

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Communication 145 – Argumentation

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

Study of the construction and analysis of public argument. Covers the theory of argument, the processes and development of arguments, and the application of argument to decision making. Topics include: methods of critical inquiry and advocacy; identifying fallacies in reasoning and language; the process of inquiry-driven research; testing evidence and evidence sources; advancing a reasoned position; and defending and refuting arguments. Analysis, presentation, and evaluation of oral and written arguments are emphasized. Students will employ argumentation theory and critical reasoning to construct detailed written essays based on inquiry-driven research, methods of analysis, evidence use, and ethical advocacy.

Prerequisite

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in ENGL C1000 or ESL 122 or equivalent

Course Content

- 1) Nature and Purpose of Argument
 - a. Popular misconceptions regarding the meaning of argument
 - b. The distinction between argument, persuasion, and advocacy
- 2) Theoretical Overview of Argument
 - a. Historical context and evolution of argumentation
 - b. Key theorists and their contributions
- 3) Role of Argument in Public Contexts
 - a. Debates, public speaking, and decision-making processes
 - b. The impact of argument on social change and public policy
- 4) Claims, Issues, and Propositions
 - a. Types of claims (fact, value, policy)
 - b. Relationship of claims to issues and the broader debate
- 5) Evidence and Reasoning in oral and written argumentation
 - a. Forms of evidence (examples, statistics, testimonies)
 - b. Evaluating the quality and relevance of evidence
- 6) Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
 - a. Basic principles and differences
 - b. Real-world applications and examples
- 7) Argument Structures in oral and written argumentation
 - a. Classical (Aristotelian) structure
 - b. Toulmin's model of argument
- 8) Techniques of Advocacy and Persuasion in oral and written argumentation
 - a. Ethos, pathos, logos
- 9) Research Skills for Argumentation
 - a. Identifying and framing a research question
 - b. Techniques for gathering evidence
- 10) Analysis and Evaluation of Sources
 - a. Determining relevance, reliability, and appropriateness
 - b. Navigating biases and credibility

- 11) Critical Analysis of Discourse
 - a. Dissecting arguments for underlying assumptions and implications
 - b. Analyzing the rhetorical situation and audience
- 12) Reasoning and Argument Fallacies
 - a. Common fallacies (e.g., ad hominem, slippery slope, straw man)
 - b. Strategies for identifying and countering fallacies
- 13) Ethical Considerations
 - a. Responsibilities of the arguer
 - b. The consequences of misinformation and manipulation
- 14) Integrating Multiple Perspectives
 - a. Recognizing and addressing limitations
 - b. Incorporating diverse voices and sources
- 15) Reflecting on the Role of Argument in Personal and Civic Life
 - a. Personal growth through argumentation
 - b. Encouraging informed and engaged citizenship

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the theory of argument as it relates to public decision making
- 2) Identify and classify claims
- 3) Compare and contrast argument and persuasion
- 4) Analyze and describe the development of arguments in public discourse
- 5) Apply the basic elements of critical thinking (e.g., methods of reasoning, recognition of logical fallacies, critical evaluation of reasoning and evidence) to evaluating an argument including attention to the intended audience, purpose and social context.
- 6) Apply the dialectical methods of determining truth to an argument, distinguishing knowledge from belief and fact from judgement.
- 7) Formulate an argument using research and evidence that demonstrates an understanding of supporting claims
- 8) Analyze, advocate and criticize ideas, especially through the process of debate
- 9) Apply argumentation skills to personal and civic life
- 10) Utilize critical thinking skills in oral and written communication
- 11) Write frequently (a minimum of 5,000 words of edited composition), including a sequence of substantial essays on issues that require reasoned defense, each subsequent writing assignment adding to the student's ability to write and reason in a more advanced way.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Exams and final exam (written) that require students to describe the theory of argument, identify and classify claims, and utilize the basic elements of critical thinking to evaluate an argument.
- 2) A series of essays that demonstrate students' understanding of various theories of argumentation, formulating an argument, analyzing and critiquing an argument, and the use of argument in public discourse, among other topics.
- 3) Oral presentation of arguments which requires students to identify and classify claims, apply the basic elements of critical thinking to evaluate an argument, and analyze, advocate and criticize ideas.
- 4) Student written work shall comprise a minimum of 5000 words.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom with moveable seating

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture and discussion
- 2) Reading assignments that reflect an awareness of cultural diversity
- 3) Examples from current affairs and mass media with attention to fairness, equity and access

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Reading assignments
- 2) Written exercises
- 3) Conduct research for assigned projects
- 4) Prepare presentations for in-class activities and simulations

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Herrick, James. *Argumentation: Understanding and Shaping Arguments*. 7th edition. Strata, 2023.
 - b. Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruskiewicz & Keith Waiters. *Everything's an Argument*, 9th edition. MacMillan, 2022.
- 2) Supplemental: As assigned.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Apply the basic elements of critical thinking to evaluating an argument in both written and oral communication.
- 2) Formulate an original argument and support the argument with relevant evidence.
- 3) Identify the role of argument in personal and civic life.