Argumentation Fall 2019

Dr. Victoria Thomas 312 Sec 02
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Office: Duncker 102 MW 8.30 - 9.50 am
Office hours: MW 1 - 2:30 and by appointment
Cell phone: 314-276-8427

Required Texts:


This upper-level writing course considers the strategies of argumentation emphasizing audience awareness, reflective thinking and strategic presentation. We will explore elements of argument such as enthymeme, the three appeals, claim types, and fallacies. Students will learn to evaluate a wide range of arguments (including their own), considering the rhetorical strategies that make for effective argumentative performance in a given situation. The course will involve regular practice in both written and oral argument. Prerequisites: Writing 1 and junior standing.

Requirements: (All papers must be completed for a passing grade)

Short homework assignments
Campus issue paper (5 pages) (20% of final grade)
Political Speech paper (5 pages) (20% of final grade)
Definition paper (6 pages) (25% of final grade)
Final symposium researched final paper (8-10 pages) (25% of final grade)
Symposium participation (5% of final grade)
Class participation (5% of final grade)

Revisions: Homework and the final paper may not be revised. Because both the Political Speech Paper and the Definition Paper will go through the peer-review workshop process, neither of those papers may be revised after I have graded them. On a case by case basis, I may allow revision of the Campus Issue Paper; please see me before undertaking any such revision

Essay formatting: All essays must be typed, proofread, spellchecked and submitted at the beginning of class on the date specified. They should be double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font with pagination and MLA citation and a final word count given. Guidelines for MLA citation can be found at owl.english.purdue.edu and elsewhere.

Participation and Homework: This is a discussion-based course so its success depends upon your regular attendance, participation and preparedness. Come to class having read
and completed any reading and/or writing assignments, and be prepared to contribute to each discussion. Good participation should be understood as consistent and thoughtful contribution to the classroom community, and engagement with course materials both for in-class exercises and homework, active participation in conversations, and a general responsiveness to (and respect for) one's fellow students and instructor. Common courtesy dictates that you should remember to silence phones during class and put them away. Texting is not allowed. You may use laptops but only for taking notes.

**Peer Review:** Two papers (the Political Speech Paper and the Definition Paper) will go through the peer review process. Though I will be present at the peer review workshops, I will grade the papers only after they have been revised. In assigning grades for peer-reviewed papers, I will take into account whether or not you make sensible revisions suggested by your peers.

**Late work:** All essays will be submitted in hard copy to me in class. I will accept an email copy of a paper only under special circumstances with prior permission. Turning in papers on time is essential since catching up can be difficult if you fall seriously behind.

**Attendance:** Consistent attendance and participation are requirements for this class. You may miss three classes without penalty. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact me for any information, homework, assignments or handouts that were distributed, and to produce any work missed as quickly as possible. You should be caught up and prepared for the next class meeting. The next two absences will reduce your final grade by half a letter grade each. Missing six classes is grounds for failure. Missing a peer review session counts as two absences, as does missing your own presentation day.

In cases of serious illness—that is, any debilitating sickness or injury that prevents you from completing assignments and/or attending class for a prolonged period of time—you should contact me and your advisor immediately to discuss how to proceed.

Class begins on the hour. 3 tardies = 1 absence. At 15 minutes late you will be counted absent. If you fall asleep in class, I will ask you to leave and count you absent; similarly if it is clear that you have come to class unprepared, you may be asked to leave and counted absent.

**Essay Assignments/Grading:**

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Written work will be assessed as follows:

A range: Virtually no errors in grammar, syntax and spelling; a clear and interesting prose style; full adherence to the instructions in the assignment; correct representation of any texts under discussion, a sound and thoughtful argument expressed through a fitting structure – including a strong thesis statement that accurately states the argument of the paper; proper balance of direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary; error-free citation; evident engagement with the subject under discussion. An outstanding prose style and/or unusually thoughtful and interesting argument will push the grade to a higher A.

B range: General adherence to the instructions in the assignment; mainly correct representation of any texts under discussion; grammar and syntax mainly acceptable, with a few errors (fragments and run-ons count as serious errors and will lower the grade substantially); a clear argument, though perhaps not well-stated in a thesis sentence; structure mainly sound; generally correct use of the terminology discussed in the textbook; proper citation with perhaps a few errors; generally proper use of evidence.

C-D range: Misrepresentation of the text you’re discussing; numerous serious errors in grammar and/or syntax; failure to adhere to several requirements of the assignment (length, research, etc.); absence of central idea (thesis); inappropriate or unclear structure; persistent erroneous citation.

F: Failure to adhere to the requirements of the assignment; errors in grammar and syntax demonstrating an inability to write at the college level; desperately flawed argument and/or structure.

Conferences: If you would like to meet to discuss your work during the semester, please do not hesitate to make an appointment or come to my office hours. I am happy to help.

Other Resources:

Disability Resource Center: I am deeply committed to providing accommodations and/or services to students with documented disabilities. In general, I am very happy to do anything I can to make your learning experience easier and more comfortable. Students who are seeking support for a disability or a suspected disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 935-5970, drc@dosa.wustl.edu. The DRC is located in Cornerstone, Gregg Residence Hall and is responsible for approving and arranging all accommodations for University students. All information is confidential.

Cornerstone (Gregg Hall; 935-5970)
The Writing Center (Eads 111; 935-4981)
International Students & Scholars Office (Stix House; 935-5910)
Arts & Sciences Computing Center (Eads Lower Level; 935-4285)
Arts & Sciences Language Lab (Eads 007)
Arts & Sciences Media Lab (Eads 008B)
(Please refer to the wustl.edu website for more information on these resources.)

Academic Integrity:

This course encourages you to develop your own voice as a writer, and to produce persuasive and well-supported arguments that are based on your own insights about and careful readings of primary and secondary sources. Falsifying citations, borrowing language or ideas from sources without acknowledging them, and other such violations of academic convention tend to be conspicuous to those who know your writing well. These actions not only constitute stealing, but they undermine your authority as a writer and a thinker.

Whether intentional or accidental, plagiarism will not be tolerated; all instances will be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee. I do not negotiate with cheaters.
Fall 2019 Argumentation Calendar

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted – but to weigh and consider - Francis Bacon

Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I remember. Involve me, and I learn - Benjamin Franklin

Readings are either from Ramage, Bean, and Johnson (RBJ) or from essays posted on our canvas page. Please bring a hard copy of the day’s reading to class with you or have your computer charged up and ready to go.

8/26  Introduction. What is argument?
8/28  RBJ Chap 1: Audience - Adams letter (in RBJ 1).

9/2  Labor Day: no labor
9/4  RBJ 3&4: Trump shutdown prime time address
   Enthymeme exercise due

9/9  No class
9/11  RBJ 15: Evidence gathering; Fessler et al; Kolbert

9/16  RBJ 5: Gladwell; Gordon
   Evidence Exercise due
9/18  RBJ 14 & RBJ 7. Be ready to discuss your Campus Issue Outline
   Campus Issue Outline due

9/23  More campus issues
9/25  RBJ 6: Fussell

9/30  RBJ Appendix on Fallacies; Nixon Chequers speech;
   Optional “Love is a fallacy”
   Fallacies Exercise due
10/2  In-class activity
   Campus Issue Paper due

10/7  RBJ 8: JFK; Obama; Watson; Glaser
10/9  Final project to be assigned
   Bring list of topics you’d like to argue about

FALL BREAK
10/16 Peer review of Political Speech paper
Draft Political Speech Paper due with copies

10/21 Peer review of Political Speech Paper
10/23 Hitchens: Political Speech Paper due

10/28 RBJ 10: Wallace
10/30 RBJ 11: (pp 222-238); Singer

11/4 RBJ 12: Parker
11/6 RBJ 11 (pp238-242): King
Readings must be posted by now!

11/11 RBJ 13: TBA
11/13 Peer review of Definition Paper
Draft Definition Paper due with copies

11/18 RBJ 15 & 17
11/20 Chua x 2
Final Definition Paper due

11/25 RBJ 16: Rosin
11/27 THANKSGIVING - no class

12/2 Student-led discussion
12/4 Student-led discussion

12/11 Final paper due in hardcopy by noon in my shelf in English department office (ground floor Duncker)