

COMM 322: ARGUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY

SECTION 20514R • WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS, 8:30–9:50 A.M. • ASC 228

Spring 2013 Syllabus

- **Instructor:** Francesca Marie Smith
- **Email:** francesca.smith@usc.edu
- **Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 10:00–11:00 a.m., and by appointment, on the ASC Garden Level patio (accessible via stairs outside the East Lobby entrance, or through the door just off the East Wing elevator at the Garden Level; East Lobby in case of rain)

Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you hone your theoretical understanding of argumentation and advocacy while also refining your practical skills. It is my intention that each student will, at the conclusion of the semester, have gained competence in these four arenas:

- Identifying, analyzing, and thinking critically about arguments as they are presented to him or her, using appropriate theoretical frameworks and vocabulary
- Effectively and eloquently producing arguments on his or her own, whether in oral, visual, or written form (ideally, demonstrating the appropriate use of research and evidence, invention, organization, style, and delivery)
- Knowing how (but also when and why) to combine these two acts of analyzing and producing arguments in dialogue with other advocates, thus enacting refutation and/or debate
- Exercising the aforementioned skills in a variety of contexts, including academic, political, interpersonal, commercial, and/or judicial argumentation

This course also seeks to inspire students to become more ethically aware advocates, recognizing the power of argumentation and guarding against its abuse. In one sense, this means enhancing our awareness of argumentation and advocacy as practices

central to democracy, vital for social success and progress, and indeed crucial to the human experience. At the same time, you will also be encouraged to practice empathy, to fairly consider (and advocate for) multiple perspectives, and to reflect on the social value of argumentation as a collaborative process of seeking truth and refining understanding, not simply as a contest to be won or lost by adversaries; hopefully, you will learn to disagree without necessarily being disagreeable, and to argue without necessarily being argumentative. In sum, we will strive to balance passion with civility, and to both identify and commit to standards of morally appropriate persuasion and debate in the private and public spheres.

Readings

The single required textbook for this course, cited in the course schedule as “A & A,” is available in both print and online form:

Hollihan, T. A., & Baaske, K. T. (2005). *Arguments and arguing: The products and process of human decision making* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Additional articles and other materials will be posted on Blackboard and/or distributed via email; as such, you are responsible for checking your USC email account and the course’s Blackboard site. In addition, please note that, regardless of whether it is discussed explicitly in lecture, any and all course material (from the readings *or* lecture notes) will be fair game for the final exam, quizzes, and other exercises.

In addition, **you will be required to stay up-to-date on current affairs by consuming some form of news media multiple times a week.** I suggest you spend a few minutes every morning, Monday through Friday, at least looking at the headlines of *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, or another major news publication; you are also welcome to listen to news radio or use an online aggregation service instead, so long as you come to class conversant with the week’s major stories.

It is strongly recommended that you acquire a style manual (either APA, Chicago, or MLA), if you do not already have one; you will be required to use one of these three citation styles accurately and consistently in your written work for this course. At minimum, please familiarize yourself with The Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>).

Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will comprise the following:

- PARTICIPATION 10%
- QUIZZES, HOMEWORK, AND IN-CLASS EXERCISES 10%
- EVIDENCE ASSIGNMENT..... 5%
- VALUE ADVOCACY AND REBUTTAL..... 15%
- LINCOLN–DOUGLAS DEBATE..... 15%
- PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE 15%
- ARGUMENT EXAMPLE PORTFOLIO..... 15%
 - *Political Argumentation Analysis*
 - *Advertisement Study*
 - *Fallacy Examples*
 - *Interpersonal Conflict Journal*
 - *Courthouse Reflection*
- FINAL EXAM..... 15%

Further details for each assignment will be available via Blackboard as the semester progresses. **All assignments listed here must be at least attempted, in good faith, in order for the student to earn a passing grade in the course.**

Grades are determined as follows.

- 93% and above: A
- 90–92%: A-
- 87–89%: B+
- 83–86%: B
- 80–82%: B-
- 77–79%: C+
- 73–76%: C
- 70–72%: C-
- 67–69%: D+
- 63–66%: D
- 60–62%: D-
- 59% and below: F

Note that grades in the A range are reserved for—and earned via—exceptional work. Above average work merits a score in the B range; C-range work is defined as “fair,” and any contributions that do not meet the minimum requirements for the assignment may be assessed in the D or F range.

Policies

Expectations for written assignments: All of your written materials (including emails!) should, ideally, reflect basic standards of professional decorum, and should therefore be free of excessive errors, overly informal language, and sloppy formatting; though we are all, of course, human, attention to detail will go a long way. In addition, students in a 300-level course should ostensibly have mastered basic skills of writing, including proper spelling (beyond the use of spell check), punctuation, and grammar; clear thesis statements, previewing, transitions, and other organizational elements; and consistent citation of outside sources in compliance with one of the major style manuals (APA, Chicago, or MLA). If you struggle with any of these skills, I encourage you to work with me or the Writing Center. All assignments should be typed, using 12-point Times New Roman font, with margins of 1 inch on all sides. **Please save copies of any materials you submit to me!**

Late work: All assignments should be submitted by the start of class time on the indicated due date. Any work received after this time can be penalized by up to a 3% grade reduction for each day or partial day that it is late. Be sure to have the mailroom staff stamp any late materials you leave in my mailbox.

Grade adjustments: On occasion, a student may feel that an error or injustice has occurred with respect to the grading of a certain assignment. Please bring any concerns you have regarding clerical errors to my attention at once (e.g., botched math, lost papers, and similar mistakes). For disputes over the substance of an evaluation (i.e., you feel you deserve a different grade), please wait at least 24 hours upon receiving the grade to consider your position. Then, I ask that you submit your argument for a grade change—**in writing**—along with any relevant materials, no later than 7 days after you receive the grade. Note that your request will be evaluated as an example of the very argumentative skills we study in this class, so please construct it with this in mind. Such a request, of course, does not guarantee that any adjustment to your grade will be made.

Attendance: You are permitted two unexcused absences, no questions asked; absences beyond that will lower your participation grade, and excessive absences can result in a failing grade in the course. Please note that exceptions will only be granted in very limited circumstances, and after consultation with the instructor. Patterns of tardiness (or leaving early) will also reflect poorly on your participation grade. **Please note that attendance is mandatory on days when you will be participating in debate activities; in addition, you are expected to be a polite audience member, and not enter or leave the classroom while a classmate is speaking.**

Class conduct: Beyond merely being physically present in the classroom, you will be evaluated on your attentiveness, contributions, and demeanor during class or class-related activities, as well as your performance on a number of small in-class exercises. You are also expected to come to class having read all assigned material (and, if possible, bring the materials with you to class as well). Superior participation also includes arriving to class equipped with questions about the material, engaging in active listening, offering relevant examples (particularly from all those current affairs you've been keeping up on), and collaborating with your classmates, instructor, and guest speakers. Particularly given the nature of our subject matter, it is crucial that each student strive to create a positive, supportive, safe, non-disruptive, and reasonable environment in the classroom; I reserve the right to adjust final grades up or down based on classroom citizenship. The primary criterion that I use in evaluating student participation is *respect*. Superior students evince deep respect for the material, the environment, their colleagues, their instructor, and—perhaps most importantly—themselves.

Technology: We are currently in a uniquely challenging age in which we still struggle to effectively incorporate into our teaching and learning practices the incredible technology that is now available to us. While I certainly see the value of such technology, it is currently my opinion that the use of laptops and similar devices in the classroom does more harm than good in terms of student learning; a number of studies suggest that the use of such technology results in decreased comprehension and retention, as well as impaired abilities to think critically and engage deeply with material, even when students are using it for class-related activities. Therefore until/unless I am convinced otherwise, laptops and other electronic equipment may not be used in the classroom. In addition, please disarm any devices that beep, buzz, ding, or might otherwise disrupt the class, prior to the start of the class period.

Disability: 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 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. 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.

I, in particular, take academic integrity very seriously in my classroom, and will not hesitate to report and take disciplinary action when faced with violations of USC’s codes of conduct; remember, **the recommended sanction for any instance of academic dishonesty in a course, even if it is a first offense, is failure in the course.** It simply isn’t worth it.

I direct you to the following two documents to familiarize yourself with what USC considers violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, aiding or taking aid from other students (when not explicitly permitted), and turning in the same work for more than one class without approval from relevant instructors:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/AcademicIntegrityOverview.pdf>
http://scampus.usc.edu/files/2012/08/appendix_a.pdf

In addition, you are **REQUIRED** for this course to complete the online tutorial provided by the USC Libraries and the university’s Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards office:

http://www.usc.edu/libraries/about/reference/tutorials/academic_integrity/index.php

Please return the course completion certificate to me no later than January 30th.

I strongly encourage you to come talk to me, early and often, even if you’re not having any particular problems in the course (however, you should especially do so if you have any concerns, difficulties, or circumstances it might be helpful for me to know about). Remember, I actually am here to—and very much want to!—help you.



Schedule
<p>Week 1</p> <p>Wednesday, January 16th – Course Introduction</p> <p>Friday, January 18th – What is Argumentation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 1 • READ: Zarefsky, “What Does an Argument Culture Look Like?”
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Wednesday, January 23rd – The Narrative Paradigm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 2 • READ: Fisher, “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm” <p>Friday, January 25th – Argumentation in Context(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 3
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Wednesday, January 30th – Argumentative Propositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 5 • DUE: Academic Integrity Certificate <p>Friday, February 1st – Argument Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 6
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Wednesday, February 6th – Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 7 <p>Friday, February 8th – Research Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: A & A Ch. 8 • GUEST LECTURER: Chimene Tucker
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Wednesday, February 13th – Applying Research to Argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: Research Supplement <p>Friday, February 15th – Constructing Value Cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Evidence Assignment

Week 6

Wednesday, February 20th – Language and Style

- READ: A & A Ch. 4

Friday, February 22nd – Refutation

- READ: A & A Ch. 9
- READ: Fallacy Supplements
- DUE: Value Advocacy

Week 7

Wednesday, February 27th – Refutation, Continued

- READ: Anonymous, “Dissoi Logoi”

Friday, March 1st – Introduction to Debate

- READ: A & A Ch. 10
- DUE: Value Rebuttal

Week 8

Wednesday, March 6th – Debating Policy Propositions, Continued

- READ: A & A Ch. 11

Friday, March 8th – Advanced Debate Theory

Week 9

Wednesday, March 13th – Political and Legal Argumentation

- READ: A & A Ch. 12
- READ: A & A Ch. 13
- READ: Fieldwork Supplements

Friday, March 15th – Visual Argument

- READ: Visual Argument Supplements
- PRESENT: Advertisement Study Example

Week 10

Wednesday, March 20th – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!

Friday, March 22nd – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!

Week 11

Wednesday, March 27th – Topic Selection and Debate Workshop

Friday, March 29th – Debate Practicum

Week 12

Wednesday, April 3rd – Lincoln–Douglas Debates

Friday, April 5th – Interpersonal Argument

- READ: A & A Ch. 15
- READ: Donohue & Kolt, “Understanding the Conflict Episode”

Week 13

Wednesday, April 10th – Lincoln–Douglas Debates

Friday, April 12th – Lincoln–Douglas Debates

Week 14

Wednesday, April 17th – Transitioning from Lincoln–Douglas to Parliamentary Debate

Friday, April 19th – Parliamentary Debate Practicum

Week 15

Wednesday, April 24th – Parliamentary Debates

Friday, April 26th – Parliamentary Debates

Week 16

Wednesday, May 1st – Parliamentary Debates

- DUE: Argument Example Portfolio

Friday, May 3rd – Course Review

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 13th, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Caveat: The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as is deemed necessary throughout the course of the semester