

COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy
Spring, 2020
(Class #20518) 12:00-1:50 MW, ASC 328

Professor: [Dr. Randy Lake](#)
Office: ASC 206C
Hours: 2:00-3:00 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

Student progress relative to these objectives will be assessed via the methods and tools described under “Assignments.”

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*. (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.

Format:

It is *imperative* that you complete the material assigned before class every day and engage it sufficiently to formulate some thoughts and questions. Why? This class emphasizes collaborative learning, in which we jointly ask questions of the material and each other and explore possible answers; in short, the class is heavily discussion-oriented. Even lecture—the purpose of which is to amplify, clarify, and supplement the course materials, not to duplicate or regurgitate them—will involve my asking questions of you. In addition, lecture may not cover all important aspects of the readings (and may cover materials not in them); nonetheless, you are responsible for *all* materials,

both in the readings and in lecture, on the exams. Class is your opportunity to ask about something in the reading that is not being covered explicitly that day. If you don't complete the readings in advance, this opportunity will be squandered and you will be less prepared for the exams. So don't plan to sit on your hands and expect to be told everything you need to know. Instead, come ready to engage the material—to offer comments, ask and answer questions—in conversation with your classmates and your instructor. In order to facilitate discussion, please bring the assigned materials to every class session.

Assignments and Grading: Detailed instructions for all assignments are available on Blackboard.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Interpersonal Conflict Analysis	100 points (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Courtroom Observation Analysis	150 points (15%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reasoning Exercise	150 points (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Debate	150 points (15%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debate Research	100 points (15%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midterm Exam	100 points (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Exam	150 points (15%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Participation and Homework*	100 points (10%)

[*includes interpersonal argumentation scales, case study analyses, debate briefs, etc.]

TOTAL 1000 points (100%)

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.*

Points will be given for each assignment, in the assumption that 90-100% of the points possible are comparable to an A; 80-89% are comparable to a B; 70-79% are comparable to a C; 60-69% are comparable to a D; and less than 60% are comparable to an F. In addition, points in the upper third of each range are comparable to a plus (+), while points in the lower third are comparable to a minus, indicating relatively stronger or weaker work. Final course grades will be calculated by summing total points earned and converting to a letter grade; conversion may employ the same 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.

Points are assigned by applying the following criteria to the work being judged. My assumption is that each grade subsumes the requirements for the grade(s) below it, e.g, that B work meets and exceeds the requirements for C work, as follows:

“A” signifies superior work that demonstrates original insight into the theories and materials presented in class, the application of these theories and materials, and comparisons among these theories and materials; an unusually clear and comprehensive understanding of course materials; and an articulate, polished, and correct communication style. This grade is difficult to achieve; it requires superior study habits and writing skills, and superior performance on all assignments and in attendance and participation.

“B” signifies excellent work that demonstrates a better-than-average comprehension of the course material, as evidenced by greater detail and thoroughness in exposition, and by organized and solid, if flawed, writing or speaking. Even average students often can achieve this grade through hard work, such as utilizing a study group effectively, making a point in class of seeking clarification of difficult ideas or ideas they don't understand, conferring with the instructor during office hours, writing and revising multiple drafts of papers, and so on.

“C” signifies adequate work and is considered to be average. It is given for work that demonstrates a basic familiarity and understanding of the course materials, as evidenced by an

ability to summarize main points correctly, to identify key figures and main ideas from memory on examinations, and to convey understanding in basic, readable prose. This grade should be achievable by any student with decent study habits and good time management skills.

“D” signifies deficient work that demonstrates an inadequate grasp of the course materials, as evidenced by unfamiliarity with, confusion about, or misunderstanding of key ideas, persons, and events on examinations, and hastily and poorly written assignments. This grade is often a sign of inadequate study or application, and also may be a sign of a problem in attendance or participation that contributes to inadequate study.

“F” signifies failing work that demonstrates an unacceptably poor familiarity with or grasp of the course materials, as evidenced by an inability to identify even basic ideas, person, and events on examinations and seriously deficient writing. This grade may indicate an unacceptable lack of participation in the class, such as excessive absences would produce. This grade may be assigned to any work that fails to meet the stated requirements of the assignment, no matter how well done this work otherwise might be. This grade will be assigned to any work that violates the academic integrity standards and policies of the School or University. A grade of “F” in any part of the course should be taken as a sign of a problem in need of remedy.

I strongly advise that assignments be turned in on time; these things snowball, and you end up further behind. Late work may be penalized as much as one full letter grade for each day (including weekends) late. The in-class debate (once scheduled) and exams cannot be rescheduled or made up.

Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with the evaluation of their work or some other dimension of the course. Please bring any grade *discrepancies* (e.g., you were not given credit for a correct answer on an examination question) to your instructor’s attention immediately. In the event of a grade *disagreement* (e.g., you believe that your answer should be counted as correct, or that you deserve a higher grade on an assignment), please: (a) wait 24 hours; and (b) submit your complaint/rationale in writing. I will review your petition, evaluate its merits, and render a decision. I will not consider petitions unless and until this process has been completed. All appeals of grades on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of that assignment. Only those who submit an acceptable written justification and adhere to this process will receive credit where credit is due. Of course, you are welcome to approach me with any general concerns at any time convenient to us both.

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 in every class. More than two absences *for any reason* (including medical emergencies or other so-called “excused” absences) may affect your course grade adversely, as much as 50 points per absence (equivalent to one-half of a letter grade), which could even 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 you may be

considered absent that day.

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* 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 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.

Tentative Daily Schedule:

Undoubtedly, some adjustments to this ideal schedule will be required as the semester progresses, so approach it with flexibility in mind. Adjustments will be discussed thoroughly in class in advance, and announced on Blackboard.

M Jan 13: Introductions: Course, Instructor, and Students

W Jan 15: Introduction to Argumentation. READ: **Chapter 2; Andersen, “How America Lost Its Mind”**

M Jan 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day–NO CLASS

W Jan 22: Audiences and Fields of Argument. READ: **Chapter 3; Goodnight, “The Personal, Public and Technical Spheres of Argument”**

M Jan 27: Interpersonal Conflict and Argumentation. READ: **Donohue and Kolt, “Understanding the Conflict Episode”**

W Jan 29: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **Lawyer & Katz, “High Risk Responses”**

M Feb 3: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **Chapter 16**

W Feb 5: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued. READ: **“Two-Dimensional Conflict Model”**

M Feb 10: Interpersonal Argumentation, continued
W Feb 12: Argumentation in the Law. READ: **Chapter 14**

M Feb 17: Presidents' Day–NO CLASS
W Feb 19: Argumentation and Critical Thinking: Legal Argument. READ: **Chapter 5 (pp. 77-78, 82-84)** DUE: Interpersonal Conflict Analysis

M Feb 24: Courtroom Observation/Debate Research work day–NO CLASS
W Feb 26: Argumentation and Critical Thinking: Legal Argument, continued

M Mar 2: Argumentation and Critical Thinking: Public Argument. READ: **Chapter 5 (remainder)**
W Mar 4: Midterm Exam

M Mar 9: Building Arguments. READ: **Chapter 8**
W Mar 11: Policy Argument. READ: **Chapter 11**

M Mar 16: Spring Break–NO CLASS
W Mar 18: Spring Break–NO CLASS

M Mar 23: Types of Arguments. READ: **Chapter 6.** DUE: Courtroom Observation Analysis
W Mar 25: Types of Arguments, continued

M Mar 30: Types of Arguments, continued
W Apr 1: Types of Arguments, continued

M Apr 6: The Grounds of Argument. READ: **Chapter 7**
W Apr 8: Preparation for debates. DUE: Affirmative Case Areas

M Apr 13: Refuting Arguments. READ: **Chapter 9**
W Apr 15: Preparation for debates. DUE: Negative Arguments

M Apr 20: Policy Debates
W Apr 22: Policy Debates

M Apr 27: Policy Debates
W Apr 29: Review for final exam

F May 8: Final exam (11:00-1:00)

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. 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>.

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the SCampus guide. 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.

If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please check with me. 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.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health – (213) 740-9355 24/7 on call
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
www.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 press “0” after hours 24/7 on call

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, 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

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

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
campussupport.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

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, 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) 442-1200 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program

undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.