**WRD 322: Argumentation**

**Beyond Persuasion**

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TuTh 2:00-3:15

Whitehall Classroom Building 244

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**Course Overview**

In this course, we will examine the nuts and bolts of arguments: what are the key components of an argument? What makes an argument effective, and what makes one fail miserably? In addition to learning key argumentation theories, we will also explore whether persuasion is always the only—or the most appropriate—rhetorical response. What alternatives are there beyond argumentation and persuasion? To that end, we will examine rhetorical theories and cases that mobilize resources and tactics that do not fit into the conventional model of persuasion and argumentation.

**Learning Objectives**

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

* Understand foundational rhetorical theories on argumentation and what constitutes a sound and ethical argument;
* Analyze the rhetorical strategies deployed in different arguments;
* Evaluate and critique the efficacy and ethical implications of public arguments;
* Construct effective arguments based on particular rhetorical contexts;
* Appreciate and deploy rhetorical alternatives to persuasion and argumentation.

**Readings**

*Mandatory*:

* Heinrichs, Jay. *Thank you for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson can Teach us about the Art of Persuasion*. Three Rivers Press. Revised Edition. 2013.
* Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students.* Pearson Longman. Fourth Edition. 2009.

All other reading materials will be available online via Canvas or URLs. Please make sure to bring your readings (either on your laptop or as printed copies) to class for discussions.

**Assignments**

* *Response and Analysis Papers*

You will be given prompts to write two to three short reading response papers. In your responses, I am interested in your intellectual position on the topics. These are more than simply showing that you “understood” the readings, but that you have reflected on them and can give your own perspective.

* *Debate*

In lieu of a mid-term exam, you put your knowledge of argumentation theories into practice by debating a particular question assigned to you. I will divide the class into groups of three and each team will be assigned a stance for the debate (one pro, one con). The class will watch each debate and judge which team mounts the most effective argument.

* *Critical Personal Narrative and Letter Exchange*

You will write a personal narrative analyzing how your lived experience and positionality influences your stance on a particular public issue and the way you respond to arguments on that topic. You will then have a guided conversation using invitational rhetoric with a peer who hold opposing views from you and exchange a response letter with each other.

* *Final Project*

For the end of the semester, you will submit a project that make use of the rhetorical and argument theories you have been exposed to participate in public discourse. This project can take the form of a traditional research paper, a mixed-genre essay, a website, video, or podcast.

**Grading**

Two Short Response Papers: 10% each (you have the option to write a third paper and drop the lowest grade)

Debate: 20%

Critical Personal Narrative and Letter: 25%

Final Project: 20%
Class Participation: 15%

**Course Policies**

*Participation & Inclusiveness*

Your regular attendance and active participation in class is required. In order to contribute constructively to class and group discussions, I expect everyone to have read the assigned reading prior to class and come with questions and responses. This course encourages different perspectives related to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. The course seeks to foster understanding, awareness and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. We will read about and discuss the experiences of people across a range of identity groups; therefore, maturity, mindfulness and conscientiousness are expected from your language choices and the way you participate in the classroom.

*Attendance*

You are allowed two absences for whatever reason with no initial penalty: you do not need to present any documentation for your free absences. There are times when nearly everyone must miss class for some reason: illness, deadlines, weather, travel, family issues, etc. This policy allows for such absences without penalty, and it is not meant to be used when you simply don’t want to come to class.

However, each absence after the third will drop your participation grade by a full letter. **Missing more than two weeks of class without any prior discussions with me will result in a failing grade for the course.** Missing a scheduled conference with me or coming to class excessively and frequently late without sound reasons will also count as an absence. If your schedule may pose attendance problems, I recommend adding switching to another section.

*Late Work*

Assignments submitted late without prior discussion with me will be dropped a full letter grade for each day late. Assignments that are two days late will not be accepted. In-class assignments and activities missed because of absences cannot be made up.

*Illnesses and Other Personal Emergencies*

If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, you must take responsibility for informing me about the situation prior to the date the work is due. We can work through issues you may encounter, but post-facto excuses do not work well.

*Religious Holidays*

If you plan to miss class for religious holidays, state in writing the days you will be absent and submit that information to your discussion section instructor by the third week of class.

*Plagiarism and Academic Honesty*

The University of Kentucky considers plagiarism a serious violation. Plagiarism is:

* using someone else’s words or ideas without proper documentation when quoting and paraphrasing;
* copying some portion of your text from another source without proper acknowledgement;
* borrowing another person’s specific ideas without documenting the source;
* turning in a paper written by someone else, an essay “service,” or from a World Wide Web site (including reproductions of such essays or papers);
* turning in a paper that you wrote for another course or turning in the same paper for more than one course without getting permission from your instructors first.

The University of Kentucky has established a range of penalties for students who plagiarize, including a reduced grade on a redone assignment, a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or even suspension or expulsion from the university.

**Resources**

*Writing Center and the Multimodal Communication Lab*

The Writing Center, Room B108B in The Hub of the W. T. Young Library (lower level), is available to help you with your writing. It is open 9 AM-9 PM Monday-Thursday, 9 AM-3 PM Friday, and 8 PM-11 PM Sunday. It is strongly advised to make an appointment in advance: go to uky.mywconline.com to sign on as a new client (select "First visit? Click here to register") or to log in and schedule an appointment. More information about the Writing Center is available at: http://wrd.as.uky.edu/writing-center. You can contact the Director of the Writing Center, Judy Prats at: judithgprats@uky.edu. If you have additional problems with public speaking, you may go to the Multimodal Communication Lab in 106 Grehan (859-257-8370). Consider going to either location if you feel stuck at any stage of the communication process. Take advantage of tutoring assistance early, so you have time to get feedback and make changes.

*Disability Resource Center*

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. The Disability Resource Center (859-257-2754) provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.

Please don’t hesitate to let me know if you require assistance or accommodations for any reason. I look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

**Course Calendar**

*Week 1: Introduction*

Aug 24: Meet-and-greet; discuss syllabus and expectations

**Read**: Syllabus; “[Argument: The Basics](http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/student/argument/argumentbasics.html)”; “[Argument and Deliberation: An Introduction](http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/student/argument/argumentintro.html)”; “Why Thinking Critically is Important” (Capps and Capps)

*Week 2: Arguments and Rhetorical Situation*

Aug 29: Rhetorical Situation

 **Read**: “The Rhetorical Situation” (Bitzer); “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation” (Vatz)

Aug 31: The Three Kinds of Rhetorics

 **Read**: “Critical Thinking and Objective Truth” (Capps and Capps); “[3 Genres of Rhetoric](http://www.danieltrichards.com/e-loquence-3-genres-of-rhetoric/)”; “[The Hipster Topics](http://www.danieltrichards.com/the-hipster-topics/)”; [Book 1, Chapter 3 from Rhetoric](http://rhetoric.eserver.org/aristotle/rhet1-3.html) (Aristotle); [Obama’s Inaugural Speech](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama); [Bush’s War on Terror Speech](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13)

*Week 3: Stasis Theory*

Sept 5: Stasis Theory

 **Read**: *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, Ch. 3 (Hawhee and Crowley); “The Classical Doctrine of Status” (Braet)

Sept 7: Case Study: Trump’s Travel Ban

 **Read/Listen**: [Executive Order 13769](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/02/01/2017-02281/protecting-the-nation-from-foreign-terrorist-entry-into-the-united-states); “[It’s Working out very Nicely](https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/609/it%E2%80%99s-working-out-very-nicely),” *This American Life* Ep. 609 (Act 2-4)

*Week 4: What Makes an Argument Good or Bad?*

Sept 12: Components of an Argument

 **Read**: “The Layouts of Arguments” (Toulmin); “Where is Argument” (Brockriede); “Making Good Arguments” (Booth)

Sept 14: *Logical Fallacies*

 **Read**: *Thank you for Arguing*, Ch. 14 (Heinichs); “[Lexicon of Lies](https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety_LexiconofLies.pdf)” (Jack)

*Week 5: Commonplace and Counterarguments*

Sept 19: Topoi

**Read**: *Thank you for Arguing*, Ch. 11 (Heinichs); *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, Ch. 4 (Hawhee and Crowley)

Sept 21: Counterarguments

**Read**: *Thank you for Arguing*, Ch. 15 (Heinichs); “[On Bullshit](https://www.stoa.org.uk/topics/bullshit/pdf/on-bullshit.pdf)” (Frankfort); two threads of your choosing from [/r/changemyview](https://www.reddit.com/r/changemyview/)

**Listen**: “[On Second Thought](http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=534132561),” *Planet Money*, Ep. 780 (8:36-14:46)

*Week 6: Arguments in the Wild*

Sept 26: Case Study: Black Lives Matter vs. All Lives Matter

 **Due**: Short Response Paper #1

**Read**: “[Why is it so Controversial when someone Says ‘All Lives Matter’ instead of ‘Black Lives Matter’?”;](https://www.reddit.com/r/explainlikeimfive/comments/3du1qm/eli5_why_is_it_so_controversial_when_someone_says/) “[On Being Asked to Change ‘Black Lives Matter’ to ‘All Lives Matter”](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-dan-schatz/on-being-asked-to-change-_b_6326614.html)

Sep 28: Case Study: Downtown Lexington Confederate Statues

 **Read**: [“New Orleans Removed its Confederate Monuments. What will Lexington Do?”](http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article44612238.html); [“Lexington Must Remove Confederate Statues”](http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article44612238.html); “ ‘[Take back Cheapside’ Keeps Pressure on City Leaders”](http://wuky.org/post/take-back-cheapside-keeps-pressure-city-leaders#stream/0); “[News Video: Mayor Jim Gray Explains Decision to Move Confederate Statues](http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayette-county/article167001662.html)”

Week 7: *Delivery and Persuasion*

Oct 3: Delivering Argumentation

**Read**: *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, Ch. 10 (Hawhee and Crowley), *Thank you for Arguing*, Ch. 23 (Heinrichs)

Oct 5: In-class debate preparation

*Week 8: Debates*

Oct 10: Group Debate

Oct 12: Group Debate

*Week 9: Arguments beyond Words*

Oct 17: Image

**Read**: “Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event” (Johnson); “The Guerrilla Girls’ Comic Politics of Subversion” (Demo); “[A Journalist’s Art Project Highlights Media Bias Against Black Men](https://creators.vice.com/en_us/article/journalist-art-project-media-bias-against-black-men)” (Sargent)

Oct 19: Material, Body, and Space

**Read**: “Unruly Arguments” (DeLuca); “Trashing the System” (Enck-Wanzer)

*Week 10: Whose Reality is it anyway?*

Oct 24: Perceptions and Emotions

**Read/Listen:** “[Understanding your Divided Mind: Kahneman, Haidt, and Greene](http://argumentninja.com/podcast/019-understanding-your-divided-mind-kahneman-haidt-and-greene/),” *Argument Ninja;* “[The Deep Story](http://www.npr.org/2017/01/24/510567860/strangers-in-their-own-land-the-deep-story-of-trump-supporters),” *Hidden Brain* Ep. 59; *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, Ch. 7 (Hawhee and Crowley)

Oct 26: Reality and Evidence

**Due**: Short Response Paper #2

**Read/Listen**: “[I’m Right, You’re Wrong](http://www.npr.org/2017/03/13/519661419/when-it-comes-to-politics-and-fake-news-facts-arent-enough),” *Hidden Brain* Ep. 64; “[How to Convince Someone when Facts Fail](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-convince-someone-when-facts-fail/)” (Shermer)

*Week 11: Beyond Argumentation*

Oct 31: Limitations of Persuasion and Argumentation

**Read: “**Beyond Persuasion” (Foss and Griffin); “The Art of Being Persuaded” (Baker et. al.)

Nov 2: Alternatives to Argumentation

**Read**: “Defining Deliberative Space,” pp. 29-43 (Lyon); “Did the Sophists Aim to Persuade?” (Gagarin)

**Due**: Critical Personal Narrative Abstract

*Week 12: Dialogue I*

Nov 7: Epistemic Privilege

**Read**: “Working together across Difference” (Narayan)

Nov 9: Invitational Rhetoric Conversations

**Read/due**: Critical Personal Narrative

*Week 13: Dialogue II*

Nov 14: Letter Exchange and Dialog

**Due**: Letter to Peer

Nov 16: Brainstorming for Final Project

**Read:** One student sample from each category of the [WRD 2017 Spring Gallery](https://wrd.as.uky.edu/spring-wrd-writing-gallery)

*Week 14: Conferences and Thanksgiving*

Nov 21: Individual Conferences

Nov23: Class Canceled

*Week* 15: *Final Project Workshops*

Nov 28: Individual Conferences and Peer Workshops

**Due**: Final Project Proposal

Nov 30: In-class Work Time

**Due**: Short Response Paper #3 (Optional)

*Week 16: Presentations*

Dec 5: Project Presentations

**Due**: Complete Draft of final project

Dec 7: Project Presentations

**Due**: Online Teaching Evaluation

**Assignment: Short Response Papers**

The purpose of these short response papers is for you to synthesize the readings and discussions we have covered thus far to generate a sound argument on the prompt. While you are welcome to use outside sources in your short papers, it is not necessary to do so. Each paper should be 2-3 pages long, and be in either MLA, Chicago, or APA style. Please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab for style guidelines.

You will be graded according to the following criteria:

* Originality and soundness of argument;
* Clarity in writing and organization;
* Critical engagement with course materials;
* Relevance to the prompt;
* Careful observance of style guidelines.
* Use of a concrete example in each paper to illustrate your main claim.

Paper I Prompt (Due 9/26):

**Option #1: Finding the Weakness**

Find an argument that you strongly agree with. (Do not choose something in the abstract. This needs to be an actual written argument or a speech/text that you can quote from.) What are the rhetorical elements of this argument? What types of claims does it make? How does this author (or authors) frame the exigence? What data does it offer in support of this claim? What are the implicit warrants underlying this argument?

Once you have done this kind of analysis, identify what you see as the weakest part of parts of this argument. In other words, how might a counter-argument reasonably and persuasively argue *against* this author?

**Option #2: Improving an Unpersuasive Argument**

Find an argument you disagree with. (Again, do not choose something in the abstract. This needs to be an actual written argument or a speech/text that you can quote from.) Provide an analysis of its rhetorical elements and claims. What types of claims does it make? How does this author (or authors) frame the exigence? What data does it offer in support of this claim? What are the implicit warrants underlying this argument?

Once you have done this analysis, suggest one way in which the author (or authors) could make this argument more compelling to someone like you. How would they begin from a different premise/warrant, for example? Or how could they frame the exigence differently? Could they shift the stasis in a way that might make their goals more likely to be heard more favorably by someone like you?

Paper II Prompt (Due 10/26):

How should a rhetor make productive and ethical use of emotion and subjective views of reality in arguments?

Paper III Prompt (Optional—Due 11/30):

Based on the argumentation theories and examples we have studied so far, what is the most important component/concept a rhetor should consider? Why?

*If you choose to write the third optional paper, your lowest grade will be dropped.*

**Assignment: Debate**

To encourage you to identify and construct cogent arguments in civil society using diverse forms of evidence, this assignment asks you to engage in a dialogue with other students on a timely and important social, cultural, or political issue. Over two class periods, you will—in a team of three—debate another team based on an assigned question and stance. These questions are open-ended and you will be given one class period before the debate to prepare; I do encourage your team to meet outside of class to prepare as well. Your grade for this assignment will be determined partially by audience ratings.

Procedures:

* Each team will begin by giving a 1-2 minute opening statement.
* Each team will take turn asking its opposition a question; the team has 3 minutes to prepare, followed by 2 minutes respond. Each team will ask a total of 3 questions.
* Audience members will pose questions to the teams.
* Both teams will then be given 3 minutes to prepare a closing statement that lasts 1-2 minutes.

Evaluation Criteria:

* Persuasiveness of opening statement;
* Relevance and criticality of questions to opposing team;
* Relevance and effectiveness of responses;
* Ability to utilize credible and persuasive evidence;
* Civil engagement with opposing team;
* Engagement with audience members;
* Persuasiveness of closing statement.

Debate Prompts:

* What are the most effective strategies to reduce rates of recidivism and mass incarceration in communities where poverty and violence are prevalent?
* How should instances of police brutality be addressed to prevent future occurrences?
* Should universities allow students to carry concealed firearms on campus?
* Should university administration regulate students’ Halloween costumes?
* Is the death penalty ethical?
* Is it ethically wrong for a sports team to use Native American mascots and names?
* Should all police officers wear body cameras?
* Should transgendered people be allowed to use public bathrooms of their gender identification?
* Research has established that football is physically dangerous for its players; is it ethical to continue watching the sport?
* Should police stop-and-frisk be deemed unconstitutional?

**Assignment: Critical Personal Narrative and Letter Exchange**

Part 1

Write a personal narrative on your communicative practice regarding a public issue (or a few interrelated ones) that you care and feel deeply about. The goal of this assignment is for you to critically evaluate the ways your feelings, cultural background, social position, values and personal and familial histories and experiences influence how you participate—or choose not to participate—in public conversations related to the topic. The paper should be 4-5 pages long (Due 11/9).

Consider the following questions:

* What do you see as the personal and public significance of this issue?
* What role does it play in your relations with others?
* What experiences do you have discussing this issue with a) people who share your views and passion; b) people who disagree with you; and c) those who are either unaware or apathetic?
* If you have chosen to not actively participate in interactions/conversations on that topic, why not?

Critically analyze the kinds of emotions that are triggered in you in these scenarios, and whether/how these feelings influence the way you communicate and relate to others. You are encouraged to reflect on the experience you had during the Invitational Rhetoric Hands-on Workshop.

Your narrative must include the following elements:

* Concrete illustrations/ descriptions of your big-picture statements. (e.g. If you write that you generally avoid participating in conversations where you know your interlocutors would disagree with your view vehemently, you would need to describe a specific time when this has happened.)
* Connections between your personal communicative practice with larger social, economic, political, or cultural structures and influences. (e.g. “I tend to be very vocal about protecting labor unions because I am from a working-class background with parents who are both active members of their respective unions.)
* Connections between your personal experience and practice with any course readings and discussions. (As you write and reflect upon your narrative, do you notice any relationships between your experience and opinions and what we have read and talked about in class?)

Part 2

You will be paired with a peer who holds a different opinion or has a different lived experience from you. After reading the peer’s narrative and having a dialogue with him/her using invitational rhetoric, write a 2-3 page letter (due 11/14) to him/her addressing the following questions:

* How does talking to him/her and reading his/her narrative complicate, challenge, or reinforce your opinions on the role of emotions in public deliberation and participation?
* What emotions arise in you during this exchange? How do you negotiate these feelings?
* Have you arrived at any new understandings—regarding the topic or about the process of dialogue and argumentation at large?
* Will/how will this exchange alter the way you engage with opposing views and different lived experiences in the future?

Part 3

At the end of this series of activities, use the questions below to reflect on your experience as a whole.

As a letter writer:

1. What considerations did you have when you were writing it?
2. How did you feel when you were drafting?
3. What is the most illuminating and challenging respectively about writing the letter?
4. How did you feel when your partner was reading your letter? Why?

As a reader:

1. How does the letter make you feel, and why?
2. Write down any thoughts and reactions you have to the letter.
3. What do you think is the most valuable/productive about the letter exchange? And what are lacking or could have been more useful?

Overall:

1. Does/ How does this experience advance your understanding of invitational rhetoric, or rhetoric in general?
2. What is the most challenging aspect of this entire process? Why? How have you tried to overcome it? Were you successful?
3. How does invitational rhetoric compare to more persuasive and argumentative forms of rhetoric? Based on your experience after this series of activities, what are their respective advantages and limitations?

**Assignment: Project Proposal**

This proposal prompts you to more concretely conceptualize what your final project would look like and what it would accomplish. It also allows me to give you specific feedback and resources. In 2-3 pages, addressing the following questions as specifically as possible:

1. What central idea(s) are you attempting to explore? What questions are you trying to answer through this project?
2. Who are the audiences of your project and what effects do you want your project to have on them? Why?
3. How would your project advance our understanding on how arguments and rhetorics function?
4. What forms would your project take (e.g. video, podcast, website, a mix of different media)? Why do you choose this form? In other words, how would the media and mode you choose help achieve the overarching purpose of the project?
5. What information do you first need to gather about the situation before you design a more concrete plan for your project? To put it differently, what background research is necessary to make sure that your project serves as an effective response or intervention.

**Assignment: Final Project and Statement of Goals and Choices**

Serving as an opportunity for critical reflection, this final project asks you to consider concepts, theories, or practices in rhetoric and argument that you find significant, and put them into practice in the public sphere. Your project could take many different forms and modes—for example, you may choose to create a video, podcast, blog, or a graphic essay. You may also choose to complete this project by writing a paper or essay that does not follow the specific academic, argumentative genre.

Identify an issue/problem at the campus, community, national, or transnational level that you find significant. Your project should aim to elicit desired public responses towards the topic. Draw on examples and rhetorical theories you have learned in this class to craft your project. Remember that there are many ways to participate in public discourse: your project does not have to be explicitly persuasive, and your rhetorical goal may be something other than changing your audience’s mind.

Example #1:

Problem: Rapid gentrification in the North Lime neighborhood that price out poor residents.

Project: A video featuring interviews with influenced residents to narrate their experiences.

Goal: Provide a platform for marginalized voices to tell their own stories.

On the other hand, if you think that persuasion and argumentation is the most appropriate rhetorical response in the situation you’ve identified, craft your project accordingly.

Example #2:

Problem: Lack of sufficient homeless shelters in the city.

Project: A website containing synthesized research, infographics on homelessness and public resources, and a petition to the city council.

Goal: Persuade local residents to sign the petition to create more shelters to address homelessness.

Statement of Goals and Choices (SOGC)

In addition to the project itself, you are required to write a 2-3 page SOGC that explain the rhetorical decisions you have made in the project.

The SOGC should answer the following questions:

* What, specifically, is this piece trying to accomplish - above and beyond satisfying the basic requirements outlined in the task description? In other words, what work does, or might, this piece do? For whom? In what contexts?
* What specific, rhetorical, material, methodological, and technological choices did you make in service of accomplishing the goal(s) articulated above? Catalog, as well, choices that you might not have consciously made, those that were made for you when you opted to work with certain genres, materials, and technologies.
* Why did you end up pursuing this plan as opposed to the others you came up with? How did the various choices listed above allow you to accomplish things that other sets or combinations of choices would not have?

Resources (see handout for additional resources):

[University of Kentucky Student Media Depot](https://www.uky.edu/its/customer-support-student-it-enablement/student-media-depot-hub)

[UW-Madison Design Lab Student Resources](https://designlab.wisc.edu/student-resources)

[University of Mississippi Multimodal Guide](http://rhetoric.olemiss.edu/student/multimodal/web/)

[Transom](https://transom.org/)

Due: 12/12