

COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy
Spring, 2013
(Class #20511) 12:00-1:50 MW, ASC 328

Professor: [Dr. Randy Lake](#)
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Hours: TBA and by appointment
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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:

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.

This website 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*. (2nd ed.; Waveland Press, 2005) [REQUIRED]
- ☐ [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) (7th ed.; 2010) [RECOMMENDED]
- ☐ [Los Angeles Times](#), daily [RECOMMENDED]
- ☐ Other readings as assigned

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. Readings will come from the textbook. In some cases supplementary readings will be distributed via Blackboard or in class as handouts. Readings 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 will be provided in due course.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Participation and Homework*	15%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Toulmin Exercise	5%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict Journal	15%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debate Research**	15%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debates (2)**	10% & 15%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midterm Exam	10%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final exam	15%

[*includes interpersonal argumentation scales, case study analyses, affirmative and negative 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.**

***Debate Topic:*

This semester, we will be researching and debating a very important and timely topic: “Resolved: That the Federal Government should significantly strengthen control of firearms and/or ammunition in the United States.”

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: **T**houghtful, **H**elpful, **I**nteresting, **N**ecessary, **K**ind.

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, notebook computers, iPods, and iPads, are allowed in class at any time unless giving a presentation, or in order to accommodate a registered disability, or otherwise approved in advance by me. Cell phones also are prohibited unless otherwise indicated. **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.”

Tentative Daily Schedule:

It may be necessary to modify this schedule a bit. **Assigned readings** should be completed *before class*; I recommend that, for each class, you read them *in the order listed*.

M Jan 14: Introductions: Course, Instructor, and Students [Complete Argumentativeness Scale]

W Jan 16: Introduction to Argumentation. READ: **Chapters 1-2; Chapter 13 (pp. 241-246 only); Combs, “The Useless-/Useful-ness of Argumentation”**

M Jan 21: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day—NO CLASS

W Jan 23: Interpersonal Argumentation. READ: **Goodnight, “The Personal, Public and Technical Spheres of Argument”; Chapter 15 (pp. 275-284 only); Donohue and Kolt, “Understanding the Conflict Episode”**

M Jan 28: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued: Conflict Styles. READ: **“Two-Dimensional Conflict Model”; Chapter 15 (pp. 284-286); Lawyer and Katz, “High-Risk Responses”** [Complete Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and Putnam-Wilson Organizational Conflict Communication Instrument; discuss “Dick and Donna” case study]

W Jan 30: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. [VIEW: [Rolloff presentation](#).]

M Feb 4: Public Policy Argumentation. READ: **Chapter 5 (pp. 73-79 only); Chapter 10 (pp. 181-185 only)** [“The Escalation of a Fight” case study analysis DUE]

W Feb 6: Analyzing Policy Propositions. READ: **Chapter 5 (pp. 79-92)**

M Feb 11: Analyzing Policy Propositions, continued [Discuss Debate Assignment]

W Feb 13: Researching Policy Propositions. READ: [“Study: Americans choose media messages that agree with their views”](#); **Chapter 8** [Discuss Research Assignment]

M Feb 18: Presidents’ Day—NO CLASS

W Feb 20: The Form of Arguments. READ: **Chapter 6 (pp. 104-111 only)** [Conflict Journal DUE]

M Feb 25: The Form of Arguments, continued

W Feb 27: The Form of Arguments, continued READ: **Chapter 6 (pp. 96-104)** [Toulmin Exercise DUE]

M Mar 4: Midterm Examination

W Mar 6: The Grounds of Argument. READ: **Chapter 7**; VIEW: **“An Inconvenient Truth”**

M Mar 11: The Language of Argument. READ: **Chapter 4**. VIEW: [“An Inconvenient Truth . . . or Convenient Fiction?”](#)

W Mar 13: Presentation and discussion of affirmative cases [Affirmative briefs DUE]

M Mar 18: Spring Break—NO CLASS

W Mar 20: Spring Break—NO CLASS

M Mar 25: Argumentation in Debate. READ: **Chapter 10 (pp. 185-201)**

W Mar 27: Argumentation in Debate, continued. READ: **Chapter 11 (pp. 203-207, 209-212 only)**

M Apr 1: Presentation and discussion of negative positions [Negative briefs DUE]

W Apr 3: Refuting Arguments. READ: **Chapter 9**

M Apr 8: Debate preparation

W Apr 10: Debate preparation

M Apr 15: Debates 1 vs. 2; 3 vs. 4

W Apr 17: Debates 5 vs. 6; 7 vs. 8

M Apr 22: Debates 9 vs. 1; 2 vs. 3 [Research Assignment DUE, Teams 1-3]

W Apr 24: Debates 4 vs. 5; 6 vs. 7 [Research Assignment DUE, Teams 4-7]

M Apr 29: Debates 8 vs. 9 [Research Assignment DUE, Teams 8-9]

W May 1: Review for final exam

F May 10: Final exam (11:00-1:00)