

COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy
4 units



Summer, 2019: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1:00 - 3:50 pm
ANN 209 (room subject to change)

Contact Information

Instructor: Christiana Robbins

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday in ANN 415 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm.
Appointments can also be made on a case-by-case basis if these times do not work for you. I am also available to Skype or Facetime if in-person meetings prove difficult to arrange.

Email: clobbin@usc.edu

I will respond to your email within 24 hours if I receive it Monday through Thursday and within 48 hours if I receive it anytime Friday through Sunday, or during holiday breaks. If I have not responded within this window of time, send me another email to make sure your first email was received.

Course Objectives

1. Learn to thoughtfully and deliberately construct arguments and persuasively present a point of view to a variety of audience types, both through written and oral means.
2. Improve critical thinking by learning to recognize and critique logical fallacies and other argumentative techniques, in your own argumentation and in the arguments of others.
3. Learn how and when to refute arguments; learn to recognize situations where productive argumentation is not possible.
4. Recognize arguments present in non-traditional sources, like visual media and digital forums.
5. Understand the societal, legal, and policy implications of argumentation in a democracy.

Textbooks

Herrick, J. A. (2019). *Argumentation: Understanding and shaping arguments* (6th ed.). State College, PA: Strata. [REQUIRED]

ISBN: 978-1-891136-42-9

Hollihan, T. A., & Baaske, K. T. (2016). *Arguments & arguing: The products and process of human decision making* (3rd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. [REQUIRED]

ISBN: 978-1-4786-2929-0

The textbook is supplemented by a variety of readings available on blackboard.usc.edu.

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION	150	15%
FREEWITES (4 FREEWRITES, EACH WORTH 25 POINTS, OR 2.5%)	100	10%
QUIZZES (4 QUIZZES, EACH WORTH 50 POINTS, OR 5%)	200	20%
DIGITAL SPACES ANALYSIS	100	10%
MONUMENTS PROJECT	100	10%
LEGAL ARGUMENTATION CASE STUDY	100	10%
FINAL PROJECT: ADVOCATING FOR A PUBLIC POLICY	150	15%
FINAL EXAM	100	10%
Total	1000	100%

Description of Assignments

Attendance and Participation: Because this is a smaller class, and because argumentation is very participatory, everyone's presence and engagement is essential for collective learning. I will take attendance every day (and even if I don't, it's going to be kind of obvious if you aren't there). Though you will not lose points for missing class, you cannot submit any in-class work (quizzes, freewrites, in-class assignments) for the day you were absent, unless the absence is excused. Absences will only be excused with a doctor's note or other form of documentation, and at the discretion of the instructor. There will be something due on most days of class, since we only have 17 classes together in total. Notify me within the first two weeks of the course if there are any days that you know in advance you will have to miss.

Freewrites: At four different points in the semester, you will complete a freewriting activity. For each freewrite, you can pick between two prompts. We'll spend approximately thirty minutes writing, and then fifteen minutes discussing what we've written. To receive full credit for each freewrite, produce several pages of writing and actively engage in the post-writing discussion. Your writing does not need to be perfect or formal; for this assignment, I'm interested in your thoughts, not your grammar.

Quizzes: Instead of a midterm exam, we will have four quizzes. Each quiz will take 20 to 30 minutes to complete and will cover material we have read and discussed in the previous class periods. We'll review topics to be covered on quizzes in advance. There are no make-up quizzes offered.

Digital Spaces Analysis: For this project you will pick a social media forum such as Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook and identify arguments taking place in these digital spaces. Observe how the design of the site impacts the nature of the debates, discussions, and arguments that take place. Then, identify logical fallacies and logical flaws in the arguments. Articulate how the argument might have gone differently if it had taken place in-person rather than online. No full paper is required but you will present your findings to the class in an approximately 5-minute presentation (and will be graded both on your content and on the quality of your presenting).

Monuments Project: During our week on visual argumentation, we will be taking a mini “field trip” to look at various memorials, monuments, and statues in and around USC. We’ll discuss how even inanimate objects can project arguments to the viewers. After that, your goal is to find a memorial, monument, or statue (or building, or sculpture, or any other architectural design that seems particularly powerful to you) somewhere in Los Angeles. You will take photos of the object, write up a brief report (likely, three pages) articulating the arguments and how they’re being conveyed, and then come to class ready to present the images of your object and discuss how argumentation is taking place.

Legal Case Study: In a four page (double-spaced, one-inch margins, Times New Roman) paper, you will analyze a significant Supreme Court dissent. Your goal is to identify the argumentative techniques we’ve been learning about in class, and to recognize how arguments function differently within the legal system. This paper will be worth 10% of your final grade. A case, a rubric, and a full description will be provided.

Final Project: Advocating for a Public Policy: You will identify a public policy that you would like to see enacted and then craft arguments designed to persuade your audience to vote in favor of the policy (your policy will be similar to the Propositions that show up on California ballots). Your total grade for the final project is based on 1) completing in-class preparatory work; 2) attending a one-on-one conference with me, with a draft of your presentation and slides; 3) presenting your policy to the class, with a full PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation; and 4) feedback provided on other students’ policy presentations. We’ll discuss general topics (such as environmental issues or immigration issues) in class and decide together what we’d like to focus on.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of multiple choice, matching, true/false, and short answer. Because we have periodic quizzes, the final exam is not cumulative and will only cover material from the last two weeks of the course. An exam review sheet will be distributed before the final.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

94% - 100% = A

90% - 93% = A-

87% - 89% = B+

84% - 86% = B

80% - 83% = B-

77% - 79% = C+

74% - 76% = C

70% - 73% = C-

67% - 69% = D+

64% - 66% = D

60% - 63% = D-

59% and below = F

Grievance Policy

At times, there are differing opinions about the quality and/or correctness of a student's work. For any major assignment where you feel that there is a significant difference between the score you received and the score you think you should have received, you may submit a letter to me detailing the specific points you disagree with and why you should earn more points than you received; also, you must state what the score should be increased to, i.e., the grade (percent score) you think is appropriate. If you have a grievance, you must submit it within **two weeks** of the assignment being graded and returned to you. After two weeks, grades are considered final. Disputing your score on one of the freewrites or quizzes is neither necessary nor recommended. Keep in mind, it is always possible that reviewing your work reveals hitherto undiscovered mistakes that could lower your score further.

Laptop Policy

There will be multiple five to 10 minutes lectures and discussions every class period, interrupted by individual research and writing, as well as in-class activities. Students are encouraged to use laptops for research, writing, and in-class activities, but are not permitted to use laptops during lectures and discussion. I will provide hard copies of the lecture slides, so if you need to take notes, you can do so by hand.

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. 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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (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/sssa

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

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

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

Course Schedule (*subject to change*)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading due	# of pages	In-class Assignments
1	Wed. May 15	Symbols and Stories	None	0	TBD
	Fri. May 17	Interpersonal Argumentation	H&B* Ch. 2, pp. 19-30 H&B Ch. 16, pp. 289-299 Herrick** Ch. 2, pp. 17-22	28	→ Freewrite #1
2	Mon. May 20	Premises, Inductive Logic	Herrick Ch. 14, pp. 197-211 Herrick Ch. 15, pp. 217-229	27	→ Quiz #1
	Wed. May 22	Logic: Inductive & Deductive	BB^ “Arguments by Example, etc.” BB “Deductive Argument” Herrick Ch. 8, pp. 117-128	30	TBD
	Fri. May 24	Definitions, Evidence	Herrick Ch. 12, pp. 175-184 Herrick Ch. 13, pp. 187-189 Herrick Ch. 5, pp. 75-84	23	→ Freewrite #2
3	Mon. May 27	<i>No Class: Memorial Day</i>			
	Wed. May 29	Digital Argumentation, Logical Fallacies, and the Persuasive Process	Herrick, Ch. 18, pp. 267-281 SKIM BB “Online Political Debates” Begin reading BB chapters on the persuasive process	51 + skim	→ Quiz #2 → Prep for Digital Presentation
	Fri. May 31	BB “The Persuasive Process” BB “Strategies for Persuasive Presentations”	DUE: Digital Presentation		
4	Mon. June 3	Arguing in Organizations	H&B Ch. 15, pp. 273-285 H&B Ch. 3, pp. 37-51	28	→ Quiz #3
	Wed. June 5	Audience Analysis	BB “Audience Analysis” (21 pages)	21	→ Freewrite #3
	Fri. June 7	Visual Argumentation	H&B Ch. 10, pp. 177-187 BB “Theory of Visual Argument” (highlighted sections)	11 + skim	→ Field Trip → Prep for Monuments Project

5	Mon. June 10	Visual Argumentation	BB "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial" (11 pages)	11	DUE: Monuments Project
	Wed. June 12	Legal Argumentation	H&B Ch. 14, p. 253 to the top of p. 262 Herrick Ch. 9, pp. 131-135 Herrick Ch. 16, pp. 237-246	24	→ Quiz #4
	Fri. June 14	Legal Argumentation	Herrick Ch. 17, pp. 251-263 Herrick Ch. 4, pp. 63-71	22	→ Prep for Legal Case Study
6	Mon. June 17	Political Argumentation	H&B Ch. 13, pp. 233-248	16	DUE: Legal Case Study → Freewrite #4 → Prep for Final Presentations
	Wed. June 19	Political Argumentation	<i>Research for your policy presentation</i>	0	→ One-on-one conferences DUE: Slides and outline draft
	Fri. June 21	Policy Design	<i>Prepare for final exam</i>	0	DUE: Final Presentations → Prep for Final Exam
7	Mon. June 24	<i>Final Exam: 1:00 - 3:50 pm</i>			

*H&B = *Arguments and Arguing*

**Herrick = *Argumentation: Understanding and Shaping Arguments*

^BB = On Blackboard, under "Content"