



**COMM 322: Argumentation & Advocacy**  
4 units

**Spring 2020 – Section 20516R**  
**Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30pm-1:50pm**  
**Location: ANN 305**

**Instructor: Professor Kiran Dhillon**  
**Office Hours:** 8:00am-9:00am; 2:30pm-4:30pm;  
Also by Appointment  
**Office:** ANN 414E  
**Contact Info:** kkdhill@usc.edu

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to a core set of basic argumentation theory including analysis and practices related to the art of argumentation and debate. Research and evidence, case construction, refutation; discursive and visual argument; diverse fields of advocacy including law, politics, organizations, interpersonal relations.

**Learning Objectives:**

Successfully completing the course assignments will help students learn the fundamental skills of argumentation and debate. These skills include:

*Critical Thinking Skills:* The ability to make reasoned decisions about communication choices, knowing what to do, as well as how and when to do it. In addition, students will learn how to effectively evaluate and critically analyze arguments, including your own.

*Political Awareness:* Understanding the role, opportunities, norms, and limitations of arguments in public discourse. In particular, students will learn how to define “argument” and “argumentation” and understand their components, relationship, use, objectives, and limitations.

*Research Skills:* The ability to research topics using credible sources such as books, peer reviewed journal articles, newspaper articles, and interviews.

*Performance Skills:* Delivery, note taking, and effectively preparing, presenting, and defending arguments.

*Listening Skills:* Critically engaging classroom speakers and practicing critical evaluation.

**Class Readings:**

Required Readings

Thomas A. Hollihan and Kevin T. Baaske, *Arguments & Arguing* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) (2016). Available at the USC Bookstore. Use prior editions at your own risk; they are not the same material. All class assignments, including exams, presume students are using the assigned textbook.

Announcements, Content, Discussion Postings, Links, Etc. on Blackboard.

Recommended Reading

Public Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition

**Class Assignments:**

1. Participation – 60 points
2. Issue Analysis Paper – 150 points
3. One v One Issue Debate – 100 points
4. Practice Group Debate – 90 points
5. Exam 1 – 100 points
6. Final Group Debate – 100 points
7. Judge's Ballot – 100 points
8. Exam 2 – 100 points

**Assignment Submission Policy:**

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

**Breakdown of Grade:**

**Total Possible: 800 points**

**Grading Scale –**

**800-744 = A**

**743-720 = A-**

**719-696 = B+**

**695-662 = B**

**663-640 = B-**

**639-615 = C+**

**614-582 = C**

**583-560 = C-**

**Course Grading Policy:**

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. **All assignments need to be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do no wait until the end of the semester to sort things out.**

In order to pass this class you will need to complete ALL of the assignments. Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| A/A-        | outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work                                |
| B+/B        | above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment               |
| B-/C+       | needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through                      |
| C and below | fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material |

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

### **Other Classroom Policies:**

#### **Additional Information on Attendance & Participation**

The unique nature of this course necessitates stringent attendance and participation requirements. A common mistake is for students to think that on the days when they are not participating in a debate themselves, there is nothing for them to do in class. Quite the contrary. A major part of what you will learn in this class is how to be an engaged audience member – how to listen to and understand the language strategies involved in good argumentation and debate. The dynamic of argumentation and debate in a functional society is that speakers and audiences need each other not just to be present, but to be engaged. The lectures, textbook, class activities, exams and other coursework provide essential insight into how to be an engaged speaker and audience member. As such, attendance at all class activities is mandatory, and will be factored into your overall grade.

#### **Expectations for Student Attentiveness**

**On the Days You Are Scheduled to Debate:** Due to the difficulty of verifying excuses, and the possibility that some students may be less than honest, virtually no excuse will be accepted for being absent on your debate day. If you do not show up on the day you are assigned to debate and/or are not prepared to debate, you will get a zero for that assignment. You know when class meets, and you will be told in advance when you are scheduled to debate. Being both physically and mentally present for your debates is your obligation. All scheduled debaters for a day must be present at the start of class. Arriving late on the day you are debating will incur a 10% grade penalty for that debate. If you have a truly compelling and verifiable reason for needing to delay your debate, and you contact your Instructor in advance, it may be possible to reschedule your debate, but this is not guaranteed.

**On the Days You Are Not Scheduled to Debate:** Attendance will be taken at every class session, and students with more than two unexcused absences will be penalized 20 points per absence. These points are deducted from your overall grade, and there is no limit to the deductions. If absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to get missed information from a classmate, and any materials distributed by your Instructor.

**Attendance:** The textbook is not designed to stand alone; the lectures will introduce and expand upon theoretical and practical concepts essential to understanding argumentation and debate, and lecture material will be included in the exam questions. Attendance will be taken every class. Your Instructor will have a sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class and it is your responsibility to sign your name. Students with more than two unexcused absences from class will have 20 points per absence deducted from their overall grade. To be eligible to have an absence excused, you must provide:

- A. Written evidence of the absolute need for you to be absent (emails are not acceptable);
- B. This evidence must be from an appropriate, verifiable source;

- C. Evidence must be presented to your Instructor **no later than one week after the missed class**. Except in the cases of extreme emergency, however, students who need to be absent should contact their Instructor at least one week prior to the date they will be absent.

Students with no unexcused absences from class will be rewarded with a 20-point bonus to their overall grade.

### **Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)**

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W” on the transcript. [Please drop any class by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

***Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change based on the progress of the class, current events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Deliverable/Due Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Dates: 1/13-1/17</b>	Welcome and Introduction to the Course  One-on-One Impromptu Debates  What Is Argument	Chapters 1, 2, & 3  Key Concepts: Arguments (p. 4-7), Arguing (p. 4-7), individual decision making (p. 7-8), democratic decision making (p. 8-10), values (p. 10-13), ethics (p. 13-15), narrative (p.19), and the narrative paradigm (p.26-30),	
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Dates: 1/20-1/24</b>	Propositions & Stock Issues	Chapters 5 & 11  Key Concepts: proposition (p. 76-77), types of propositions (p.77-80), techniques for analyzing propositions (p.80-84), and stock issues (p.84-88), affirmative (p.194), negative (p.194), burden of proof (p. 195), prima facie	<b>[Martin Luther King Day: Monday, January 20]</b>

		case (p.195), presumption (p.195), cross-examination (p.198), topicality (p.199), ill (p.199), blame (p.199), cure (p.199), solvency (p.203), disadvantage (p.204), uniqueness (p.204), link and (p.204), impact (p.204), and flowing (p.207).	
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Dates: 1/27-1/31</b>	The Grounds for Argument, Building Arguments, and Types of Arguments  Research	Chapters 6, 7 & 8  Key Concepts: inductive arguments (p.97-105), deductive syllogism (p.105-109), the Toulmin Model (p.109), claims (p.110), warrants (p.111), grounds (p.111), and rebuttal (p.112), grounds (p.116), proofs (p.116), premises (p.116-123), examples (p.123), statistics (p.124), and all tests (p.124-134).	<b>Issue Analysis Paper Due on 1/30</b>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Dates: 2/3-2/7</b>	Audiences & Fields of Arguments  The Language of Argument	Chapters 3 & 4  Key Concepts: audience (p.38), universal audience (p.45), objective fact (p.46), objective truth (p.46), presence (p.46), fields (p.48), field-invariant (p.50), field-dependent (p.50), language (p.57), epistemic function (p.57), denotative meaning (p.58), connotative meaning (p.59), abstraction (p.59), characters (p.60), role (p.61), character type (p.61), scene (p.64), events (p.65), metaphor (p.68), ornamental metaphor (p.68), argumentative metaphor (p.68), generative capability (p.70),	

<b>Week 5</b> <b>Dates: 2/10-2/14</b>	One v One Debates Workshop  One v One Debates		<b>One v One Debates All Speech Outlines are Due on 2/6</b>
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Dates: 2/17-2/21</b>	One v One Debates		<b>[Presidents' Day: Monday, February 17]</b>  One v One Debates
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Dates: 2/24-2/28</b>	Argumentation in Interpersonal Relationships	Chapter 16  Key Concepts: argument style (p.291), adjacency pairs (p.293), self-esteem (p.297), and empathic listening (p.298).	
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Dates: 3/2-3/6</b>	Exam 1 Review  Exam 1		<b>Exam 1 on 3/5</b>
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Dates: 3/9-3/13</b>	Argumentation in Business and Organizations	Chapter 15  Key Concepts: organizational culture (p.273), power (p.278), coalitions (p.279) and compromise (p.285).	
<b>Dates: 3/15-3/22</b>	<b>No Classes</b>		<b>[Spring Break]</b>
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Dates: 3/23-3/27</b>	Practice Group Debates Workshop  Practice Group Debates		<b>Practice Group Debates All Evidence Packets are Due on 3/26</b>
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Dates: 3/30-4/3</b>	Practice Group Debates		Practice Group Debates
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Dates: 4/6-4/10</b>	Visual Arguments	Chapter 10  Key Concepts: dominant reading (p.184), oppositional reading (p.185), and negotiated reading (p.185).	

<b>Week 13</b> <b>Dates: 4/13-4/17</b>	Argumentation in Politics: Campaigns and Debates  Argumentation and the Law	Chapters 13 & 14  Key Concepts: political myths (p.235), image (p.239), character (p.240), and historical narratives (p.242), political myths (p.242), political myths (p.235), image (p.239), character (p.240), and historical narratives (p.242).	
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Dates: 4/20-4/24</b>	Final Group Debates		Final Group Debates  <b>Final Group Debates All Evidence Packets are Due on 4/21</b>
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Dates: 4/27-5/1</b>	Final Group Debates  Final Exam Review		Final Group Debates
<b>STUDY DAYS</b> <b>Dates: 5/2-5/5</b>			<b>No final examinations may be scheduled on Study Days.</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <b>Date: 5/13</b>			<b>Judge's Ballot Paper due on 5/13</b>  2:00pm-4:00pm

### 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, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.