

**COMM 322: Argumentation and Advocacy****4 units****Summer 2020** – MTW 9:30am-12:20pm**Section:** 20510R**Location:** Zoom**Instructor:** Nathaniel Ming Curran**Office:** Zoom**Office Hours:** Monday, 12:30-1:30pm and by appointment**Contact Info:** ncurran@usc.edu**I. Course Description**

Arguments and arguing are the products and process of human decision making. Argumentation is an essential dimension of communication. Argumentation plays a critical role in the way we understand complex issues and how we respond to those issues. This course introduces argumentation as a crucial aspect of contemporary life, and covers theories and principles of argumentation. This course focuses on two different meanings of the term argument: 1) claims that people make; and 2) types of interactions in which people engage. We will consider argumentation in the abstract, as well as argumentation in specialized fields and on specific topics (i.e. North Korea).

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to critically examine contemporary issues of concern and to evaluate the quality of the myriad arguments to which we are exposed each day. We will focus on understanding what argument is, how to make good arguments, and also how to refute the arguments of others. This course is intended to be extremely participatory, hands-on, and practical. At the same time, this class will also introduce students to important theories of argumentation. Students will leave the class better able to analyze complex and controversial social issues, and to formulate strong arguments.

III. Course Notes

The situation with COVID-19 is fluid and unfolding. In an ideal world, this course would not be taking place online. However, we will make the best of the situation. Because of the dynamic nature of the situation, the syllabus is subject to change. We will use the fact that we are online to consider the implications of computer mediated argument, and the differences between arguments online and offline.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments**a. Participation**

This course demands a high level of engagement and attention, and this remains the case even in an online setting. Thus, active participation is required, and failure to actively participate will result in receiving a low participation grade. Further, active participation refers not just to talking

in class, but also to thoughtfully listening to others and responding in a respectful way. Because this is an argumentation class, it is especially important that students voice their opinions with care and respect. Rude or demeaning behavior, towards either other students or the instructor, will not be tolerated.

Class attendance is a substantial part of students' participation grade in this class. While missing one class (but not a day with debates) may be excused without any penalty, any other unexcused absences will result in a penalty to the student's attendance grade. Attendance and participation in the debates is mandatory.

b. Blackboard reading responses

By Sunday evening at 11:00pm, students must upload 500-700 word reading responses about the upcoming week's readings. These reading responses should:

- 1) Summarize the main points of the coming week's readings;
- 2) Pose questions about the readings, especially where the student may be confused or disagree with the author;
- 3) Provide a hyperlink to a particularly good or poor argument the student has encountered in the popular press during the preceding week and explain why the student feels it is a strong or bad argument (drawing on the theories we learn in class).

These responses are expected to be written clearly. Only I will see the responses. The first week there will not be a required reading response. Students' critiques of popular press arguments are expected to reflect increasing rigor each week as the class covers additional theories of argumentation. Responses will be evaluated with letter grades, and will be returned to the student within one week.

c. Debates

Two class sessions this semester will be dedicated to holding class debates. These debates will be an opportunity for students to use the theories and techniques we have studied. I will bring in outside judges to help score these debates. The topic of the debates will be: *Resolved: The United States should reduce sanctions on North Korea in order to improve relations and increase the security of Northeast Asia.*

d. Final Paper

On the final day of class, students are expected to turn in a 10-page final paper. This final paper must address a current, unresolved controversy, and it must make a strong argument, using the theories and techniques covered in class. Outside sources are vital for successfully completing this paper. Students are required to meet with me individually by July 15th to discuss their final paper. By July 31st, students must have turned in a 1,500-word rough draft of their paper. However, only the final paper will be graded. The final paper is expected to be well-written, and free from awkward phrasing and grammatical errors. It should flow well and make a convincing argument. Only papers that are rigorously researched, meticulously written, and creatively argued will be awarded an "A" grade. On the final day of class, students will give a 5-minute presentation about their final paper.

V. Grading**a. Breakdown of Grade**

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	15	15%
Blackboard reading responses	25	25%
Debates	20	20%
Final Paper	40	40%
TOTAL	100	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Obtaining an “A” grade in this class will require thoughtful and constructive participation in all class activities, as well as the submission of outstanding-quality work. This work must creatively engage with the course material, and students must demonstrate their intellectual growth in the field of argumentation.

Obtaining a “B” grade in this class will require consistent and sustained participation in class, as well as the submission of superior-quality work. This superior-quality work must accurately engage with the course material.

d. Grading Timeline

Because this is a fast-paced summer course, I will make every effort to grade and return your work to you within one week of submission.

VI. Assignment Rubrics

If students have any questions regarding how assignments will be graded, they should reach out to me as early as possible.

VII. Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement from the instructor, late assignments will automatically be dropped one letter grade for each day they are late.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via blackboard. In addition, the final paper must also be emailed to me at ncurran@usc.edu by August 11th, 2020, 11:00pm.

VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Hollihan, T.A. & Baaske, K.T. (2015). *Arguments and arguing: The products and process of human decision making, 3d ed.* Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

All other required readings will be uploaded to Blackboard. In addition, students are expected to read *The New York Times* and/or other news publications daily.

IX. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s **Information Technology Services** website.

X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 051

- Thursday, July 9th:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 051
- Thursday, July 9th** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” and receive a refund for Session 051
- Tuesday, July 21st:** Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 051
- Tuesday, August 4th:** Last day to drop with a mark of "W" for Session 051

XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

9:30-12:20, MWF, July 1st – August 10th, 2020

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability. Additional readings may be added.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Wednesday 07/01	Syllabus; Introductions; Course goals	Prepare a 3-minute self-introduction	
Friday 07/03	NO CLASS University Holiday	H & B, Chapter 1	
Monday 07/06	<i>Homo Narrans</i> ; Storytelling	H & B, Chapter 2	Reading response 1 due by 07/05 at 11:00pm

Wednesday 07/08	Narrative Probability and Narrative Fidelity	Fisher on <i>Homo Narrans</i> (BB)	
Friday 07/10	Audiences and Fields; The Language of Argument	H & B, Chapter 3 & 4	
Monday 07/13	Stock Issues; Systems Analysis; Final Paper Discussion; APA	H & B, Chapter 5;	Reading response 2 due by 07/12 at 11:00pm; Deadline for completing individual meetings about final paper
Wednesday 07/15	Nuclear North Korea; Guest Speaker 1	North Korea readings (BB)	
Friday 07/17	Framing	Entman on Frames (BB); Iyengar on Poverty (BB)	
Monday 07/20	Schema; Heuristics	NYT article on Kahneman	Reading response 3 due on 07/19 by 11:00pm
Wednesday 07/22	Toulmin Model; Premises; Statistics	H & B Chapter 6 & Chapter 7	
Friday 07/24	Final paper discussion; Academic Writing; Citation	H & B Chapter 8	
Monday 07/27	Academic Debate; Guest Speaker 2	H & B Chapter 11	Reading response 4 due on 07/26 by 11:00pm
Wednesday 07/29	Academic Debate; Guest Speaker 3	H & B Chapter 12	
Friday 07/31	Debate Competition (Judged)	Prepare for Debate	1,500-word rough draft (due by 11:00pm, 07/31)
Monday 08/03	Debate Competition (Judged)	Prepare for Debate	Reading response 5 due by 08/02 by 11:00pm; DEBATE 2
Wednesday 08/05	Visual Communication; Guest Speaker 4	H & B Chapter 10	H & B Chapter 10
Friday 08/07	Course evaluations; Final Paper discussions	Rodriguez & Dmitrova on visual framing (BB)	Rodriguez & Dmitrova on visual framing (BB)

Monday 08/10	Class Presentation	Prepare for 5-minute class presentation	Final Papers are due by Tuesday, August 11, by 11:00pm
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XII. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Students are expected to be seated in front of their computers during class time and to keep their cameras on for the duration of class. If this is not possible, students should contact me to discuss the situation. Sharing the recordings of the classes with anyone is absolutely prohibited.

Communication

I highly encourage students to regularly meet with me via Zoom and to proactively discuss their performance in the class as it progresses. My email is ncurran@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. 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
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

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

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

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-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.