Argumentation and Advocacy: Comm 322
Section 20513R, ASC 228
TTh 8-9:20am
Fall 2012

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Office Hours: Tue/Thu 9:30-10:30

“The aim of argument… should not be victory, but progress.” – Joseph Joubert

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 the ability to critically analyze and evaluate the arguments of others
• to develop the ability to construct and present sound arguments
• to apply argumentation theory to current events, media discourses, and contemporary controversies

Course Description
This is an introduction to the theory and practice of argumentation, focusing on the interactive construction and critical evaluation of everyday arguments, mediated discourse, and public debates. Focus will be placed upon cultivating argument that is both effective and ethical. The aim is to combine passion and civility, and to realize the moral and practical values of this approach. In this course you will learn to research, organize, develop, present, evaluate, refute, and critique arguments.

Course Materials
• Additional readings, posted on Blackboard.
• The Los Angeles Times (Print or Online). An essential element of the course will be our ability to hold lively discussions regarding current events, to explore how argumentation theory interacts with and reflects upon contemporary issues and controversies. You are expected to read the LA Times or another paper prior to each class meeting. Find at least one main story or one op-ed that you can argue for or against in each class. I will also occasionally send out articles from other news sources via e-mail during the week, which you are expected to read. If you have the time, it would also be good to occasionally check out the generally liberal website Alternet.org and the generally conservative website Townhall.com for what seems to be stirring in the world of public opinion. You will be tested on your ability to apply argumentation theories to current affairs.

Recommended Supplemental Materials
• APA style manual or MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (revised ed.). All papers for this class must be submitted in one of these two formats.
Blackboard / Communication
There is a course website at blackboard.usc.edu. All students enrolled in this course have access to the website through their USC username and password. Please note that all course emails will be sent to your USC account. You are responsible for knowing any material sent to your USC email account (as you are responsible for material distributed or discussed during class).

Assignments (Detailed instructions for all assignments will be provided separately).

Controversy Analysis 10%

Students will choose a contemporary public controversy and identify and analyze relevant arguments therein. The foundation of good argument is research; therefore, this paper should showcase your thorough research of your topic. Begin thinking about your topic early and choose something that will hold your interest, as this paper will provide a basis for the Argumentative Speech assignment.

Argumentative Speech 15%

Using the same general topic as the Controversy Analysis paper, students will choose a perspective and advocate for it. The main objective of this speech will be to analyze a problem related to the controversy you have outlined, and present a solution to the problem.

Debate 15%

Students will participate in one major debate (as well as other, ungraded, mini-debates). Students will be assigned a partner and will be expected to debate either the affirmative or negative side of a proposition.

Refutation Paper 20%

In this paper, students will have the opportunity to either 1) choose another student’s speech and argue against it; or 2) choose a speech from a candidate in the 2012 campaign and argue against it. Students will be expected to provide well-researched arguments refuting those presented in the speech, and engage in thoughtful analysis grounded in argumentation theory.

Midterm exam 15%
Final exam 15%
Attendance and participation 10%

Grading Criteria
Final grades are calculated according to the following percentages:

- A 94-100%
- A– 90-93%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 84-86%
- B– 80-83%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 74-76%
- C– 70-73%
- D+ 67-69%
- D 64-66%
- D– 60-63%
- F 59% and below

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.
Course Policies
Attendance during Speech/Debate days: You must be present during all speech and debate days, unless a family or medical emergency prevents your attendance. There are no makeup debates, regardless of the nature of your absence.

Deadlines/Exams: Due dates for both oral and written assignments are final, and all assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you are absent the day an assignment is due or do not turn in the assignment, you will receive a 10% deduction for each day it is not turned in. Makeup exams will only be given in the event of a documented family or medical emergency on the day of the exam. No computer excuses will be accepted (in other words, make sure to frequently back up your work).

Grades: Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner. There is a 24-hour “wait period” after receiving a grade, but then you should address concerns within the next 10 days.

Participation and Attendance
Students are expected to come to class on time having already read the assigned readings, participate in class discussions, and show courtesy to all class members. You should also go beyond the readings and find examples from the campaign, the news, or your daily life to illustrate course concepts and theory.

It is important that you be present and prepared to participate in each class not only as an advocate, but also as an audience -- argumentation is a process of give-and-take. Regular attendance is presumed, but roll will be taken if necessary. More than three absences for any reason (excluding medical emergencies) will affect your course grade adversely. Arriving late and leaving early are disruptive, and may be counted as absences.

This class is largely about free-flowing argument, so be prepared to discuss current events and the assigned readings in class every day. A working knowledge of current events is necessary for constructing arguments and evaluating public debate. Class will begin each day with a discussion of what’s going on in the news, what stories or op-eds you want to argue for or against in the newspapers, and your arguments about the other readings. Because we are in an election season, pay particularly close attention to argument and controversy surrounding the campaign.

At no time is class conversation meant to be antagonistic. Rather, you should feel challenged to speak whatever is on your mind freely in a safe environment. The aim is to bring out your creativity and independence as a communicator. Each of you should always feel free to say what’s on your mind with the mutual understanding that while we may disagree, every person’s right to speak or argue should be respected. Approach every argument with an open mind, and acknowledge that there is always a chance you could be wrong.

ADA Compliance Statement
Any student requesting academic accommodation 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 be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) 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 Statement**
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. 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. For further clarification, please refer to the “University Student Conduct Code” and the “Appendix A: Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines” in the *SCampus* guide.

**Course Schedule (Parts of this schedule may be revised as necessary).**

**Week 1**
Aug 28: Introduction
Aug 30: Argument as Symbolic: H&B Ch. 1

**Week 2**
Sept 4: Foundations of Argument: H&B Ch. 2; Zarefsky “Argument Culture”
Sept 6: Audience, Fields, and Language: H&B Chs. 3 & 4

**Week 3**
Sept 11: Critical Thinking: H&B Ch. 5
Sept 13: Types of Argument: H&B Ch. 6

**Week 4**
Sep 18: Political Argument: H&B Ch. 12
Sep 20: Political cont.: Miller & McKerrow “Political Argument”; Hollihan “Barack Obama”

**Week 5**
Sep 25: Political cont.; *Controversy Analysis Due*
Sep 27: Review for Midterm Exam

**Week 6**
Oct 2: *Midterm Exam*
Oct 4: Mini-debates

**Week 7**
Oct 9: Grounds of Argument: H&B Ch. 7
Oct 11: Building Arguments: H&B Ch. 8

**Week 8**
Oct 16: Refuting Arguments: H&B Ch. 9
Oct 18: Argumentative Speech Preparation

**Week 9**
Oct 23: *Argumentative Speeches*
Oct 25: *Argumentative Speeches*
Week 10
Oct 30: Academic Debate: H&B Ch. 10-11
Nov 1: Mini-debates

Week 11
Nov 6: Election Day and Debate Preparation
Nov 8: Debate Preparation

Week 12
Nov 13: Debate Presentations
Nov 15: NO CLASS (NCA)

Week 13
Nov 20: Debate Presentations
Nov 22: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Week 14
Nov 27: Argumentation in Law & Business: H&B Chs. 13 & 14
Nov 29: Argumentation in Relationships: H&B Ch. 15

Week 15
Dec 4: Spheres of Argumentation: Goodnight “Personal, Technical, Public”
Dec 6: Review for Final Examination; Refutation Paper Due

Dec 18 (Tue): Final exam 4:30-6:30pm (No alternate arrangements permitted by the University)

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