

**COMM 322**  
**Argumentation and Advocacy**  
Fall, 2016  
TTh 9:30-10:50

“If you have an important point to make, don’t try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then a third time---a tremendous whack.”

Winston Churchill

“Logic has no place in decent argument.”

Stephanie Cole BBC-TV

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Office Hours: TTh 11:00-12:00, W 5:30-6:30 and by appointment

Course Objectives: This course is designed to help students understand the use of argument in communication and to help students build and present well-formed arguments and analyze the arguments of others. Though this course is grounded in argumentation theory, it emphasizes the pragmatic. Students will work alone and in groups to better understand, create, and criticize arguments.

Required Texts: Hollihan, Thomas A. And Baaske, Kevin T. Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process of Human Decision Making. New York: Waveland Press 2004.

Class Assignments and Grade Breakdown: This class includes two argumentation speeches, several writing and research assignments, several group assignments, a mid-term exam, and a final exam. The point breakdown follows:

Participation-----	5
Writing Assignment-----	10
Research Assignment-----	10
Collaborative Assignments-----	10
Policy Speech-----	10
Debate-----	20

Mid-term Exam-----15

Final Exam-----20

Total 100

Writing Assignment: One of the oldest theories of argument is that both sides of an issue may be argued effectively. This assignment will offer you the opportunity to demonstrate the truth of this idea. Your writing assignment will be a response to your persuasive speech. You will write a formal argument that supports the opposition, an argument that refutes your persuasive speech.

Research Assignment: Research is a fundamental part of good argument. Therefore, you will need to find at least ten sources for your persuasive speech and at least two pieces of evidence from each source. To fulfill your research assignment, you will print this evidence on a paper identifying the claim each piece of evidence warrants. More on this assignment later.

Collaborative Learning and Group Assignments: This course uses collaborative learning. Collaborative learning has been found to greatly enhance understanding and application of class concepts. Since argumentation involves both theory and practice, collaborative learning technologies should help students apply key argumentation concepts in their own work and may help prepare students for exams. Collaborative learning will involve in-class and out of class group discussion of key concepts, principles, and issues. You will often work with others on brief in-class applications of argumentation concepts.

Participation: Your participation in this class is important. Failure to actively participate in collaborative learning exercises will negatively impact your grade, as will failure to participate in class discussions. However, consistent participation in class and group discussions can have a strong positive impact on your final grade.

While in class, turn off cell phones and close all computers. Texting, emailing, searching the Internet, or any other use of technology that distracts from the classroom will result in the automatic loss of points from your participation grade. Continued distractions will directly impact your course grade beyond the participation grade and may result in you being asked to leave the class. Also, do not enter or exit the class during speeches or debates.

Attendance: You will be allowed two absences, after which each (whether excused or not) absence will result in a 5% deduction in your final grade. Remember, any given absence may be on a day in which you would have been involved in a group assignment. In-class group assignments cannot be made up. So, it is in your best interest to have the best possible attendance.

Late work: Late work will result in the loss of one letter grade for each class period the work is late. Debates and exams cannot be made up.

Writing and Paper Grades: All work in this course must follow MLA or APA guidelines for research papers. Failure to follow an accepted format will result in your paper being returned for a rewrite. Papers will be graded on quality of writing, clarity of explanations and argument, and completion of assigned work. Excessive errors (15 or more) in grammar, spelling or format may result in the paper being returned to you for a rewrite. All rewritten papers will lose ten percent of their grade for having been rewritten.

Internet Research: While the Internet seems an endless source of information, it also has limitations (several of which we will address). Your grades on assignments will be directly impacted by the **quality of your sources**. The quality of your evidence and sources of that evidence have a direct bearing on nearly every grade. So, choose your sources wisely. We will discuss sources and evidence throughout the semester.

Disabilities Services: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity: The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Scampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please check with me. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse.

### ***Tentative Schedule and Due Dates***

Course Introduction  
August 23

Foundations of Argument  
August 25-30, read Chs. 1-2  
**Propositions Due** August 30

Theories of Argument: Stories and Audiences  
September 1-5, read Chs. 4-5

Sustaining Propositions  
September 8, read Ch. 5

A Theory of Argument Construction  
September 13-20, read Ch. 6  
**Final Speech Propositions Due** September 20

Types and Uses of Evidence  
September 27-October 6, read Ch. 7-8  
**Research Assignment Due** October 6

Constructing Arguments  
October 11, read Ch. 8

Mid-term Exam  
October 13

Logic, Reasoning, Fallacies, and Refutation  
October 18-20, read Ch. 9-10

**Presentation of Policy Speeches**  
October 25-27

Debate: Format and Performance  
November 1-3, read Chs. 11-12

Value Fields and Argument  
November 8-10, read Chs. 13-14

Interpersonal Conflict  
November 29, Read Ch. 16  
**Writing Assignment Due** 11/29

Conclusions  
December 1

**Final Exam**  
December 8 11:00-2:00

## Debates

November 15-22

COMM 322

Argumentation and Advocacy

Research Assignment

Due October 6

### The Great Gildersleeve

Radio Program

Broadcast Date: January 20, 1946

Gildersleeve: If this town had any kind of police department, Horace, a man like this palm reader couldn't even open up shop. They'd run him right out of town.

Judge Hooker: Oh, it's not quite as simple as that, my friend. Under the law, a man is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.

Gildersleeve: But, the man is a faker.

Judge Hooker: Possibly so. But, can we prove it? Is there any evidence to that effect?

Gildersleeve: I just told you.

Judge Hooker: I know.

Gildersleeve: The man is a faker.

Judge Hooker: That is an assertion. It is not evidence.

Gildersleeve: It's a fact. That's what it is.

Judge Hooker: But, how do we know?

Gildersleeve: I just told you...twice!

Judge Hooker: Gildy, I say again, that is an assertion. And merely repeating it does not lend it weight.

To create an effective argument, you must present real **evidence** to support your claim. Supporting an assertion with the same assertion differently stated does not make an argument. Our discussion throughout the semester has focused on supporting claims with evidence drawn from authoritative sources. This assignment will help you create a fund

of evidence to use in your upcoming policy speech. You are to find at least twenty pieces of evidence from at least ten different sources to support your policy claim.

Remembering our discussions of types of evidence, their innate strengths and weaknesses, and the importance of source material, your fund of evidence should offer specific data supporting claims that you will put forward in your policy speech. This evidence will be judged on the quality of sources, relevance or how well the evidence supports the claim(s), and strength of the evidence. So, you need to find the best evidence possible from the best sources available.

Your research assignment paper will need to have the following. You will need to identify your policy thesis at the top of the first page. Then, you will need to identify sub-claims that you will use to support that policy. Under each sub-claim, you will cite a variety of evidence that supports that claim. You should have at least five sub-claims.

To illustrate, I have pulled the following three pieces of evidence from a recent paper handed in for this class. I chose this illustration because, while it doesn't offer particularly good evidence, it clearly illustrates the structure your paper should follow. The policy thesis for this speech was "the United States Government should make federal election day a federal holiday." The following evidence supported the first sub-claim for that policy. This entire section is directly quoted from the paper.

Sub-Claim One: The United States federal election system is in need of change.

A: "American politics today is characterized by decreasing [voter] turnout."

- Evidence establishes need for change (Demobilization of American Voters, p. 112).

B: "America's minority population is growing appreciably and in some cases dramatically."

- Shows need to increase voter access in order to be inclusive of a growing national voice (U. S. Electoral Systems: Their Impact on Women and Minorities, p. 321).

C: "Some political scientists have measured political legitimacy by the extent to which a system establishes the opportunity for public participation."

- Evidence proposes a challenge to the legitimacy of the status quo system of decreasing political access (Classifying by Race, p. 23).

Remember, I will be assessing how well each piece of evidence supports the claim under which it is listed. So, make sure the evidence is clear and clearly supports its claim. Also, remember that a paragraph represents a complete argument. The evidence you cite

should typically be no more than a sentence each. You will need to attach a works cited page to the back of your paper.

If you have any questions, please bring them to me. Good luck and happy hunting.

ASC 322  
Policy Speech Assignment  
Due October 25

You have now created a policy position and generated sufficient evidence to argue that position. You are to present a 9-10 minute persuasive speech arguing for this policy. Your speech should draw on the evidence you have produced for your first assignment.

You are to bring me a two page typed full sentence outline that you will hand me before you get up to speak. Failure to produce an outline will result in you not being allowed to speak and in receiving a zero for this assignment. Your outline must follow MLA guidelines for research paper writing and must include a cited references page that includes all sources from which you cite in your presentation.

You are to use note cards with a key word outline when you speak. Remember, don't even give the impression that you are delivering a manuscript speech. The only things you should directly read are direct quotes from the sources you use.

You should structure your outline and speech to demonstrate inherency and to address the stock issues. Thus, your speech should demonstrate (not just claim) that a problem exists in the belief and actions of society, that the problem will not go away without some specific change in policy, and that only your proposed policy change will fully alleviate the problem.

Your evidence should demonstrate the existence of the problem and the need for your proposed change. Your evidence should also demonstrate that your proposed change is both workable and desirable.

An effective argument will have excellent evidence from authoritative sources that warrants the claims you will make throughout your speech. Thus, the quality of your grounds and warrants will have a determining effect on the quality of your argument.

Finally, you should be certain that you qualify your claim in a manner appropriate to your presentation, that is, that you make a claim of the appropriate strength given the evidence you have to sustain it. You must also be certain that the language you use throughout is clear and appropriately defined. Define all jargon terms, vague words, and new words for your listeners.

Be strong, self-assured, and dynamic. Avoid reasoning fallacies. Make the best case you can as clearly and effectively as you can. Speeches will be graded on quality of argument, quality of research, quality of presentation, and fulfilling the assignment.

Argue well and, if you have any questions, please contact me.

ASC 322  
Writing Assignment  
Due November 29

By the time you write this paper, you will have presented a 10-minute speech advocating change in an important public policy. You are to write a 5-page paper presenting an argument opposing the one you made in your speech.

This means you are to write an opposition argument on the same topic as your speech. If you presented a speech that claimed, “The U.S. government should legalize marijuana,” your paper should argue the claim that “The U.S. government should not legalize marijuana.”

You are to produce sufficient evidence to support your opposition claim. As an arguer for the opposition, you do have presumption on your side. However, someone (you) has now presented a 10-minute speech that (hopefully) argued brilliantly for a change in that policy. Your paper must answer that speech point for point, showing why the proposed policy change is unnecessary or harmful.

You cannot create this argument by denial or contradiction. For instance, you cannot simply say that “The arguer claimed that marijuana is good for acne, but, so what?” or “The arguer claimed that marijuana cleans your lungs out, but, it does not.” As with your speech, you must present evidence showing that each of your claims is true. I would expect a minimum of five sources to be identified on your cited references page.

As with your speech, your paper should answer the stock issues. Your argument should show that the change is not necessary or that the proposed change is unworkable or that the effects of the change will be undesirable.

Your paper must follow MLA guidelines for research paper writing and include a cited references page. Don’t joke around with this. Make the best case you can to destroy the argument you made in your speech and you should do well.

Papers will be graded on quality of argument, quality of writing, clarity, and completing the assignment.



Argue brilliantly and, as always, if you have questions, please bring them to me.