

COMM 1270: Analysis of Argument
Department of Communication
University of Utah * Spring 2025

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 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.

University Policies

- Updated mandatory syllabus policies regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct can be viewed at: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>

Course Requirements & Grading Scale

Assignment	Points	% Grade
<i>Exams</i>		
Mid-Term	50 pts.	10%
Final Exam	100 pts.	20%
<i>Written Assignments</i>		
Argument Artifact	100 pts.	20%
Discussion		
Topic Paper	50 pts.	10%
Argumentative Essay	100 pts.	20%
Refutation Block	50 pts.	10%
<i>Participation</i>		
Participation	50 pts.	10%
Total	500 pts	100%

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 6	Course Introduction <i>*Please print the Syllabus and Assignment Guidelines Packet on Canvas and bring it to class.</i>	
January 8	In-Class Activity: Grammar Quiz	Rogers' Writing Guide
January 10	Defining Argumentation	ACDM, Ch. 1
January 13	Defining Argumentation, ctd.	ACDM, Ch. 1
January 15	Appraising Argumentation	ACDM, Ch 2
January 17	In-Class Activity: Lost on the Moon	
January 20	No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day	No Class
January 22	Making Sense of Argumentation	ACDM, Ch 3
January 24	Making Sense of Argumentation In-Class Activity: Locating Unruly Argument	Deluca, "Unruly Arguments"
January 27	The Nature of Arguments	ACDM, Ch. 4
January 29	The Nature of Arguments, ctd	
January 31	In-Class Activity: Diagramming Arguments	
February 3	Elements of Argument: Evidence	ACDM, Ch. 7
February 5	Elements of Argument: Evidence, ctd.	
February 7	In-Class Activity: Evaluating Evidence	
February 10	Elements of Arguments: Credibility	ACDM, Ch. 9
February 12	Credibility in Crisis	
February 14	Midterm Review Review Topic Paper Requirements	Midterm Review Topic Paper Guidelines

<i>February 17</i>	<i>No Class – Presidents Day</i>	<i>No Class</i>
September 19	Analysis in Argumentation	ACDM, Ch 5
February 21	Analysis in Argumentation, ctd	
February 24	Midterm	Midterm
February 26	Case-Building	ACDM, Ch 6 Due: Topic Paper
February 28	Case-Building, ctd In-Class Activity: Topic Paper Group Discussions	
March 3	Analyzing Arguments & Case-Building	
March 5	Argumentative Writing Preview Argument Essay	UMGC Ch 8
March 7	Research & Evidence Review Research Guide	
<i>March 10</i>	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
<i>March 12</i>	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
<i>March 14</i>	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
March 17	Research Day – Library – No Class Meeting	
March 19	Refutation	ACDM, Ch 10
March 21	Fallacy	ACDM, Ch 11
March 24	In-Class Activity: Refutation & Fallacies	
March 26	Peer Writing Workshop	Due: Argument Essay Draft
March 28	Argumentation and the Law	ACDM, Ch 12
March 31	Argumentation and the Law, ctd	
April 2	Argumentation in Government and Politics	ACDM, Ch 16

April 4	Argumentation in Government and Politics, ctd	
April 7	Discuss Refutation Block	
April 9	Argumentation in Business	ACDM, Ch. 15
April 11	Argumentation in Business, ctd	
April 14	Argumentation & Science	ACDM, Ch. 13 Due: Argument Essay
April 16	Argumentation & Science, ctd	ACDM, Ch. 13
April 18	Exam Review	
April 21	Course Debrief	Due: Refutation Block
TBD	Final Exam	

**Subject to change