

COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy

Fall, 2017

(Class #20510) 11:00-12:20 TTh, ANN 405

Professor: [Dr. Randy Lake](#)

Office: ASC 206C

Hours: TBA

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E-mail: rlake@usc.edu (This is the most efficient way to reach me. I check my email regularly when in the office. However, weekdays when I am out of the office, weekends, and evenings are much more sporadic so, if you email me at these times, please do not expect an immediate reply. Because improper email format is unprofessional, inappropriate, and communicates a poor image of its sender, please use proper grammar, letter format, and “netiquette” when communicating with me.)

Objectives:

- to understand the nature, functions, forms and contexts of argumentation as a communication event
- to understand the history and evolution of argumentation theories
- to develop our abilities critically to analyze and evaluate the arguments of others
- to develop our abilities to construct and present sound arguments

Website:

The course website at blackboard.usc.edu is an official place for posting information relevant to the class, such as announcements, assignments, and grades, for discussing lecture materials, and so on. You are as responsible for knowing any material posted to the website as you would be responsible for material distributed or discussed during class. Because the university does not unequivocally recognize material placed on this website as the intellectual property of its creator, copies of my lecture notes, etc., will not be made available here.

Readings:

- Thomas A. Hollihan and Kevin T. Baaske, *Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process of Human Decision Making*. (3rd ed.; Waveland Press, 2016) [REQUIRED]
- Other readings as assigned (distributed via Blackboard)

Readings are assigned to enhance our understanding of argumentation theory and practice as well as to stimulate class discussion. All readings are required unless indicated otherwise. They should be completed *before class* on the day assigned, and I expect you to bring your book and/or article(s) to *every* class session. Lectures will not cover all portions of the assigned readings and will cover additional materials not in the assigned readings; nonetheless, you are responsible for *all* materials, both in the readings and in lecture, on the exams.

Assignments: Detailed instructions for all assignments are available on Blackboard.

- Interpersonal Conflict Analysis 10%
- Courtroom Observation Analysis 15%
- Reasoning Exercise 15%
- Policy Debate 15%

- Debate Research 10%
- Midterm Exam 10%
- Final Exam 15%
- Class Participation and Homework* 10%

[*includes interpersonal argumentation scales, case study analyses, debate briefs, etc.]

All assignments must be the original work of the student and cannot have been used previously or concurrently in any other course. *All assignments must be attempted and turned in to pass the course.*

Participation and Attendance:

Argumentation is a process of give-and-take. While the process of arguing involves disagreement, it need not—and should not—be disagreeable. Being a good arguer is not synonymous with being argumentative or quarrelsome. On the contrary, an effective arguer is open-minded, a good listener, respectful of the opinions of others, and able to fashion arguments in a way that others will find reasonable. Thus, it is very important that you be present and prepared to participate appropriately in each class not only as an advocate but also as an audience. The best policy is to always **T.H.I.N.K.** before you speak by ensuring that your comment is: **Thoughtful, Helpful, Interesting, Necessary, Kind.**

Roll will be taken every day, and more than three absences for any reason (including medical emergencies or other so-called “excused” absences) will affect your course grade adversely, as much as a full letter grade per absence, and even may cause you to fail the course.

Arriving late, leaving early, and other activities not conducive to learning—such as turning off a ringing cell phone or leaving the room to answer it—are extremely disruptive, and may be counted as absences.

Technology: “Topless”

No electronic devices, including laptops, tablets, and phones, are allowed in class at any time unless giving a presentation, or in order to accommodate a registered disability, or otherwise approved by me. There will be times when we will want to use them, so please bring them to class but also *turn them off* before class. According to the [*Wall Street Journal*](#): “In Silicon Valley itself, as the *Los Angeles Times* reported last year, some companies have installed the ‘topless’ meeting—in which not only laptops but iPhones and other tools are banned—to combat a new problem: ‘continuous partial attention.’ With a device close by, attendees at workplace meetings simply cannot keep their focus on the speaker. It’s too easy to check email, stock quotes and Facebook. While a quick log-on may seem, to the user, a harmless break, others in the room receive it as a silent dismissal. It announces: ‘I’m not interested.’ So the tools must now remain at the door.”

Support Services:

Students can face a variety of stressors and difficulties, both school- and life-related. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is [Student Counseling Services](#). To schedule an appointment, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays, or visit the Engemann Student Health Center. The service is confidential, and there is no charge. If you or a friend have been the victim of sexual coercion or violence, the [Sexual Assault Resource Center](#) is located within the Center for Women and Men in the Student Union, Suite 202C, and can be reached at (213) 740-4906. Students who require accommodations or assistance in the course of their studies can receive help from [Disability Services and Programs](#),

Grace Ford Salvatori Hall 120, 213-740-0776 (phone), 213-814-4618 (video phone), 213-740-8216 (fax), or ability@usc.edu. These services are confidential, but you must be registered in order to receive accommodation.

Tentative Daily Schedule:

Undoubtedly, some adjustments to this ideal schedule will be required as the semester progresses, so approach it with flexibility in mind. Adjustments will be discussed thoroughly in class in advance, and announced on Blackboard.

T Aug 22: Introductions: Course, Instructor, and Students

Th Aug 24: Introduction to Argumentation. READ: **Chapter 2; Combs, “The Useless-/Usefulness of Argumentation”**

T Aug 29: Audiences and Fields of Argument. READ: **Chapter 3; Goodnight, “The Personal, Public and Technical Spheres of Argument”**

Th Aug 31: Interpersonal Conflict and Argumentation. READ: **Chapter 16; Donohue and Kolt, “Understanding the Conflict Episode”**

T Sep 5: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **Lawyer & Katz, “High Risk Responses”**

Th Sep 7: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **“Two-Dimensional Conflict Model”**

T Sep 12: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **Hollihan & Riley, “The Rhetorical Power of a Compelling Story”**

Th Sep 14: Argumentation in Politics. READ: **Chapter 13**

T Sep 19: Argumentation in the Law. READ: **Chapter 14**

Th Sep 21: Argumentation and Critical Thinking. READ: **Chapter 5 DUE: Interpersonal Conflict Analysis**

T Sep 26: Argumentation and Critical Thinking, continued.

Th Sep 28: Argumentation and Critical Thinking, continued.

T Oct 3: Courtroom Observation Time. NO CLASS

Th Oct 5: Midterm Exam

T Oct 10: Types of Arguments. READ: **Chapter 6 DUE: Courtroom Observation Analysis**

Th Oct 12: Types of Arguments, continued.

T Oct 17: Types of Arguments, continued.

Th Oct 19: Types of Arguments, continued.

T Oct 24: The Grounds of Argument. READ: **Chapter 7**

Th Oct 26: Building Arguments. READ: **Chapter 8**

T Oct 31: Policy Argument. Read: **Chapter 11**

Th Nov 2: Policy Argument, continued. DUE: Reasoning Exercise

T Nov 7: Refuting Arguments. READ: **Chapter 9**

Th Nov 9: Preparation for debates

T Nov 14: Policy Debates

Th Nov 16: Policy Debates

T Nov 21: Policy Debates

Th Nov 23: THANKSGIVING

T Nov 28: Visual Argument. READ: **Chapter 10**

Th Nov 30: Review for final exam

T Dec 12: Final exam (8:00-10:00)