

COMM 1270 ANALYSIS OF ARGUMENT (ONLINE)

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
FALL 2017

Instructor: Dakota Park-Ozee

Office Hours: By appointment (In-person in LNCO or online via Skype/Google Chat)

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the formal study of argumentation. It is designed to help students be more sensitive to the arguments that surround them in their everyday life, to develop greater skill in understanding and critically assessing those arguments, and to build competence in producing their own arguments. To achieve these goals, the course is structured to teach argumentation skills, experiences, and abilities by engaging in public arguments about pressing political, social, and legal issues.

Course Objectives

- *To understand*--This course presents basic argumentation concepts and principles of effective argumentation and critical thinking.
- *To apply*--Over the course of the semester, students will use argumentation concepts to develop reasonable arguments that enhance their critical thinking and communication skills.
- *To evaluate*--The learner will use course concepts to analyze and evaluate public arguments in legal, political, social, and governmental contexts.

Required Course Materials

- Richard D. Rieke, Malcolm O. Sillars, and Tarla Rai Peterson. *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making*. 8th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education, 2013. Print. (ACDM)
- Additional readings will be posted on Canvas
- Reliable internet access
- Microsoft Word and PowerPoint software

Methods

The class will be taught online via Canvas and will require that you check Canvas and your email daily, Monday-Friday. The workload is equivalent to a three-credit course but the exact time requirements will vary depending on reading/comprehension rate and writing pace.

The course is organized into a series of presentations, class activities, discussions and quizzes with participation deadlines every Wednesday and Friday. By the end of every Wednesday (11:59PM Mountain Time) you will be required to view a PowerPoint presentation, and complete an assigned course activity OR participate in the weekly discussion and respond to one of your peers with at least one comment (minimum 5 sentence replies). Every Friday you will complete an online reading quiz that will cover material from the book and PowerPoint.

We will focus on developing an understanding of basic argumentation concepts, applying principles of effective argumentation to enhance critical thinking and communication skills, as well as evaluating public arguments in legal, political, social and governmental contexts. We will follow the textbook closely and it is absolutely necessary that you have the textbook and complete all reading assignments as listed in the syllabus. In addition to weekly class participation, three short papers will be assigned that ask you to explore a controversial topic, develop an argument about that topic, and respond critically to your own arguments. You

will also be asked to diagram another author's argument from an Op-Ed assigned to the class. Finally, you will complete one midterm exam and one final exam on the dates specified in the syllabus.

Course Policies

Learning Environment: We are all responsible for creating an open minded and respectful online classroom environment by observing, discussing, and reflecting upon our own and others' communicative behaviors in order to learn. Thus, each one of us will need to be conscious of our role in providing 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, transphobia, classism, ableism 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 deletion of offensive posts and/or comments to removal from the course. If at any time or for any reason you feel uncomfortable in the online classroom environment or confused about these expectations, please contact the instructor immediately in order to resolve/improve the situation.

Assignment Due Dates and Extra Credit: Assignments must be submitted and examinations must be completed as scheduled. There are no routine make-up participation opportunities available for this course. Additionally, there will be **no** extra credit work available. **There will be no late assignments accepted unless the instructor is provided proof of a University-sanctioned excuse.**

University Policies

Relevant university policies that apply to this course can be found at the links below:

- ADA: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you need such accommodation in this class, please provide reasonable prior notice to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD), <http://disability.utah.edu/>
- University Accommodations: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php> (See Section Q)
- Attendance: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php> (See Section O)
- Academic Integrity: <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>
- Grading, Registration, and Incompletes: http://catalog.utah.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=633#I_Grade
- Withdrawals: <http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/withdrawal.php>
- Semester calendar: <http://registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/fall2017.php>

Course Assignments

(NOTE: Lengthy instructions for each of these assignments, as well as the grading rubrics I use are available in the “Assignment Guidelines” document on Canvas.)

Exams: Midterm: ____/100 Final: ____/200

One short midterm exam will draw from both PowerPoint and reading material covered thus far in class. 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.

Argument Diagram: ____/100

Using diagramming methods to examine arguments provides a clear picture of their structure. Moreover, diagrams allow students to interact with critical components of arguments in productive ways. For this assignment, students are required to evaluate an argument using the Toulmin model of argumentation described in ACDM Chapter 4. Key components include claim, grounds, warrant, backing, qualifier, reservation, and rebuttal. I will post an article to be diagrammed on Canvas. Students are responsible for developing a critical analysis of the argument under review. In your submission, you must identify the author’s central claim, warrants, evidence, and any rebuttals or qualifiers that modify their argument. Once you’ve identified these elements, determine whether the argument is substantive according to Toulmin standards. In the end, you need to tell me whether or not the author made a sound argument in a one-page review. This assignment is worth 100 points and should be 2-3 pages.

Topic Paper: ____/100

For this assignment, you will choose a contemporary controversy of local, statewide, national, or international significance. After you select a topic, you will be required to complete three elements of this assignment. First, identify 5-7 credible sources that are relevant to your topic and create an annotated bibliography that includes these sources. Second, write a one-page justification for your topic that identifies why it is significant and can be addressed through argumentation. Third, you will develop 3-4 propositions based on the topic. One of these will be the basis for your argumentative essay. Average length: 2-3 pages.

Argumentative Essay: ____/200

For this assignment, you will use instructor feedback to select a final proposition and develop your research on the topic you selected for your topic paper. You will develop a claim in support of or opposed to the proposition you developed and support that claim with your own research. The essay will be guided by discussions of case-writing and issue selection from the text and online materials and should reflect effective grounds, backing, and warrants for your argument. Your essay should be 4-5 full, double-spaced pages.

Refutation Block: ____/100

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

Participation Points: _____/200

Your participation will be evaluated based on the completion of course activities due by 11:59PM every Wednesday and Friday.

- Wednesdays --- every Wednesday will require that you either 1) read the assigned course material and complete an activity that can be found under Canvas Assignments OR 2) read the assigned course material and write an original discussion post in response to the weekly discussion topics/questions, and respond to at least one other students' post. Other responses are encouraged, but at least one weekly comment of no less than 5 sentences is required for full credit.
- Friday --- most Fridays will require that you complete a reading quiz. Weekly quizzes are 5-15 questions in length.

TOTAL POINTS: _____/1000

Point Distribution

<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>% Grade</i>
Exams	300	30%
Argument Diagram	100	10%
Topic Paper	100	10%
Argumentative Essay	200	20%
Refutation Block	100	10%
Participation	200	20%

Grading Scale

A = 100- 94%	C = 76.99 - 74%
A- = 93.99 - 90%	C- = 73.99 – 70%
B+ = 89.99 – 87%	D+ = 69.99 – 67%
B = 86.99 – 84%	D = 66.99 - 64%
B- = 83.99 – 80%	D- = 63.99 - 60%
C+ = 79.99 – 77%	E = 59.99% and lower

*Note the grading scale accounts for all decimal possibilities. For example, an 89.99 is a B+ and not an A-.

COMM 1270 Course Schedule

* Please note that this schedule is tentative and slight changes may be made as the semester progresses.

	Due Dates	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Week 1	August 23rd by 11:59 PM	Syllabus	Syllabus
	August 25th by 11:59 PM	Introduction	Intro Discussion Board Intro Activity
Week 2	August 30th by 11:59 PM	Domains of Argument	ACDM Ch. 1 Chapter 1 Activity
	September 1st by 11:59 PM		Chapter 1 Reading Quiz
Week 3	September 6th by 11:59 PM	Appraising Argumentation	ACDM Ch. 2 Chapter 2 Activity
	September 8th by 11:59 PM		Chapter 2 Reading Quiz
Week 4	September 13th by 11:59 PM	Making Sense of Argumentation	ACDM Ch. 3 Chapter 3 Activity
	September 15th by 11:59 PM		Chapter 3 Reading Quiz
Week 5	September 20th by 11:59 PM	The Nature of Arguments	ACDM Ch. 4 Chapter 4 Discussion Board
	September 22nd by 11:59 PM		Chapter 4 Reading Quiz
Week 6	September 27th by 11:59 PM	Analysis in Argumentation	ACDM Ch. 5 Chapter 5 Discussion Board
	September 29th by 11:59 PM		Chapter 5 Reading Quiz
Week 7	October 4th by 11:59 PM	Case Building	ACDM Ch. 6 Chapter 6 Activity
	October 6th by 11:59 PM		ARGUMENT DIAGRAM DUE
Week 8	October 8th – 15th	***Fall Break***	
Week 9	October 18th by 11:59 PM	Support: Evidence	ACDM Ch. 7 Chapter 7 Discussion Board
	October 20th by 11:59 PM		TOPIC PAPER DUE
Week 10	October 25th by 11:59 PM	Support: Values	ACDM Ch. 8 Chapter 8 Discussion Board
	October 27th by 11:59 PM		MIDTERM EXAM
Week 11	November 1st by 11:59 PM	Support: Credibility	ACDM Ch. 9 Chapter 9 Activity
	November 3rd by 11:59 PM		Chapter 6 & 9 Reading Quiz

Week 12	November 8th by 11:59 PM	Refutation	ACDM Ch. 10 Chapter 10 Activity
	November 10th by 11:59 PM		ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY DUE
Week 13	November 15th by 11:59 PM	Fallacy Claims	ACDM Ch. 11 Chapter 11 Discussion Board
	November 17th by 11:59 PM		Chapter 11 Reading Quiz
Week 14	November 22nd by 11:59 PM	Argumentation in Law, Science and Religion	ACDM Ch. 12 - 14 Chapter 12-14 Discussion Board Chapter 12-14 Reading Quiz
	November 23rd – 26th	***Thanksgiving Break***	
Week 15	November 29th by 11:59 PM	Argumentation in Business, Government and Politics	ACDM Ch. 15-16 Chapter 15-16 Activity Chapter 15-16 Reading Quiz
	December 1st by 11:59PM		REFUTATION BLOCK DUE
Week 16		***FINAL EXAM DUE BY DECEMBER 8TH AT 11:59PM***	