

# COMM 9 – Argumentation: Analysis of Oral & Written Communication



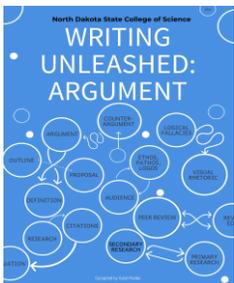
**Instructor:** Brandon Gainer (gainerbrandon@fhda.edu)  
**Office Hours:** 4:00-5:30 PM; Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
**Times:** Online course; no required meetings

**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 as well as the hyperlinked text in the title.

## 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 “Course Orientation” module in Canvas for a more comprehensive description of the course policies – below are the key ones.

**Attendance & Participation:** A common question I get is “how much time should this class take”. According to our college’s web page on [credits and load limitations](#) the formula is that each unit of a class equals one hour is with an additional 2 hours of outside preparation for every unit. So for a 5 unit class, that’s 15 hours total (hence why “12 units” is considered “full time”). Now, as an asynchronous class, the time is distributed a bit differently, *but* it doesn’t disappear entirely. The number might be lower if you’re an exceptionally fast reader, are a returning student, or just excel at writing; It might be higher if you’re working outside of your native language or using assistive technology.

For my part, I’ll make sure that the work you’re doing in this class is intentional and not merely “busy work”. I also acknowledge that you have commitments outside of class and will work towards helping you succeed. Regardless, please budget your time accordingly, as I cannot change course learning outcomes or activities to account for individual schedules or circumstances.

**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, pdf, or .rtf format; If I can’t open the assignment, I can’t grade it.
- 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:

- Please put your **name, the course** and its **time** in the subject line (e.g. “Brandon Gainer – COMM 9”). Since I receive many e-mails per day, this will make it easier to respond more quickly to you.
- After 6:00 PM on weekdays, I generally do not answer e-mails. I do **not** respond on the weekends.
- If my office hours don’t work for you, still reach out: We might be able to coordinate an alternate time

**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 **25%** from the final score. You may always submit an assignment ahead of time (and I encourage you to do so if it’s complete). Beyond 24 hours, the assignment receives a 0 unless you schedule a time to meet with me during office hours to discuss your circumstances and make a case. Such instances, however, remain at the discretion of the instructor (meaning I can still say no even with an explanation) and must be initiated within **5 days** of the missed assignment.

**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 (DSPS), please follow up to ensure that your accommodations have been authorized for the current quarter. If you are not registered with DSPS and need accommodations, please go to the DSPS 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 their website for additional information: [Disability Support Services and Programs](#), 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 as long as it can be related back to communication or a relevant social issue. 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 first submission.

**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 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:

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

**Current Events:** This is a discussion thread on Canvas where you can post relevant news stories in relation to our class and provide a summary. While these are technically not for credit, if you post three times throughout the quarter and meeting the criteria described there I will give you credit for **one** missed writing exercise.

### Assignment Help

If any assignment guidelines are unclear, don't hesitate to ask for help! 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.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit will not be offered in this class. The leniency built into the course (described on the next page) with revision opportunities, dropped discussions, the current event threads, and the late pass all drastically exceed any extra credit I could offer, giving you ample opportunity to succeed in this class. Given this, I will not respond to individual extra credit requests. Also, repeated requests to "bump" a grade throughout, or at the end of the term will be considered a violation of the De Anza Code of Conduct (Board Policy 5510) and treated as such.

Tentative Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

Date	Topics & Readings	Assignment(s) due
<b>UNIT I: Introduction to Critical Thinking &amp; Argumentation</b>		
<b>Week 1</b> 4/10-4/14	Course Orientation & Overview Critical Thinking & Argumentation: Why They Matter <b>(Mills Ch.1; Priebe p.4-7)</b> Argumentation Basics: Structures & Models <b>(Mills Ch.2.2; Priebe 8-12)</b>	<b>4/12:</b> Course Orientation Activities Discussion #1: <b>4/14:</b> Writing Exercise #1
<b>UNIT II: Researching Arguments</b>		
<b>Week 2</b> 4/17-4/21	Research & Source Documentation <b>(Mills Ch.6; Priebe p.52-70)</b>	<b>4/17: Essay #1</b> <b>4/19:</b> Discussion #2 <b>4/21:</b> Exercise #2; Discussion Response
<b>Week 3</b> 4/24-4/28	Visual Rhetoric <b>(Priebe p.44-48)</b> Assessing Arguments: Peer Review <b>(Priebe p.24-25)</b>	<b>4/26:</b> Discussion #3 <b>4/28:</b> Exercise #3; Discussion Response
<b>UNIT III: Analyzing &amp; Evaluating Arguments</b>		
<b>Week 4</b> 5/1-5/5	Evaluating Evidence & Claims <b>(Mills Ch.4; Ch.9)</b> Structuring Analysis Essays <b>(Mills Ch.10)</b>	<b>5/1: Essay #2</b> <b>5/3:</b> Discussion #4 <b>5/5:</b> Exercise #4; Discussion Response
<b>Week 5</b> 5/8-5/12	Warrants: Underlying Assumptions <b>(Mills Ch.4.4)</b>	<b>5/10:</b> Discussion #5 <b>5/12:</b> Exercises #5 & 6; Midterm Check-In
<b>Week 6</b> 5/15-5/19	Logical Reasoning <b>(Van Cleave p.17-24; p.139-169)</b> Clarifying Arguments	<b>5/17:</b> Discussion #6 <b>5/19:</b> Exercise #7; Discussion Response
<b>Week 7</b> 5/22-5/26	Faulty Arguments: Logical Fallacies <b>(Priebe p.14-16; Van Cleave Ch.4)</b>	<b>5/24:</b> Discussion #7 <b>5/26:</b> Exercise #8; Discussion Response
<b>UNIT IV: Writing for Persuasion – Bringing it All Together</b>		
<b>Week 8</b> 5/29-6/2	Language & Persuasion <b>(Mills Ch.8)</b> Policy Arguments: Stock Issues	<b>5/29: Essay #3</b> <b>5/31:</b> Discussion #8 <b>6/2:</b> Exercise #9; Discussion Responses
<b>Week 9</b> 6/5-6/9	Response, Rebuttal, & Refutation <b>(Mills Ch.5)</b> <b>Online Debates</b>	<b>6/7:</b> Discussion #9 <b>6/9:</b> Discussion Response; Final Checkin
<b>Week 10</b> 6/12-6/16	<b>Conferences &amp; Finals Preparation</b>	<b>6/14:</b> Discussion #10 <b>6/16:</b> Discussion Response
<b>Week 11</b> 6/19-6/23	Responding to Arguments	<b>6/21:</b> Essay #4
<b>Finals Week</b>	<b>Final Exam Period</b>	<b>6/28: Policy Rebuttal (Final Discussion)</b>