

DCAS 215: Argumentation
Section 002, TR 1:35 – 2:50 PM
Fall 2018

Instructor: Jeremy David Johnson

Office: 347 Moore

Office Hours: TR 3:00 – 4:15 pm, or by appointment

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Class Location: 010 Huck

Course Description

This course explores the foundations of argumentation and some of its applications in contemporary society. The course will develop competencies in argumentation, logic, reasoning, and persuasion through both critical analysis and practical implementation.

Course Objectives

1. Students will understand the crucial role argumentation plays in public and private discourse.
2. Students will become skilled advocates by researching, gathering, and organizing supporting material to craft argumentative discourse.
3. Students will be able to effectively utilize the physical and digital resources of Penn State's library system.
4. Students will be able to leverage their knowledge for effective critique of contemporary public discourse.

Course Texts

James A. Herrick, *Argumentation: Understanding and Shaping Arguments*. 5th edition. Strata Publishing, 2015.

Course Assignments

Written assignments should be delivered in Microsoft Word or PDF format, double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font and standard 1" margins.

Written assignments are due via Canvas before the start of class on the date indicated on the course schedule. Failure to submit your assignment on time will result in a deduction of up to 10% per day the assignment is late. I am happy to be flexible if extenuating circumstances arise, but only if you contact me in advance of the due date.

Below are brief descriptions of each assignment; more details will be provided in class.

Annotated bibliography

Using Penn State's library resources, you will find and annotate at least ten scholarly sources related to the debate topic for the course. These sources will serve as a foundation for your later research.

Debate position paper

In this 5-6 page paper (excluding bibliography), you will construct and provide evidence for arguments that will support the case you will make in the oral debate. These papers will be reviewed by a peer prior to final submission.

Oral debate

Students will be paired up to participate in two-on-two debates. Each student will debate once. This debate will require extensive research and work outside of class.

Written materials for debates

You will be required to submit all briefs, constructive cases, negative blocks, and evidence that you used in preparing for the oral debate, regardless of whether you used the material in the debate itself.

Networked argumentation analysis

In this 2-3 page paper, you will observe and analyze a debate or argumentative exchange on a networking platform (Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.) using techniques and concepts learned in class.

Debate critiques

You will be required to complete a peer review of two teams debating on different days. Each critique will be worth 20 points. In this critique, you will focus on your peers' use of evidence, argumentative strategies, and responsiveness to their opponents.

Exams & Participation

Exams

This course will have four exams. While all exams can be considered comprehensive, each of the first three exams will have a different focus. The final exam will comprehensively test student learning through the semester.

Attendance

You are expected to attend each class. You may miss up to two days without penalty. Beyond two absences, for each absence, I will deduct 2% from your overall grade. If you need to miss class, please let me know in advance. You will be expected to get notes and catch up on work in a timely fashion.

Impromptu speeches

On most class days, I will select a few students to give impromptu speeches with the goal of developing in-the-moment oral argumentation skills.

Grading

This course will use a 1000-point system for tracking your grades. This should make it easy for you to track your own grade and to identify any discrepancies. Each assignment percentage above corresponds to a point value; for example, each exam, worth 10% of your grade, is valued at 100 points.

Assignment	Points
<i>Oral presentations</i>	<i>200</i>
Debate	200
<i>Written assignments</i>	<i>270</i>
Debate position paper	120
Written materials for debates	50
Networked argumentation analysis	50
Annotated bibliography	50
<i>Exams</i>	<i>400</i>
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Final exam	100
<i>Participation/attendance</i>	<i>130</i>
Presence, discussion, and impromptu speeches	90
Debate critiques	40
Total	1000

Grading scale:

Letter	Points
A	940-1000
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	840-869
B-	800-839
C+	770-799
C	700-769
D	600-699
F	0-599

Access, Disabilities, and Health

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about physical access, please notify me as soon as possible. A disability can be defined as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” This includes a variety of invisible disabilities, including chronic physical and/or mental illness.

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients’ cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>

(814) 863-0395

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week)

(877) 229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week)

Text LIONS to 741741

I will work with you to make sure you can succeed in this class, and welcome you to use any necessary university resources to make your success possible. Please let me know if I can help.

Academic Integrity

Dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Academic dishonesty will result in academic sanctions and may result in automatic failure of the course. For more information on this policy, please see information from the university handbook: (url here)

Classroom Climate

In this course, we will be discussing a variety of topics, some of which are highly debated, very personal, and sometimes outside of your comfort zone. I encourage you to stretch your comfort zone and to use the concepts discussed in class to think about your experiences and position in the world. Many of our beliefs (including mine) may be challenged this semester. This process has enormous potential and usefulness. However, I expect you to treat your classmates with respect and care.

While you may strongly disagree with each other or with me, I expect that you value your classmates’ opinions and ideas in class. At no point this semester should any student feel

silenced or muted. I take the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students very seriously, and will work to create an inclusive, safe, and challenging classroom environment.

Electronic Devices Policy

As someone deeply invested in technology, I understand that many of us are connected constantly via cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. However, during this class, I ask that you do not use electronic devices for purposes outside the parameters of the class. I encourage students to use laptops and tablets to take notes, to look up information relevant to our discussions, and to generally supplement the classroom experience using technology. If I find your technology use to be disruptive (eg. if you are doing something you should not be doing, or if your technology is distracting your classmates), I will ask you to turn it off or sit in the very back of the classroom. I reserve the right to dock points from your participation grade if you are not using technology appropriately.

If you ever need to leave on your cell phone or electronic device, you must communicate that with me prior to class. I understand that emergencies arise and that some communications (eg. job calls) are vital. I will be flexible with such occasions if and only if you tell me first.

Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic & Readings</u> Read indicated materials <u>prior to</u> class *Indicates readings will be posted on Canvas
8/21	T	Course introduction; argumentative claims and evidence Discuss: Syllabus and course expectations; What is an argument? What is critical thinking?
8/23	R	Components of an argument; types of propositions Read and analyze assigned editorials Read: Chapter 1, Chapter 2 Do: Exercises B, C, D (Ch. 2)
8/28	T	Topic selection; stock issues; research basics Read: Appendix A Assign: Annotated bibliography
8/30	R	Standardizing and diagramming arguments Read: Chapter 3 Do: Exercises A & B

9/4	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Argumentative analysis Do: Exercise C Read: Chapter 4, Chapter 5</p>
9/6	R	<p style="text-align: center;">Argumentative ethics; reasonability and rationality Group work: Identifying issues Read: Chapter 5 and “What Does an Argument Culture Look Like?”*</p>
9/11	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Exam 1 Covers chapters 1-5 Read: Chapter 6, Chapter 7 Class time for bibliography research</p>
9/13	R	<p style="text-align: center;">Criteria, support, and types of evidence Read: Chapter 8, Chapter 9 Due: Annotated bibliography</p>
9/18	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Analogies and examples; causal reasoning Read: Chapter 15 Do: Exercises A, B, C</p>
9/20	R	<p style="text-align: center;">Enthymematic inference, narrative, and metonymy Read: Chapter 14 Assign: Networked argumentation observation</p>
9/25	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Missing premises; formal fallacies; networked argumentation Read: Chapter 13</p>
9/27	R	<p style="text-align: center;">Networked argumentation Read: Paliewicz and McHendry*; Lewinski*</p>
10/2	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Rendering arguments into logical form; testing for validity Do: Exercise B, Ch. 11 Due: Networked argumentation observation</p>
10/4	R	<p style="text-align: center;">Informal fallacies Read: https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com Assign: Position paper</p>
10/9	T	<p style="text-align: center;">Exam 2</p>

		Emphasizes chapters 6-9 & 14-15 Activity: Position paper peer work
10/11	R	Instructor conference Class will not meet; use time to work on position paper
10/16	T	View sample debate; do peer review Read: Chapter 10 Peer review time for position paper
10/18	R	Deductive reasoning Read: Chapter 12
10/23	T	Formal debating; constructive speeches Assign: Argumentative briefs, case, disadvantage Due: Position paper
10/25	R	Rebuttals, cross examination
10/30	T	Exam 3 Emphasizes chapters 10-13
11/1	R	Conference time
11/6	T	Debate 1
11/8	R	No class held
11/13	T	Debate 2
11/15	R	Debate 3
11/27	T	Debate 4
11/29	R	Debate 5
12/4	T	Debate 6
12/6	R	Final exam review; course wrap-up