

# COMM 322 SYLLABUS

## Section 20516R

Argumentation and Advocacy

Monday & Wednesday, 12:00 pm to 1:50 pm

**Fall Semester 2017**

**Classroom: ANN 305**

**Professor: Michael Wissot**

Office: ASC 333

Cell Phone: (805) 490-2460

Office E-Mail: mwissot@usc.edu

Office Hours: *Only by Appointment*, M & W, 9a-10am, 2-3pm

**Course Description:** This class will be an intensive examination of the theories and practices of argumentation. Students will be exposed to a wide range of argumentation theory and vocabulary, and they will be asked to apply these approaches to public argument and advocacy. The class will also cover a variety of contemporary topics, tied particularly to domestic and foreign policy.

**Course Goals:**

- To analyze theories of argumentation and demonstrate practical applications
- To enhance critical thinking skills by anticipating, advancing and refuting arguments
- To develop viable strategies in constructing and presenting oral and written arguments

**Course Meaning:** We will demonstrate the highest attainable work ethic and discover within us that which is superior to circumstance. We will persevere this semester toward the most rewarding pursuit in higher education – the stimulation of thought, emotion, and soul. It is my duty to prepare you, as future leaders of the Free World, to integrate your communication skills into all fields of endeavor. As individuals and as a collective unit, we will dare to be great.

**Required Textbook:** Hollihan, Thomas A. and Baaske, Kevin T. *Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process of Human Decision Making*. 2nd Ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2005.

**Additionally Required Materials:** *Available via e-mail or the university's Blackboard course site*

**Preparedness:** Class will meet each Monday and Wednesday throughout the semester. You must complete ALL course requirements in order to earn a grade in this course. You are responsible for all reading assignments as pop quizzes may be given to determine your preparedness for class. You are required to participate in debates on the dates when you are scheduled. Since your attendance in this course – both as a speaker and listener – is vital, any absences from class will affect your final grade. You are, therefore, required to notify me BEFORE missing class and provide corresponding documentation AFTERWARD. In the event that both of these criteria are satisfied, you will receive “make up” assignments/projects to suffice for time missed from the classroom. Please note that I will record an unexcused absence if you miss any considerable portion of the class period (arriving late, leaving early) without my prior authorization. Late submissions on assignments will result in a 10% grade deduction for every day late. Classroom behavior will be predicated on an environment of mutual respect. Any level of disruptive or threatening student behavior is unacceptable. We are here to learn from each other in a non-threatening environment. You are encouraged to formulate and share opinions with due discretion, as well as be comfortable in practicing communication techniques and debating ideas in a safe environment. However, any behavior that is deemed disrespectful by the instructor will affect your participation points.

COMM 322 – Wissot  
Syllabus (cont.)

**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 violation 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 immediately. 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. You should be familiar with the following resources:

Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf>

Guide to Avoiding Academic Dishonesty: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf>

**Use of Technology:** Students may only use technology-based products with the expressed written consent of the professor. The use of laptops, mobile phones and all other computer devices during class time is not permitted. Accessing the Internet in any capacity during class time is not permitted. **Any violation of this class policy may result in the loss of ALL participation points for the entire semester, as well as other ramifications under university policy.**

**Disability 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. Please have the letter delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. DSP's phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**Grading Procedures:**

Participation / Attendance	25 points
Jeffersonian-Madisonian Exchange	30 points
Debate #1	25 points
Debate #2	25 points
Analysis #1	10 points
Analysis #2	10 points
Op-Ed Submission	50 points
Business Strategy Presentation	25 points
Town Hall Debate	75 points
Term Paper	100 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	125 points

**TOTAL: 600 POINTS**

*Please note that I expect you to complete all assignments on schedule. Late work, if accepted at all, may be penalized substantially.*

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

94 - 100 percent = A	74 - 76.9 percent = C
90 - 93.9 percent = A-	70 - 73.9 percent = C-
87 - 89.9 percent = B+	67 - 69.9 percent = D+
84 - 86.9 percent = B	64 - 66.9 percent = D
80 - 83.9 percent = B-	60 - 63.9 percent = D-
77 - 79.9 percent = C+	BELOW 60 percent = F

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week / Date	Topic / Activity	Assignment (Hollihan, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed)
<b>#1</b> 8/21 & 8/23	Overview of Course  Introduction to the study of Argumentation	
<b>#2</b> 8/28 & 8/30	Argument as Public Discourse Foundations of Argumentation - Narrative Models  Language & Framing Arguments Language in Presidential Debates	Chapter 1 Chapter 2  Chapter 4
	Assign Jeffersonian-Madisonian Exchange in which you will argue, via weekly e-mail correspondence, in support/opposition of events, trends, policies and initiatives -- at the local, state, federal and international levels -- that you deem important. Due 11/24	
<b>#3</b> 9/6 only	Audience Analysis & Fields of Argument Identity Politics: Reaching Unique Demographics  Types of Arguments Grounds for Arguments Defective Evidence  Assign Debate #1 Topics (for Sept 18)	Chapter 3 Denton, Chapter 5  Chapter 6 Chapter 7
<b>#4</b> 9/11 & 9/13	Argumentation & Critical Thinking  Building Arguments Refuting Arguments	Chapter 5  Chapter 8 Chapter 9
	Assign Op-Ed project in which you will write an editorial (500+ words) in support of a particular policy, candidate, cause or organization, and then submit it to at least <i>two publications</i> (that you deem suitable, based on editorial content). Final version must be submitted to Professor Wissot, and targeted publications, by November 15.	
<b>#5</b> 9/18 & 9/20	Debate # 1  Review for Midterm Examination	

**COMM 322 – Wissot  
Course Schedule (cont.)**

<b>Week / Date</b>	<b>Topic / Activity</b>	<b>Assignment (Hollihan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed)</b>
<b>#6</b> 9/27 only	Midterm Examination on Wednesday, September 27 Covers Chapters 1 – 9 in Hollihan, plus all lectures and additional readings BLUE BOOK REQUIRED (Loss of 10 points without Blue Book)	
	Introduction to Academic Debate Debate Formats	Chapters 10 & 11
	Assign Analysis #1: Viewing of Democratic Presidential Primary Debate (TBD). Class Discussion will take place Wednesday, October 11. Prepare to analyze the positions taken by your assigned candidate(s) on related issues, the communication strategies and overall effectiveness (verbal/nonverbal) of the candidates.	
<b>#7</b> 10/2 & 10/4	Argumentation in Politics: Campaigns & Debates Political Debates: Techniques & Results Managing The Dialogue	Chapter 12 Morris, Chapter 43 Morris, Chapter 34
	Bring a sample Op-Ed to class (Oct. 4)	
	Assign Debate #2 Topics (for Nov. 3)	
<b>#8</b> 10/9 & 10/11	Argumentation in Business Message Development & Corporate Strategy	Chapter 14
	Analysis #1: Democratic Presidential Primary Debate (Oct 11)	
	Assign Business Strategy Presentations	
<b>#9</b> 10/18 only	The Absolute Advantage: Sacred Rhetoric Activity – TBD	Marietta
	Assign analysis #2: Viewing of Republican Presidential Primary Debate. Class Discussion will take place Wednesday, November 1. Prepare to analyze the positions taken by your assigned candidate(s) on related issues, the communication strategies and overall effectiveness (verbal/nonverbal) of the candidates.	

**COMM 322 – Wissot  
Course Schedule (cont.)**

<b>Week / Date</b>	<b>Topic / Activity</b>	<b>Assignment (Hollihan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed)</b>
<b>#10</b> 10/23 & 10/25	Business Strategy Presentations	
<b>#11</b> 10/30 & 11/1	Activity – TBD  Analysis #2: Republican Presidential Primary Debate (Nov 1)  Assign major term paper: DUE Monday, November 20, at the beginning of class One hard copy and one electronic copy of the policy paper are <b>REQUIRED</b> . All papers must follow MLA style. Students without internal citing/references could be committing plagiarism and receive an “F” grade, plus possible referral to the Ethics Committee. (When in doubt or in need of help regarding MLA style, please show a rough draft of your term paper to Professor Wissot or go to the USC Writing Center).	
<b>#12</b> 11/6 & 11/8	Debate # 2  Assign Topics for Town Hall Forum (for Nov. 27 & 29)  Review of Term Paper	
<b>#13</b> 11/13 & 11/15	Topic Selection for Town Hall Debate  Activity – TBD  OP-ED ASSIGNMENT DUE (Nov 15)	
<b>#14</b> 11/20 only	Crisis Communication Activity  ALL TERM PAPERS DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20 AT START OF CLASS. LATE PAPERS WILL HAVE 10 POINTS DEDUCTED PER DAY LATE. LATENESS BY SEVERAL MINUTES/HOURS WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF POINTS. ONE ELECTRONIC COPY MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DEADLINE.  JEFFERSONIAN-MADISON EXCHANGE DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20.	

COMM 322 – Wissot  
Course Schedule (cont.)

Week / Date	Topic / Activity	Assignment (Hollihan, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed)
-------------	------------------	---

**#15**

11/27 & 11/29

Town Hall Debate

Review for Final Examination

*November 29 is the last day to submit any late assignments/projects for “excused” absences or deliver “make-up” excused absence speeches.*

**#16**

12/8 only

**Final Examination: Friday, December 8, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Covers Chapters 10-11 & 14 in Hollihan, plus all lectures and handouts from the second half of the semester AND selected topics covered in Test #1

BLUE BOOK REQUIRED (Loss of 10 points without Blue Book)

The final exam will cover all Hollihan material (covered in study guide), lectures, discussion, and handouts. Please do not ask to take the final exam early because university regulations prohibit it.