core Learning Objective of Critical Thinking (THECB, 2016). The THECB (2016) defines Critical Thinking as "creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information."

## Methodology

A total of 114 students in upper division courses in the College of Humanities and Social took the CAT in Spring 2016. The tests were scored by faculty and staff volunteers during a two-day scoring session in July 2016. Facilitators trained by the Center for Assessment and Improvement of Learning at Tennessee Tech University lead the scoring sessions to ensure norming and validity. The scored tests were mailed back to the Center for Assessment and Improvement of Learning for analysis. The following is a listing of the colleges and departments that participated in the CAT for 2015-2016:

### College of Humanities and Social Sciences

- a. Department of English
- b. Department of Sociology
- c. Department of Political Science
- d. Department of Psychology and Philosophy
- e. Department of History
- f. Department of Communication Studies

## Results

Readers are directed to Table 1 for a breakdown of these results.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Student Scores on Critical Thinking and Assessment Test (CAT) in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for 2015-2016*

College/Department	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	114	3	30	14.75	6.21
English	26	6	30	17.51	5.95
Sociology	20	4	28	13.30	6.62
Political Science	8	4	27	14.63	8.55
Psychology and Philosophy	14	8	27	18.00	5.87
History	7	7	16	11.86	3.53
Communication Studies	39	3	24	13.03	5.23

### **References**

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2016). Elements of the Texas Core Curriculum. Retrieved from: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=427FDE26-AF5D-F1A1-E6FDB62091E2A507>