

COMM 1270-002: Analysis of Argument
Department of Communication
University of Utah * Spring 2024

Instructor

Averie Vockel (she/her/hers)

Office: LNCO 2890

Office Hours: By appointment via zoom, or Tuesday & Thursday 2 pm - 2:30 pm

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Class Meetings

Tuesday & Thursday 12:25-1:45 BUC 212

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the formal study of argumentation and the role it plays in society. It is designed to help students become more aware of the arguments to which they are exposed in their everyday lives, to develop greater skill in understanding and critically assessing those arguments, and to build competence in producing their own arguments. The course focuses on various forms of argumentation, including those arguments made through various digital platforms.

General Education Requirement

This course carries the Humanities Exploration (HF) designation.

This course carries the Quantitative Statistics/Logic (QB) designation.

This course addresses the General Education Learning Outcome: Respond Creatively.

Course Objectives

- Understand basic principles of effective argumentation and critical thinking.
- Apply these principles to produce ethical and reasonable arguments.
- Critically evaluate public arguments as they occur in various societal contexts.
- Explain the key arguments on both sides of an important public issue.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students should demonstrate their abilities to think critically using written academic argument, analysis, critique, and evaluation.
- Students should be able to analyze and interpret texts and case studies by applying the concepts, questions, and theoretical paradigms discussed in class and in the assigned readings.
- Students should be able to formulate illuminating and persuasive claims in their writing, projects, and exam responses. These ideas should reflect a solid internalization of the course material.
- Students should be able to use textual evidence (via quotation, analysis, and documentation of pertinent passages) to ground their arguments and support their claims.
- Students should be able to express their ideas in clear, logical, organized, ethical, and persuasive ways.

Required Materials

- Richard D. Rieke, Malcolm O. Sillars, and Tarla Rai Peterson. *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making*. 8th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, 2013. Print. (ACDM)
- Other supplemental readings as assigned.

Course Policies

Learning Environment: We will maintain our classroom as a productive place to learn. We are all responsible for fostering an environment open to observing, discussing, and reflecting upon our own and others' communicative behaviors in order to learn. Thus, each one of us will need to be aware of our role in creating a place where every class member, given all our differences, will feel free to participate as part of the class. Specific concerns include evaluation of peers, selection and delivery of topics and materials for presentation, and accountability for one's participation in our class. Further, egregious disrespect including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, classism, etc., will not be tolerated. Students choosing to engage in such behavior, depending on the severity of their violation, will be subject to repercussions ranging from dismissal from the class period to removal from class. If at any time or for any reason you feel uncomfortable with the classroom environment or confused about these expectations, please contact the instructor immediately in order to resolve/improve the situation.

Attendance: The University of Utah expects regular attendance at all class meetings. According to the University's Attendance Policy, you are responsible for satisfying the entire range of academic objectives, requirements, and prerequisites as determined by the instructor. Given the nature of this speech communication course, you are required to attend class every day. You must also actively participate in discussion and activities. However, *you are permitted to miss two class sessions* at any point in the semester. For each additional absence, 15 points will be deducted from your participation grade. If you are absent from the class to participate in official sanctioned University activities (e.g. band, debate, student government, intercollegiate athletics), religious obligations, or with instructor's approval, you will be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations. If you miss the first 2 class meetings, you may be required to withdraw from the course. See the Student Attendance Policy at: <http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/>.

Assignment Due Dates: Assignments must be submitted and examinations must be completed as scheduled. Students who do not observe this policy will not be permitted to make up their exams or assignments. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in the case of University-sanctioned absences as described in the attendance section above.

Grievance Policy: If you have any concerns about the course please meet with your instructor to discuss these concerns as soon as possible. If you are unable to resolve your grievance with the instructor, you may contact the course supervisor, Dr. Michael Middleton, in LNCO 2525, or at m.middleton@utah.edu. If you are still not satisfied with the response you receive, you may contact Travis Ciaramella, Director of Undergraduate Studies (travis.ciaramella@utah.edu).

Personal Electronics: If the use of your cell phone disrupts others, including the teacher, you will be asked to leave class and marked as absent. To prevent this from happening, please turn off or silence your electronics before class. If you need to answer an important call, put the phone on vibrate and leave the

room to answer. You will need a device that allows you to access Canvas materials in class. However, no device should distract you, your peers, or the instructor.

Required Readings: The reading component of this class is comprised of the textbook (available in the bookstore) AND/OR E-Reserve readings posted on the course Canvas page. Each reading is required. Students are expected to read their own copies ***before the date they are assigned***. Further, students are required to bring the Textbook/E-reserve readings to class for discussion purposes on scheduled days. It is recommended that students print their readings. Likewise, students will be expected to analyze, to discuss, and to apply these readings. Students whose schedules, other classes, or non-academic commitments conflict with or prevent completing these assignments should consider strongly the appropriateness of this course. PLEASE NOTE: Additional readings may be added throughout the semester. Watch your class e-mail for any announcements.

Course Assignments

Exams: _____/150

Students in this course will complete two exams: a midterm and a final. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, matching, and true/false. Each exam is designed to assess both your comprehension of course content and your ability to apply concepts and processes. The final exam will be comprehensive.

Midterm 1: ____/50

Final: ____/100

Argument Artifact Discussions: _____/100

Beginning the second week of class, students will be expected to regularly participate in online canvas discussions of argument artifacts they encounter in their everyday life or locate in their own reading that illustrate, challenge, complement, or provoke discussion about concepts being addressed in the course. An argument artifact can be a news story, a speech, a song, a comic, street art, a poem, etc. Discussion participation will require BOTH posting an example and responding to peers. There will be 12 opportunities to participate in these discussions. Students must complete at least 10 to receive full credit for this assignment.

Topic Proposal _____/25

For this assignment, you will choose two topics of controversy of local, statewide, national, or international significance. You will provide a 1-2 paragraph write-up detailing each topic and why it is appropriate to be addressed with argumentation. Additionally, you will provide 3-4 potential propositions for each topic. More details will be available in Canvas.

Annotated Bibliography _____/50

After you have submitted a topic proposal, you will select one of your topics and ONE of your propositions for that topic and identify 10 **peer reviewed** sources that are relevant to your topic and create an annotated bibliography that includes these sources. More details will be available in Canvas.

Case Construction _____/50

You will develop a claim in support of, or opposed to, the proposition you developed and support that claim with your own research. The assignment will be guided by discussions of case-writing and issue

selection had in lecture and should reflect effective grounds, backing, and warrants for your argument. More details will be available in Canvas and discussed in class.

Refutation Block _____/25

Once you have completed your case, you must create a refutation block that identifies and develops counterarguments that respond to each of your major claims in that case. Your refutation block should develop point-by-point responses to each of the arguments you made in your original argument. Your refutation should be written as an argument block, meaning it should be outlined into main points. For each counter-argument, be sure to: 1) identify the *claim* it is making, 2) provide *evidence* that supports the claim, and 3) elaborate a *warrant* that connects your evidence to your claim.

Final Argument Presentation _____/100

At the conclusion of the semester you will prepare a 10 minute presentation of your argument/case. The presentation should at minimum cover the following:

- Background/Inherency
- Literature review
- Proposition selection
- How the proposition solves
- Counter arguments
- Any additional concepts from class appropriate for your topic. We will discuss this in class.

This assignment is a verbal presentation of the argument you have been constructing throughout the semester. 10% of your grade on this assignment will be based on participating in an in-class peer writing workshop on March 25th. If you do not participate in this peer writing feedback exercise, you cannot receive full credit on this assignment.

Participation Points: _____/100

Your grade in the course will also be affected by your consistent participation in course discussions and activities. If you have questions about how these points are assigned, please meet with your instructor. Be sure to review the attendance policy above for greater detail on absences.

TOTAL POINTS: _____/600

Point Distribution and Grading Scale

Assignment	Points
<i>Exams</i>	
Mid-Term	50 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.
<i>Written Assignments</i>	
Argument Artifact	100 pts.
Discussions	
Topic Proposal	25 pts.
Annotated Bibliography	50 pts.
Refutation Block	25 pts.
Case Construction	25 pts.
<i>Participation</i>	
Participation	100 pts.
Total	600 pts

Grading Scale	
A = 100-94%	C = 76-74%
A- = 93-90%	C- = 73-70%
B+ = 89-87%	D+ = 69-67%
B = 86-84%	D = 66-64%
B- = 83-80%	D- = 63-60%
C+ = 79-77%	E = 59% ↓

Course Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
January 7	Course Introduction	Course syllabus
January 9	Defining Argumentation	ACDM, Ch. 1 Rogers' Writing Guide
January 14	Defining Argumentation, ctd.	ACDM, Ch. 1
January 16	Appraising Argumentation In-Class Activity: Lost on the Moon	ACDM, Ch 2
January 21	Making Sense of Argumentation	ACDM, Ch 3 Due: Topic Proposal
January 23	Making Sense of Argumentation In-Class Activity: Locating Unruly Argument	Deluca, "Unruly Arguments"
January 28	The Nature of Arguments In-Class Activity: Diagramming Arguments	ACDM, Ch. 4
January 30	Elements of Argument: Evidence	ACDM, Ch. 7
February 4	<i>ONLINE DAY – APA Review</i>	
February 6	<i>ONLINE DAY – Elements of Arguments: Credibility</i>	ACDM, Ch. 9
February 11	Analysis in Argumentation	ACDM, Ch 5
February 13	<i>ONLINE DAY – Midterm Review</i>	Due: Annotated Bibliography
February 18	Midterm	
February 20	Case-Building	ACDM, Ch 6
February 25	Analyzing Arguments & Case-Building	Due: Case Construction
February 27	Argumentative Writing	UMGC Ch 8
March 4	Refutation	ACDM Ch 10
March 6	<i>ONLINE DAY – Fallacy</i>	ACDM, Ch 11

March 11	SPRING BREAK	
March 13	SPRING BREAK	
March 18	In-Class Activity: SPAR	
March 20	Library Resources Day	Due: Refutation Block
March 25	Peer Writing Workshop	
March 27	Argumentation and the Law	ACDM, Ch 12
April 1	Argumentation in Government and Politics	ACDM, Ch. 16
April 3	Argumentation & Science	ACDM, Ch. 13
April 8	Argumentation in Business	ACDM Ch 15
April 10	Final Presentations	
April 15	Final Presentations	
April 17	<i>ONLINE DAY – Exam Review</i>	
Finals Week	<i>NO CLASS – Final Exam</i>	

****Subject to change**

University Policies

The Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Access.

Campus Safety. The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS). As an employee of the University of Utah, I am a mandatory reporter for all cases of sexual violence (this includes reports of cases that happened out-of-state, occurred many years ago, or have already been prosecuted).

Student Wellness. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Incompletes. Per University Policy 6-100 (III), section G, Incompletes are only offered under extraordinary circumstances and if the student has completed 80% of the coursework.

Course Withdrawals. See this semester's Class Schedule for deadlines and procedures.

Academic Dishonesty. Academic Dishonesty can take multiple forms. Plagiarism consists of using the work of someone else and passing it off as your own. Even if you plagiarize by accident you will still be held accountable. Other forms of academic dishonesty include signing in for someone else on the attendance sheet, having someone else complete your assignments, or cheating on an exam. If you are having trouble with this course, contact me! Academic dishonesty is not the answer and the penalty can involve failure of the course.

Curriculum Accommodations.

- I am able to make *schedule accommodations* for those who have a conflict that involves religious/spiritual observances, or University sanctioned activities (see University Policy 6-100 (III), section O). If you anticipate any scheduling conflicts with this course, please email me as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to contact me and it must be done through email.
- I do not make content accommodations for course required materials (see University Policy 6-100 (III), section Q). Students may encounter reading materials, presentations, lectures, or audio/visual materials controversial or in conflict with their values or beliefs. Please be assured that all course content has been selected for its pedagogical value and utility in relation to the concepts we are engaging. I will NOT make content accommodations for this material. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, readings, assignments, and materials in advance to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. Should you have questions, contact me immediately.