

## COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy

Fall, 2018

(Class #20510) 12:30-1:50 TTh, ANN 211

*Professor:* [Dr. Randy Lake](#)

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*Hours:* TBA

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*E-mail:* [rlake@usc.edu](mailto: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](http://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*. (3rd ed.; Waveland Press, 2016) [REQUIRED]
- ☐ Other readings as assigned (distributed via Blackboard)

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. They 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 are available on Blackboard.

- ☐ Interpersonal Conflict Analysis      100 points
- ☐ Courtroom Observation Analysis      150 points
- ☐ Reasoning Exercise      150 points
- ☐ Policy Debate      150 points

- ☐ Debate Research 100 points
- ☐ Midterm Exam 100 points
- ☐ Final Exam 150 points
- ☐ Class Participation and Homework\* 100 points

[\*includes interpersonal argumentation scales, case study analyses, debate 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.* 1000 total points can be earned in the class. Course grades may be assigned according to the standard curve (900-1000 = A, 800-899 = B, 700-799 = C, 600-699 = D, with appropriate pluses and minuses), but the instructor reserves the right to employ a different curve.

#### *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: **Thoughtful, Helpful, Interesting, Necessary, Kind.**

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 50 points 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,” or “Off the Grid”*

Some time ago, the [\*Wall Street Journal\*](#) reported, “In Silicon Valley itself . . . 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.” Research supports this policy, including a study called [“Why you should take notes by hand – not on a laptop”](#); a *New Yorker* piece called [“The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom”](#); and the studies of the late Stanford professor (and USC Annenberg graduate) Cliff Nass, demonstrating the dangers of multitasking (summarized in [this NPR segment](#)). Or, read Nicolas Carr’s piece in the *Wall Street Journal* last year called [“How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds: Research suggests that as the brain grows dependent on phone technology, the intellect weakens.”](#) The *Los Angeles Times* published a similar article on this “off the grid” policy in 2015. Most recently, and even more importantly, [a new \(July 2018\) study in Educational Psychology](#) reveals that technology use during class is detrimental to long-term retention (as measured by lower exam scores), not only among users but among *all* students. *Hence, like smoking, using technology harms not only you but, second hand, those around you.*

**Accordingly, no electronic devices, including laptops, tablets, and phones, are allowed in class at any time except as an accommodation for 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. You can expect to be called out publicly for violating this policy, not because I am an unreasonable, unhip dude, but because the policy is in your own best interest.

#### University Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

##### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

##### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS)* – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* – 1 (800) 273-8255 Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center* For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance* – (213) 740-5086 Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support* Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs* Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

*Student Support and Advocacy* – (213) 821-4710 Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic.

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC* Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information* Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC:* (213) 740-4321 – *HSC:* (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)