

# COMM 322 Argumentation and Advocacy – Fall 2012

<b>L. Paul Strait</b>	<b>TTh 5:00 pm -6:20pm ASC 331</b>
<b>Office:</b> ASC G4 (PhD office, west wing basement)	<b>Office Hours:</b> 3-5 pm T/Th & by appointment
<b>Phone:</b> (202) 270-6397	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:strait@usc.edu">strait@usc.edu</a>
<b>Teaching Assistant:</b> Sean Hernandez	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sean.j.hernandez@gmail.com">sean.j.hernandez@gmail.com</a>

## *Course Description*

This class will be an intensive examination of the theories and practices of argumentation. Students will be exposed to a wide range of argumentation theory and vocabulary and asked to apply these approaches to public argument. This course will situate argument at the center of lived social experience. We will explore how argument shapes the political, ethical, and cultural lives that we live.

## *Student Objectives*

The goal of this class is to enhance the student's ability to critically evaluate and effectively deploy argument. Toward that end, this course will seek to:

- 1) Apply argumentation theory to contemporary controversies in order to unpack and critique political and cultural texts.
- 2) Identify the elements in the complex interactive process of argumentation.
- 3) Enhance critical thinking skills by developing and critiquing public arguments.
- 4) Provide the vocabulary and methods for systematic observation and analysis of argumentation in society.
- 5) Enhance argumentative competence through the construction and presentation of oral and written arguments.

## *Required Readings*

- Hollihan, Thomas A. and Baaske, Kevin T. *Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process or Argumentation*. 2nd Ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2005 (Listed on the schedule as 'AA').
- Additional readings (marked as 'BB') will be available through the Blackboard course site.

## *Daily Schedule*

This schedule may be updated and revised – I will alert you to any changes, and post revisions to Blackboard.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
28-Aug	Introduction to course	
30-Aug	What is Argument?	AA Introduction; AA Ch 1; Goodnight "Public Discourse" (BB); Plato Republic Book I (BB)

4-Sep	First Order Logic & Truth Tables	Aristotle's Logic (BB)
6-Sep	What is Persuasive?	AA Ch 6
11-Sep	Stasis Points	Aristotle Rhetoric I:1-3 (BB)
13-Sep	Topoi of Invention	Cicero, "Topics" (BB)
18-Sep	Types of Audiences	AA Ch 3; Aristotle Rhetoric II:1,12-19
20-Sep	Arguments and Fields	Black "The Second Persona" (BB)
25-Sep	Grounds for Argument	AA Ch 7
27-Sep	Refuting Arguments -- Fallacies	AA Ch 9; Blair, "Fallacies in Everyday Argument" (BB)
2-Oct	Toulmin Model, Field-dependence/invariance	Van Eemeren et al, "Toulmin's Model of Argumentation" (BB)
4-Oct	Toulmin Model, Diagramming arguments	Brockriede & Ehringer "Toulmin on Argument" (BB)
9-Oct	Overview of Policy Debate, Advantages	AA Ch 10, "Judging Policy Debate" (BB)
11-Oct	Resolution & Structure of Disadvantages	AA Ch 11, <b>DUE: PAPER #1</b>
16-Oct	Argumentation – Practicums	
18-Oct	Building Arguments	AA Ch 8
23-Oct	Offense and Defense	
25-Oct	Building an Affirmative Case & Theories of Naming and Story-Telling	AA Ch 2; AA ch 4
30-Oct	Building a Negative Strategy	
1-Nov	Working with and Refuting Evidence	<b>DUE: PAPER #2</b>
6-Nov	Debate Preparation	
8-Nov	Debate Preparation	
13-Nov	Debates – Patton/Kronk vs. Casillas/Hernandez	
15-Nov	Debates – P. Jones/Wapnick vs. Waitt/Megginson	
20-Nov	Debates – Rios/Prowell vs. Chang/Mazzoni	
22-Nov	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>	
27-Nov	Debates – Casillas/Hernandez vs. Yu/Incerpi	
29-Nov	Debates – Waitt/Megginson vs. Choi/Shupack	

4-Dec	Debates – Chang/Mazzoni vs. E.Jones/Ellerbrock	
6-Dec	Debates – Yu/Incerpi vs. Patton/Kronk	<b>DUE: PAPER #3</b>
13-Dec	Debates – Choi/Shupack vs. P. Jones/Wapnick Debates – E.Jones/Ellerbrock vs. Rios/Prowell	<b>DUE: FINAL EXAM</b>

**Grading Scale:** Students will earn grades based on the following assignments. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. Final course grades are assigned on the following scale

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

## *Assignments*

### **I. Participation & Practicums (20%)**

This course is designed to provide students with a new methodology to approach public argument. The success of this process depends on the willingness of students to read before class and be ready to discuss the readings. Students should expect a substantial amount of daily reading for each class period. Students who attend class without being ready to participate will receive a lower class participation grade. If, at any point, the instructor feels that students are not keeping current with their reading assignments, there will be unannounced quizzes.

Attendance will be taken in class. Students who accumulate excessive absences or who regularly miss portions of class will receive a lower class participation grade. Absences due to university activities (conferences, competitions, etc.) must be discussed with the instructor before the relevant class period and proof of activity must be submitted in writing. Arrangements concerning absences are entirely at the instructor's discretion.

### **II. Exam (25%)**

The final exam, which will be on Thursday, December 13, from 4:30-6:30pm, will be based on a) readings, b) class lectures, and c) class discussion. The test will not have any concepts with which you are unfamiliar, but it very well include examples, illustrations, and problems that are new to you. That is, it is expected that you understand concepts, not merely memorize definitions or figures.

### **III. Papers (3 papers, 30% total)**

These papers will ask you to employ the skills that you've learned in class to evaluate arguments found in 'in the wild' in newspapers, magazines, on TV, etc. All papers should emphasize the theories and structures discussed in the readings and in class. You will be graded on your knowledge of argumentation theory as well as on your ability to apply it. Full descriptions of the parameters of each paper assignment are available on the Blackboard site under the 'Assignments' tab.

- Paper 1 (5%) will ask you to unpack an argument by analyzing its audience. It should include a summary of the arguments being made and a theoretically-grounded analysis of the arguments' intended audiences. It should be between 3 and 5 pages.

- Paper 2 (10%) will ask you to unpack and evaluate an argument by analyzing its argumentative structure. It should include a summary of the arguments being made and an evaluation of the strength of those arguments based on the Toulmin model and on the presence or absence of argumentative fallacies. It should be between 5 and 7 pages.

- Paper 3 (15%) will ask you to unpack and evaluate both sides of a public controversy. It should include a summary of the argument in the terms of policy debate and an evaluation of those arguments according to the structures of policy debate. You should make a case for the stronger side. It should be between 7 and 10 pages.

The papers should all utilize common font and margin settings (such as Times New Roman 12 point fonts and 1 inch margins). Each paper should follow a consistent style manual (APA, MLA, or Chicago are the preferred options) and should reflect a writing style consistent with junior-level college work. The expectations for senior level writing include:

*Structure* - Quality papers should demonstrate a clear writing plan and basic structure. A clear thesis should be evident early on the first page to preview the fundamental elements of the essay. This section should also preview the organizational structure of the project. Each section should reflect an organizing principle which utilizes previews, summaries, and transitions. You shouldn't be trying to build suspense in these essays. If you don't provide a sense of your final direction in the first two to three paragraphs, you are too weakening the focus of the essay. Good essays also should include a quality conclusion that draws together the basic details. Simply finishing your last point doesn't accomplish this task.

*Focus on specific arguments* - Your essays are all designed to analyze specific political contexts so it is important that you closely detail the relevant articles and texts, including properly citing them, and provide specific analysis. You are free to use your own perspectives to accent these essays, but ultimately they need to provide analysis of the specific artifacts in question as their primary task.

*Writing Style* - In any essay, the medium of your language is the technique that you will use to make your arguments. Even in our visual culture, the ability to make a professional argument in writing is an essential skill, especially in an argumentation course. When your language begins resembles the spoken word it loses its authority and it distracts from your contentions. These essays are intentionally short to provide you with time to edit and revise your work. Junior level college writing should be free of

- (Thinking out loud comments in parenthesis)
- Misspelled words or words that are poorly spell-checked and come back as different words. There is a huge credibility problem for your writing when these errors appear.
- Conversational or sarcastic tones. This is a formal essay and it should be treated as such. President Obama is the appropriate way to first refer to him, regardless of your views.

*Use of a style manual* - Papers should feature consistent use of a style manual. In some cases students still need to familiarize themselves with a manual. Common errors include a lack of alphabetical listing of citations, incomplete citation information (i.e., you need authors in all cases) and the inclusion of the appropriate URL).

*Use of qualified sources* - In cases where you need or want to make an authoritative claim, you should utilize a well-qualified source. Suggestions involve experts in the field, scholarly journals, and other professional sources, including our texts. The easiest google results, especially including Wikipedia, should be treated as starting points for reference and not references. When essay topics refer to specific concepts covered in the readings, it is important that these essays display a competent grasp of the material.

Evidence should be carefully analyzed before usage. Materials cited as proof of your claims should be timely, relevant, and well scrutinized. Materials should reflect your awareness of the ideological foundations of all evidence (i.e., using materials from Karl Rove supporting the Republicans is acceptable; however, the use of that material should reflect your awareness that this source is highly partisan).

*Bibliography & Citations* - Citations must be provided for all researched information. Any use of additional material, even as background, must be cited within the body of the paper and then again in a works cited or bibliography. The format for these citations should consistently reflect a style manual.

#### **IV. Debates (25%)**

Teams will debate each other on a preselected topic. There are two components to this assignment: the actual debate performance (30 points) and the debate packets, which include outlines of speeches and key research (70). While this will have some similarities to formal collegiate debate, there is nothing of that intensity nor preparation required.

### ***Course Policies***

**Academic Integrity** - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code. 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. 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. You should be familiar with the following resources:

\* "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program (by Student Judicial Affairs)  
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tig.pdf>

\* "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration (by Student Judicial Affairs)  
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tio.pdf>

\* The "2012-2013 SCampus" (the student handbook) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies. <http://www.usc.edu/scampus>

**Late & Unfinished Work** – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late. Each speaking assignment must be given on the day assigned. No makeup sessions will be available.

**Grievance Procedure** - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

**Special Assistance** - Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.