

COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy
Fall, 2015
(Class #20518) 12:00-1:50 MW, ANN 211

Professor: [Dr. Randy Lake](#)
Office: ASC 206C
Hours: 2:00-3:30 MW and by appointment
Telephone: (213) 740-3946
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:

The course website at blackboard.usc.edu 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]
- 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.

- Participation and Homework* 15%
- Toulmin Exercise 5%

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| <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 an important and timely topic, recently proposed by Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton: “Resolved: That upon reaching 18 years of age, all U.S. citizens should be automatically registered and eligible to vote in federal and state elections.”

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, tablets, and phones, are allowed in class at any time unless giving a presentation, or in order to accommodate a registered disability, or otherwise approved by me. There will be times when we will want to use them, so please **bring them to class** but also **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.”

Support Services:

Students can face a variety of stressors and difficulties, both school- and life-related. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is [Student Counseling Services](#). To schedule an appointment, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays, or visit the Engemann Student Health Center. The service is confidential, and there is no charge. If you or a friend have been the victim of sexual coercion or violence, the [Sexual Assault Resource Center](#) is located within the Center for Women and Men in the Student Union, Suite 202C, and can be reached at (213) 740-4906. Students who require accommodations or assistance in the course of their studies can receive help from [Disability Services and Programs](#), Grace Ford Salvatori Hall 120, 213-740-0776 (phone), 213-814-4618 (video phone), 213-740-8216 (fax), or ability@usc.edu. These services are confidential, but you must be registered in order to receive accommodation.