

## Communication 322 - Argumentation and Advocacy – Fall 2013

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### 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 asked to apply these approaches to public argument.

### Student Objectives

1. To identify the elements in the complex interactive process of argumentation.
2. To understand how the rise of digital culture is influencing changing argumentation norms.
3. To help enhance critical thinking skills by developing and critiquing public arguments.
4. To provide the vocabulary and methods for systematic observation and analysis of argumentation in society.
5. To enhance argumentative competence through the construction and presentation of oral and written arguments.

### Required Readings

1. Hollihan, Thomas A. and Baaske, Kevin T. *Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process or Argumentation*. 2nd Ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2005 (Listed on the schedule as 'AA').
2. Additional readings will be available either through the Blackboard course site – Items marked as 'BB' and available on blackboard under 'e-packet.'

### Daily Schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings
8/27	Introduction to the study of Argumentation	
8/29	Argument as Public Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AA Ch 1</li><li>• Goodnight "Public Discourse" (BB);</li></ul>
9/3	Digital Contexts for Argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rheingold – Stewards of Digital Literacies (BB)</li></ul>
9/5	Argumentation as Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gutman "Deliberative Democracy" (BB),</li></ul>
9/10	The Foundations of Argumentation – Narrative Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AA Ch 2</li><li>• Foss "Narrative" (BB)</li></ul>
9/12	Fields of Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AA Ch 3</li></ul>

9/17	The Language of Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 4</li> </ul>
9/19	Argumentation and Critical Thinking (Argument Identification Paper Due)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 5</li> </ul>
9/24	Civility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rodin "Incivility &amp; Public Discourse" (BB),</li> <li>• <u>Civility in America 2013</u></li> </ul>
9/26	Type of Arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 6</li> <li>• Tinsdale - "Fallacies" (BB)</li> </ul>
10/1	<b>Exam 1</b>	
10/3	Grounds of Argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 7</li> </ul>
10/8	Building Arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 8</li> <li>• "How to Use RSS"</li> </ul>
10/10	Contemporary Research: Aggregation & Curation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Feedly Tutorial</u></li> </ul>
10/15	Introduction to Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 10</li> <li>• AA Ch 11</li> </ul>
10/17	Advanced Debate	
10/22	Refuting Arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 9</li> </ul>
10/24	Practicums in Argumentation <b>(Advocacy Manuscripts Due)</b>	
10/29	Argumentation in Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 12</li> </ul>
10/31	Argumentation in the Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 13</li> </ul>
11/5	Argument Seminar: Conspiracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miller "Conspiracy theories" (BB)</li> </ul>
11/7	Argument Seminar: Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blair - "Public memorializing in postmodernity." (BB);</li> <li>• Jessica Dailey "<u>The Seven National 9/11 Memorial Designs That Will Never Be.</u>"</li> </ul>
11/12	Argumentation in Businesses & Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 14</li> </ul>
11/14	Argumentation in Interpersonal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Ch 15</li> </ul>
11/19	<b>Video Debates</b>	

11/21	<b>Video Debates</b>	
11/26	<b>Twitter Debates</b>	
11/28	Thanksgiving – No Class	
12/3	Digital Debate Debriefing <b>(Refutation Paper Due)</b>	
12/5	Final course debriefing & Exam Review	
12/17	<b>Final Exam</b>	11 am – 1 pm

### Evaluation Criteria

**Grade Worksheet:** Over the course of the semester students can track their own grades using the following simple chart.

Assignment	Due Date	Percent	Grade	Points
Argument Identification Paper		5%		
Midterm Exam		20%		
Advocacy Manuscript		10%		
Digital Debate		15%		
Twitter Debate		10%		
Refutation Paper		10%		
Final Exam		20%		
Class Participation		10%		
TOTAL		100%		

**Grading Scale:** Students will earn grades based on the following assignments. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. Final course grades are assigned on the following scale

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

## **Assignments**

### **1. Participation & Practicums: (10%)**

This course is designed to provide students with a new methodology to approach public argument. The success of this process depends on the willingness of students to read before class, be ready to discuss the readings and to reflect after class. Students should expect a substantial amount of daily reading for each class period. Students who attend class without being ready to participate will receive a lower class participation grade. If, at any point, the instructor feels that students are not keeping current with their reading assignments, there will be unannounced quizzes.

Throughout the course there will be a series of specific and detailed discussions of public arguments. During these argument practicums students will be asked to prepare, explore and analyze specific aspects of these arguments. These applications will take the form of specific feedback on the course blog.

Attendance will be taken in class. Students who accumulate excessive absences or who regularly miss portions of class will receive a lower class participation grade. Absences due to university activities (conferences, competitions, etc.) must be discussed with the instructor before the relevant class period and proof of activity must be submitted in writing. Arrangements concerning absences are entirely at the instructor's discretion.

### **2. Exams (20% each, 40% total)**

Three short answer and short essay exams provide a primary means of assessment. Each exam will include roughly one third of the course material. Although none of the exams are cumulative in focus, it is assumed that students have mastered material in the course as the semester progresses.

### **3. Papers (5% for Argument Identification Paper, 10% each for the Advocacy Manuscript and Refutation Paper; 25% total)**

Each student will write one 5-7-page paper and two 7-10 page papers during the course. Each paper will be a specific assignment relating to the analysis of a public policy controversy. The first paper, the Argument Identification paper, involves a basic diagnosis of an argumentative dispute. The advocacy manuscript asks the student to research and take a position with regard to a controversy. The refutation paper involves a detailed response to a specific advocacy position. All three papers will be explained in greater detail and all three will involve both primary research and close analysis of significant controversies.

The papers should all utilize common font and margin settings (such as Times New Roman 12 point fonts and 1 inch margins). Each paper should follow a consistent style manual (APA or MLA are the preferred

options) and should reflect a writing style consistent with junior-level college work. The expectations for senior level writing include:

*Structure* - Quality papers should demonstrate a clear writing plan and basic structure. A clear thesis should be evident early on the first page to preview the fundamental elements of the essay. This section should also preview the organizational structure of the project. Each section should reflect an organizing principle which utilizes previews, summaries, and transitions. You shouldn't be trying to build suspense in these essays. If you don't provide a sense of your final direction in the first two to three paragraphs, you are too weakening the focus of the essay. Good essays also should include a quality conclusion that draws together the basic details. Simply finishing your last point doesn't accomplish this task.

*Focus on specific arguments* - Your essays are all designed to analyze specific political contexts so it is important that you closely detail the relevant articles and texts, including properly citing them, and provide specific analysis. You are free to use your own perspectives to accent these essays, but ultimately they need to provide analysis of the specific artifacts in question as their primary task.

*Writing Style* - In any essay, the medium of your language is the technique that you will use to make your arguments. Even in our visual culture, the ability to make a professional argument in writing is an essential skill, especially in an argumentation course. When your language begins resembles the spoken word it loses its authority and it distracts from your contentions. These essays are intentionally short to provide you with time to edit and revise your work. Junior level college writing should be free of

- (Thinking out loud comments in parenthesis)
- Misspelled words or words that are poorly spell-checked and come back as different words. There is a huge credibility problem for your writing when these errors appear.
- Conversational or sarcastic tones. This is a formal essay and it should be treated as such. President Bush is the appropriate way to first refer to him, regardless of your views.

*Use of a style manual* - Papers should feature consistent use of a style manual. In some cases students still need to familiarize themselves with a manual. Common errors include a lack of alphabetical listing of citations, incomplete citation information (i.e., you need authors in all cases) and the inclusion of the appropriate URL).

*Use of qualified sources* – In cases where you need or want to make an authoritative claim, you should utilize a well-qualified source. Suggestions involve experts in the field, scholarly journals, and other professional sources, including our texts. The easiest google results, especially including Wikipedia, should be treated as starting points for reference and not references. When essay topics refer to specific concepts covered in the readings, it is important that these essays display a competent grasp of the material.

Evidence should be carefully analyzed before usage. Materials cited as proof of your claims should be timely, relevant, and well scrutinized. Materials should reflect your awareness of the ideological foundations of all evidence (i.e., using materials from Karl Rove supporting the Republicans is acceptable; however, the use of that material should reflect your awareness that this source is highly partisan).

*Bibliography & Citations* - Citations must be provided for all researched information. Any use of additional material, even as background, must be cited within the body of the paper and then again in a works cited or bibliography. The format for these citations should consistently reflect a style manual.

#### **4. Debates (15% for Video Debates, 10% for twitter debate activity; 25% total)**

These two activities provide opportunities for students to engage in argumentation applications and then to conduct analysis of these sessions. The applications will provide means for students to practice argumentative techniques. Each debate activity will take place on specific mediated debate platforms. The use of research, logic and effective reasoning are important to the evaluation of these assignments.

### **Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity** - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code. 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. 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" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tig.pdf>

\* "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tio.pdf>

\* The "2013-2014 SCampus" (the student handbook) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies. <http://www.usc.edu/scampus>

**Late & Unfinished Work** – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late. Each speaking assignment must be given on the day assigned. No makeup sessions will be available.

**Grievance Procedure** - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

**Special Assistance** - 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 that the letter is delivered 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 and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.