

SPCM 222: Argumentation and Debate
Spring 2019
Rebecca A. Kuehl, Ph.D.
South Dakota State University

TEXTBOOK:

Rottenberg, A. T. & Winchell, D. H. (2015). *The structure of argument*, 8th ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The purpose of this course is to “explore argument as a communication activity, constructing sound arguments in a variety of venues and analyzing the contribution of argument to public dialogue on contemporary issues” (from South Dakota State University’s undergraduate catalog).

LOC #6: Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals (self-efficacy)

- Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy
- Articulate personal beliefs about abilities to accomplish communication goals

This course fulfills the System Graduation Requirement (SGR) Goal #2: Students will communicate effectively and responsibly through listening and speaking.

Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

1. Prepare and deliver speeches for a variety of **audiences and settings**;
2. Demonstrate **speaking competencies** including choice and use of topic, supporting materials, organizational pattern, language usage, presentational aids, and delivery;
3. Demonstrate **listening competencies** by summarizing, analyzing, and paraphrasing ideas, perspectives, and emotional content.

Other learning outcomes include:

4. *Critical thinking*: Students will **demonstrate critical thinking skills** by identifying and evaluating parts of an argument, using the Toulmin model.
5. *Self-efficacy*: Students will demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals. They will identify and argue from **multiple positions on an issue**, showing an ability to adapt arguments to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Doing so helps students to realize their own values, assumptions, and beliefs in the process of recognizing others’ values, assumptions, and beliefs in public controversies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Two speeches.** In the first 5-7 minute *informative speech*, you will educate your classmates about the various sides of a debate in public discourse (social, political, economic, energy, environment issues, etc.). In the second 6-8 minute *persuasive speech*, you will choose one side of the debate topic you chose for your first speech. You are now an advocate for this position in the debate, and your goal is to persuade your fellow students to agree to your position through a claim of policy. The first speech is worth 75 points, and the second speech is worth 100 points, for a total of **175 points** (35%).

2. **Two papers.** In the first paper on *identifying values and argument techniques*, you will read an editorial and then systematically analyze its arguments through a 3-page essay. Identify the following: 1) the advocate’s claim (position and thesis); 2) the rhetorical situation; 3) how the advocate uses facts and/or values; 4) warrants; and 5) how the advocate refutes opposing views. In the second paper on *cooperative argument*, you will explain this model of argumentation as seen in the film, *12 Angry Men*. In 3-5 pages, make a claim regarding the use of cooperative argument, and then support that claim with evidence from the film and the readings. The first paper is worth 50 points, and the second paper is worth 75 points, for a total of **125 points** (25%).

3. **In-class debate.** You will be assigned to a group of four, with two individuals teaming up for each side of the debate. As a group, you must research the debate topic, using the class readings as a starting point for identifying important claims, values, audience appeals, warrants, and evidence. These readings will be your classmates’ basis for understanding this particular debate. The debate itself will be 40 minutes long, with 10 minutes to follow for audience questions and discussion. Each team thus has a total of 20 minutes to 1) argue claims, warrants, and evidence for their side of the debate, and 2) refute the other side’s claims, warrants, and evidence, offering a counterplan to solve for the problems associated with the issue. **Worth 100 points** (20%).

4. **Final exam.** The final exam will assess your knowledge of course concepts and their application in two editorials that represent controversies in current public discourse. You will evaluate the arguments in the editorials through a sampling of test questions, including multiple choice and true/false questions. **Worth 50 points** (10%).

5. **In-class activities and participation.** You will have many opportunities to discuss and debate topics from a variety of positions and perspectives. These points are earned through random activities and discussions spread throughout the semester. They can only be made up if an absence is excused. Make sure to read before class and prepare to engage others in class every day. **Worth 50 points** (10%).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week	Topic	Reading Due
1	Syllabus; argumentativeness scale	Syllabus and argumentativeness scale
	Theoretical approaches to argument	Chapter 1 (pp. 3-20; 24-31)
	Rhetorical situation – audience and context	Chapter 2 (pp. 34-45; 53-60); Rhetorical Situation worksheet
2	Responding to arguments; intro to claims and support; documenting evidence	Chapter 4 (pp. 110-126; 130-136)
	Dialogue and developing a class code of ethics	NCA code of ethics

	Claims – fact, value, policy; explain Paper #1	Chapter 5 (pp. 149-152; 158-161; 164-167; 171)
3	Evaluating evidence and supporting claims	Chapter 6 (pp. 174-191; 200-208)
	Warrants	Chapter 7 (pp. 214-224; 227-229; 232-233); Chapter 5 (pp. 50-52)
4	Argumentative writing: planning and research, organization, and APA style	Chapter 11 (pp. 337-367); Chapter 12 (pp. 380-385); Chapter 13 (pp. 419-439)
	Stock issues; refutation; explain in-class debates	Chapter 12 (pp. 372-379)
	Oral arguments; explain Speech #1	Chapter 12 (pp. 385-396); Paper #1 due
5	Logic: syllogisms, enthymeme, inductive and deductive reasoning	Chapter 10 (pp. 296-308); Encyclopedia of Rhetoric
	Rhetorical fallacies	Chapter 10 (pp. 308-318; 328-332)
	Language in argument	Chapter 9 (pp. 262-270; 272-276; 282-290)
6	Speech #1	
	Speech #1	
	Speech #1	
7	Speech #1	
	In-class debate work day	
8	Cooperative argument; explain Paper #2	Makau & Marty; video: <i>12 Angry Men</i>
	Cooperative argument (cont.)	Video: <i>12 Angry Men</i>
	Cooperative argument (cont.)	Video: <i>12 Angry Men</i>
9	Causal arguments; explain Speech #2	Ramage et al. Chapter 12
	Definitional arguments	Chapter 8 (pp. 239-243; 246-255)
	Resemblance arguments	Ramage et al. Chapter 13; Paper #2 due

10	In-class debate work day	
	<i>Speech #2</i>	
	<i>Speech #2</i>	
11	<i>Speech #2</i>	
	<i>Speech #2</i>	
	<i>Speech #2</i>	
12	Humorous and multimodal arguments	Lunsford et al. Chapter 13; Chapter 3
	Electronic arguments	Lunsford et al. Chapter 16
13	In-class debate work day	
	<i>In-class debate #1</i> (freedom of speech)	Chapter 14
	<i>In-class debate #2</i> (social responsibility of business)	Chapter 15
14	<i>In-class debate #3</i> (human stem-cell research)	Chapter 16
	<i>In-class debate #4</i> (gender stereotypes)	Chapter 17
15	<i>In-class debate #5</i> (paying college athletes)	Chapter 18
	<i>In-class debate #6</i> (regulating guns)	Rottenberg & Winchell (2012), pp. 377-385
	Explain final exam; class choice – analyze an argument (in-class final exam review)	Final exam editorial texts; final exam review guide
Final Exam	<i>Final exam</i>	Final exam editorial texts