

COMM 9 – Argumentation: Analysis of Oral & Written Communication



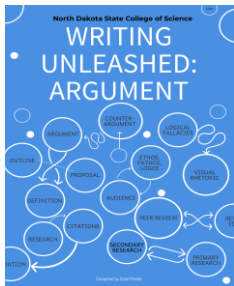
Instructor: Brandon Gainer (gainerbrandon@fhda.edu)
Office Hours: 4:30-6:30 PM Tuesdays & Thursdays
Times: Asynchronous Online course

Prerequisites: ENG 1A/1AH
 Fulfills IGETC Area 1B: Critical Thinking /English Composition
 Fulfills CSU GE Area A3: Critical Thinking

Course Textbooks



Mills, A. *How Arguments Work: A Guide to Writing & Analyzing Texts in College*



Priebe, S. *Writing Unleashed*

Van Cleave, M.J. *Introduction to Logic & Critical Thinking*

All textbooks and free OER resources and accessible online via Canvas.

Course Overview

Welcome to COMM 9! This is a unique course that will give you the opportunity to practice your speaking, debate, critical thinking and (primarily) writing skills! We'll be exploring a range of current events and socially significant issues. My hope is that you leave this class with the ability to craft better, logically sound arguments in writing, while also gaining the tools and vocabulary to pinpoint the weaknesses in the everyday argument.

Ultimately, this class is centered around 5 key objectives: **(1)** Helping you apply logic and reasoning to argumentative writing and speaking. **(2)** Becoming more effective at researching and evaluating arguments. **(3)** Analyzing diverse issues. **(4)** Giving you practice with different types of argumentative writing and **(5)** Discussing and debating issues using appropriate argumentation methods & structures.

COMM 9 Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the logic of arguments.
2. Write a progression of well-organized critical essays that demonstrate increasingly complex writing and critical thought.
3. Deconstruct, examine, and confidently debate contemporary, socially relevant issues through development and presentation of arguments.
4. Find, evaluate and cite sources in writing and presentations using appropriate documentation format.

Succeeding in COMM 9

- ✓ Give yourself ample time to complete assignments: Writing an essay at the last minute typically causes careless errors!
- ✓ Make use of the tutoring services (WRC or Online tutoring).
- ✓ When possible, have someone else read over your paper; A second set of eyes can catch something that you missed.
- ✓ Don't obsess over writing things "perfectly" – there are many approaches to creating a strong argument and essay.
- ✓ Participate in discussions! There is a lot to learn just by seeing the different perspectives of your classmates.

Course Policies:

Please refer to Canvas for a more comprehensive description of the course policies – below are the key ones.

A Foreword Regarding Technology

By now, everyone should be (in some cases, reluctantly) used to online courses. I will do my best to quickly resolve issues that I have control over within Canvas (broken links; missing files; etc.). If you are experiencing issues with Canvas beyond this, file a help-desk ticket clicking “**Help**” in Canvas. That said, technological discomfort, unfamiliarity, or difficulties will not be accepted as an excuse for late or incomplete work: Start early as your timeline permits to avoid such issues.

Attendance & Participation: You’ll need to log on weekly to complete assignments and participate in discussions. Since this is a 5-unit course, ideally you should set aside a **minimum** of 5 hours per week if you expect to be successful in the course. Please note: Failing to log in and complete assignments during weeks 1 & 2 may result in being dropped.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments are submitted through Canvas. Unless specified otherwise, they are due at 11:59 PST on the respective date. Also, keep the following in mind:

- Please only use .doc, .docx, or .rtf format; If I can’t open the assignment, it’s not considered submitted.
- Unless I explicitly request it, **please do not e-mail me an assignment.**

Contacting the Instructor: E-mail, my office line (**408-864-8802**), office hours, and our Canvas message board are all ways of reaching me. Please keep the following in mind for effective communication:

- Putting your **name, the course** and its **time** in the subject line helps me recognize your e-mail faster (e.g. “Brandon Gainer – COMM 9 – Online Section) and get you a timely response (usually within 24 hours).
- I typically respond to e-mails from 10:00 AM – 1 PM M-F. Barring weekends, expect a 24-hour response.
- If the scheduled office hours don’t work, just ask! – I can expand my availability depending on the day.

Late Work: Assignments may be submitted up to 24 hours after the due date posted on Canvas. These assignments generally receive less feedback and are subject to a deduction of **50%** from the final score. You may always submit an assignment ahead of time (and I encourage you to do so if it’s complete).

Academic Honesty: Instances of academic misconduct will result in disciplinary action, which can include receiving a 0 on the assignment. This includes, but is not limited to: **plagiarism, submitting work from a previous course, submitting work written by an outside party, or misrepresenting facts to receive a changed grade**, etc.

Further information on the college’s academic integrity policy can be found here: [De Anza Academic Honesty Policies](#).

Accommodations: If you are eligible for accommodations by Disability Support Services (DSS), please follow up to ensure that your accommodations have been authorized for the current quarter. If you are not registered with DSS and need accommodations, please go to the DSS office in the Registration & Student Services Building (RSS) - Room 141 for information on eligibility and how to receive support services. You can also go online to <http://www.deanza.edu/dss> for additional information.

Assignments

Guidelines for each assignment will be posted online via Canvas. Below is a general description of each assignment area that you'll be assessed on throughout the term.

Essays [50%]: These comprise the biggest part of your grade. This class is required to have students write a minimum of 6000 words, which we're distributing across 4 major essays throughout the term. You are allowed to write on any topic of your choosing within the realm of current events, social issues, or communication. This not only gives you a lot of leeway in topic selection. Additionally, you will have the option of revising Essay #2 and Essay #3 if you are unhappy with your score. The specific criteria and requirements tied to revision will be noted on Canvas.

Discussions [27%]: Most weeks will have you doing an online posting based on readings or other content within Canvas. These typically consist of an **initial post** (due Wednesdays) and a response to a peer (**due Friday**). I primarily grade these on **completion** (did you address the criteria) and **coherence** (is it relatively free of typos and grammatical errors). Your two lowest scores in this category will be dropped.

Writing Exercises [20%]: These are applied activities designed to help you build a better essay. While these are graded by rubric, I'm primarily looking at these for **completion** than perfection. These are noted on the course calendar as "Exercise #1, #2, etc." While these are due at the end of the week, a number of them might inform your understanding of other assignments, so if you can complete them earlier, do so.

Course Orientation Activities [3%]: This category consists of three assignments done in week 1: An intake form, a syllabus quiz, and an introduction. ..These are basically the easiest points you can earn in the class.

Grading Scale

There are **500** points total available in this course. Final grades are assigned based on the following scale:

A+ [100%]: 500 and above	A [99%-94%]: 499-470	A- [93%-90%]: 469-450
B+[89%-87%]: 449-435	B [86%-84%]: 434-420	B-[83%-80%]: 419-400
C+[79%-77%]: 399-385	C[76%-70%]: 384-350	D+ [69%-67%]: 349-335
D[66%-64%]: 334-320	D-[63%-60%]: 319-300	F [59% and below]: 299 and below

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be offered in this class: I believe in offering concessions built into the course are far more beneficial than creating extra work for either of us. As noted above, your lowest two discussion scores will be dropped. You also have the option of revising two essays which comprise a large part of your grade. Mathematically, the value you get from these two things far exceeds any amount of extra credit I could give. Given this, **I will not respond to any requests to 'bump' a grade at the end of the quarter.**

Assignment Help

If any assignment guidelines, don't hesitate to ask! If you need an in-depth explanation, then scheduling an appointment during office hours to talk will work best. Please note that I will not **proofread** or **edit** or grade drafts of major essays before submission. Additionally, I do not respond to any e-mail inquiries regarding how to do an assignment within 24 hours of its due date: By that point, I'm expecting you to utilize your critical thinking skills and have confidence in your ability to succeed.

Tentative Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

Date	Topics & Readings	Assignment(s) due
UNIT I: Introduction to Critical Thinking & Argumentation		
Week 1 1/4-1/8	Course Orientation & Overview Critical Thinking & Argumentation: Why They Matter (Mills Ch.1; Priebe p.4-7) Argumentation Basics: Structures & Models (Mills Ch.2.2; Priebe 8-12)	1/6: Course Orientation Activities Discussion #1: 1/8: Writing Exercise #1
UNIT II: Researching Arguments		
Week 2 1/11-1/15	Research & Source Documentation (Mills Ch.6; Priebe p.52-70)	1/11: Essay #1 1/13: Discussion #2 1/15: Exercise #2; Discussion Response
Week 3 1/18-1/22	Visual Rhetoric (Priebe p.44-48) Assessing Arguments: Peer Review (Priebe p.24-25)	1/20: Discussion #3 1/22: Exercise #3; Discussion Response
UNIT III: Analyzing & Evaluating Arguments		
Week 4 1/25-1/29	Evaluating Evidence & Claims (Mills Ch.4; Ch.9) Structuring Analysis Essays (Mills Ch.10)	1/25: Essay #2 1/27: Discussion #4 1/29: Exercise #4; Discussion Response
Week 5 2/1-2/5	Warrants: Underlying Assumptions (Mills Ch.4.4)	2/3: Discussion #5 2/5: Exercises #5 & 6; Midterm Check-In
Week 6 2/8-2/12	Logical Reasoning (Van Cleave p.17-24; p.139-169) Clarifying Arguments	2/10: Discussion #6 2/12: Exercise #7; Discussion Response
Week 7 2/15-2/19	Faulty Arguments: Logical Fallacies (Priebe p.14-16; Van Cleave Ch.4)	2/17: Discussion #7 2/19: Exercise #8; Discussion Response
UNIT IV: Writing for Persuasion – Bringing it All Together		
Week 8 2/22-2/26	Language & Persuasion (Mills Ch.8) Policy Arguments: Stock Issues	2/22: Essay #3 2/24: Discussion #8 2/26: Exercise #9; Discussion Response
Week 9 3/1-3/5	Response, Rebuttal, & Refutation (Mills Ch.5) Online Debates	3/3: Discussion #9 3/5: Discussion Response; Final Checkin
Week 10 3/8-3/12	Conferences & Finals Preparation	3/10: Discussion #10 3/12: Discussion Response
Week 11 3/15-3/19	Responding to Arguments	3/17: Essay #4
Finals Week	Final Exam Period	3/22: Policy Rebuttal (Final Discussion)