COMM 1270: Analysis of Argument (Fall, 2015)

Instructor: Ryan Cheek

Email: ryancheek@weber.edu

CRN XXXXX: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9-10:15am

Office: EH 359 or EH 111

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1:30pm

 Wednesdays 3:30-5:30pm

 Thursdays 12-1:30pm

Required Textbook:

Reike, R.D., Sillars, M.O., & Peterson, T.R. (2013). *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making*. 8th Ed. Boston: Pearson Education.

Course Description:

Students will learn to analyze, evaluate, develop and refute arguments using formal argumentation methods and research based evidence. The course is designed to increase student competence and confidence in constructing, defending and critiquing a broad range of arguments found in public discourse.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

Demonstrate knowledge of basic argumentation concepts.

Apply critical thinking and communication skills in the construction of arguments.

Synthesize research and strategic persuasion in argument development.

Evaluate public arguments in legal, political, social, scientific, and business contexts.

Critically assess the argumentative quality of academic scholarship.

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

Core Beliefs Policy:

According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs.”

Disability Accommodations:

PPM 3-34 notes: “When students seek accommodation in a regularly scheduled course, they have the responsibility to make such requests at the Center for Students with Disabilities before the beginning of the quarter [semester] in which the accommodation is being requested. When a student fails to make such arrangements, interim accommodations can be made by the instructor, pending the determination of the request for a permanent accommodation.”

Course Specific Policies

Attendance Policy:

Analysis of Argumentation is a participation intensive course designed to increase argumentation competence. To achieve this goal students must attend every session prepared to participate in class discussion and activities. Absences, tardiness, and non-participation will negatively impact your final grade.

Emergency Closure:

If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class via Canvas. Look for announcements on Canvas and in your email.

Late Assignments:

Assignments submitted late will be penalized by at least 10 percent. This statement does not obligate me to grant your request to turn in a late assignment and I reserve the right to not make accommodations for late assignments.

Online Submission Policy:

All course assignments will be turned in through Canvas. Lateness of assignments will be determined by the time and date you submit the assignment through Canvas. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

Safety Policy:

Any disclosure by a student, orally or in writing, whether related to class assignments or not, that communicates the possibility of imminent danger to the student or others will be shared with appropriate authorities.

Course Assignments:

A total of 1000 points are possible, divided as follows:

One-page arguments (x5) 250 Points

Legal Proposition (50 pts.)

Political Proposition (50 pts.)

Social Proposition (50 pts.)

Scientific Proposition (50 pts.)

Business Proposition (50 pts.)

Argument Diagrams 150 Points

Aristotelian Model (50 pts.)

Toulmin Model (50 pts.)

Rogerian Model (50 pts.)

Argumentative Research Project 300 Points

Topic Proposal (50 pts.)

Position Paper (100 pts.)

Annotated Bibliography (50 pts.)

Refutation Block (50 pts.)

Argument Presentation (50 pts.)

Exams 200 Points

Midterm (100 pts.)

Final Exam (100 pts.)

Attendance & Participation 100 Points

940-1000 points = A, 900-939 points = A-, 870-899 = B+, 830-869 points = B, 800-829 = B-, 770-799 = C+, 730-769 = C, 700-729 = C-, 670-699 = D+, 630-669 = D, 600-629 = D-, 0-599 = F

Description of Assignments:

One-page arguments: construct a one-page written argument that supports, qualifies, or rejects the proposition assigned. There are five total propositions that differ in topic orientation. Each argument response must develop a single claim supported by multiple forms of warrants, grounds and backing and be at least one full page typed and double spaced. This assignment will measure SLO#’s 2 & 4.

Argument Diagrams: using op-ed pieces chosen by the instructor, students will diagram the central argument of the piece. A total of 3 diagrams will be submitted covering Aristotelian, Toulmin, and Rogerian models of argumentation. A brief critical analysis of each op-ed is expected to accompany each model. This assignment will measure SLO#’s 1, 4 & 5.

Argumentative Research Project: first, students must choose a topic of legal, political and/or social importance and submit a 1-2 page topic proposal that outlines the central claims they are considering using for their final argumentative paper. Second, students will research their topics and develop an annotated bibliography with a minimum of five academic sources. Third, students will write a 4-5 page position paper that defends a central thesis with a minimum of five complete arguments. Fourth, students will construct a 1-2 page refutation block that identifies and develops counterarguments to each major claim made in their position paper. Finally, students will present their position paper to the class in a condensed (5-7 minute) format and answer questions from the audience concerning their position. This assignment will measure SLO#’s 2, 3, 4 & 5.

Exams: a midterm exam consisting of multiple choice, matching and true false questions will be given half way through the semester in Chi Tester. A comprehensive final exam consisting of multiple choice, matching, true false, short answer and essay questions will be given during finals week. Each exam will draw from reading and lecture material. This assignment will measure SLO# 1.

Attendance & Participation: attendance will be taken every day. Being on time and ready to participate in class discussion and activities is essential to getting the most out of this class. If a student is more than 15 minutes late or leaves class early without permission, they will be considered absent. University excused absences, documented illness, or other extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration as long as a student proactively communicates their circumstances to the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week One: Welcome to the course. Introduction to Argumentation.

Week Two: Defining Argumentation & Argumentation in Law. Read Chapters One & Twelve.

Week Three: Appraising Argumentation & Argumentation in Politics. Read Chapters Two & Sixteen. Legal Proposition Argument Due.

Week Four: Making Sense of Argumentation & Argumentation in Society. Read Chapter Three & Fourteen. Political Proposition Argument Due.

Week Five: Diagraming and the Nature of Arguments. Read Chapter Four. Social Proposition Argument Due.

Week Six: Analysis of Argumentation. Read Chapter Five. Aristotellian Model Diagram Due.

Week Seven: Midterm Exam. Case Building. Read Chapter Six. Toulmin Model Diagram Due.

Week Eight: Research, Evidence & Argumentation in Science. Read Chapters Seven & Thirteen. Rogerian Model Diagram Due.

Week Nine: Supporting Arguments with Values and Credibility. Read Chapters Eight & Nine. Scientific Proposition Argument Due.

Week Ten: Refutation & Argumentation in Business. Read Chapters Ten & Fifteen. Topic Proposal Due.

Week Eleven: Logical Reasoning & Fallacies in Refutation. Read Chapter Eleven. Business Proposition Argument Due.

Week Twelve: Oral Presentation of Argument. Research day (please bring a laptop).

Week Thirteen: Cross-Examination Strategies. Peer review day (please bring a rough draft of your position paper).

Week Fourteen: Position Paper Presentations. Refutation Block Due.

Week Fifteen: Final exam review. Position Paper & Annotated Bibliography Due.

Final Exam Week: Final Exam.