

ENG 474-01: Argumentation

Summer, 2015

HM 207: M/W 4:30pm – 7:30pm

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Description: This course is designed to teach you about the nature and function of argumentative discourse drawn from a range of communicative contexts and situations. You will learn to recognize and critically evaluate the argumentative structure and function of not only extended, formal argumentative texts (e.g., academic essays) but also truncated, covert arguments found in news discourse, advertisements, etc. In addition, through various writing and research assignments you will also practice developing and refining your skills at composing argumentative prose.

This is a content-based course that focuses on several issues concerning the relationship(s) between the literacy, power, and society. During the course of the session we will read several argumentative essays concerning the nature of literacy, the impact these arguments have on social values and norms, and the ways in which these arguments about literacy influence our understandings of and interactions with the social world. The course readings will serve 3 primary functions. First, they will anchor our discussions of the nature and function of argumentative prose in a contemporary issue that has been debated in various argumentative contexts. Our discussions of each of the readings will begin by explicating the specific argumentative features of a given essay. We will then critically evaluate the essays' strengths and weaknesses by considering, for example, counter arguments, the nature of the support provided, the underlying reasoning, and audience considerations. The second function of the readings is to provide topics and argumentative context within which you will carry out your argumentative writing. Finally, the course readings will enable us as a class to engage in a "conversation" about various aspects about literacy, power, and society. This conversation will draw from the course readings, as well as from the research each of you will be conducting throughout the semester. In sum, during the course of the semester you will:

- identify the formal features of argumentative prose;
- critically evaluate those features in various types of argumentative texts;
- incorporate those features into your own writing;
- strengthen your abilities to produce strong argumentative prose through guided practice.

Materials:

Course readings posted to Isidore (print out to read)

Laptop & reliable printer

Course Requirements:

Daily Assignments: You will be responsible for reading and written homework everyday. If there is reading assigned, you should also expect a reading quiz. In addition, there will usually be some in-class writing everyday. Consequently, you will receive a **daily grade** for your writing and reading performance on each class day. Obviously, you must attend class to receive this grade.

Worksheets: I will provide you with worksheets concerning each of the major theories of argumentation we will examine during the course. These worksheets are intended for you to examine these various argumentative theories, demonstrate your close reading of the theoretical texts, and practice employing these theories prior to your fully developed papers. Completion of these worksheets is a non-negotiable.

Major Assignments: There will be 3 major papers (11 pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, APA documentation style – failure to adhere to these formatting conventions will result in a paper being returned without a grade). All major papers will grow out of our class discussions, and likely, will involve some additional research on your part. The topics for each paper *may*, depending on your topic choices, relate to and build off of each other. For each paper you will participate in revision workshops, in which you will give and receive significant feedback.

Paper 1: An argument about the nature of literacy

Paper 2: An evaluative argument about literacy

Paper 3: A policy argument about literacy

Course Schedule

Date	In-Class Activities	What's Due
5/11	Course Introductions; self-intros and discussion	Read: US Dept of Education: <i>A Nation at Risk</i> Sheils, "Why Johnny Can't Write"
5/13	Using Aristotle to develop an analytic framework, finding "commonplaces" for arguments; Assign Essay 1	Read: Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i> , Book I, chapters 1-3 Quigley, "The Cycles of Literacy" Aristotle Worksheet Due
5/18	Analyzing arguments about the nature of literacy; writing workshop for Essay 1	Read: Ong, "Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought" Scribner, "Literacy in Three Metaphors" Fahnestock & Secor: "Arguing about the Nature of Things" Bring 5-7 topics for Essay 1
5/20	Revision Workshop for Essay 1	Rough Draft of Essay 1
5/25	No Class – Memorial Day	Essay 1 due to Isidore by 4:30pm
5/27	Employing <i>Stasis</i> to discover arguments; analysis of Bartholomae; Assign Essay 2	Read: Bartholomae, "Inventing the University" Crowley & Hawhee, "Stasis Theory" Stasis Worksheet Due
6/1	Analyzing arguments about academic literacy; writing workshop for Essay 2	Read: Zamel, "Questioning Academic Discourse" Rose, "The Language of Exclusion" Bring topics & source material for Essay 2
6/3	Revision Workshop for Essay 2	Rough Draft of Essay 2
6/8	Applying the Toulmin Model to short-and long-form arguments; Assign Essay 3	Read: Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" Toulmin, Chapter 3 from <i>The Uses of Argument</i> Essay 2 due to Isidore by 4:30pm Toulmin Worksheet Due
6/10	Analyzing arguments about the future of literacy; writing workshop - Essay 3	Read: Alexander: "Technology, Literacy & Digital Youth" Lankshear & Knobel, "New Literacies: Technologies & Values"
6/15	Research & Writing Day: Essay 3	Rough Draft of Essay 3
6/17	Final Revisions for Essay 3; Course reflections & Evaluations	Essay 3 due to Isidore by 7:30pm

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