COMM 9 – Argumentation: Analysis of Oral & Written Communication

Instructor: Brandon Gainer (gainerbrandon@fhda.edu)
Office Hours: 6:30-7:30 PM; T (F31E); W 5-6 PM (online)
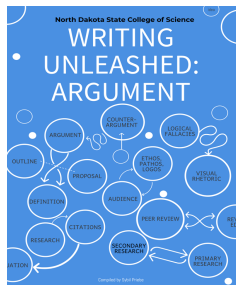**Times:**   Online course; no required meetings

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.

As for attendance: A failure to log in and submit any of the deliverables in the first two weeks may result in being dropped from the course. After that, consecutively missing two weeks of assignments and activity may also result in being dropped from the course.

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.

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/program**, 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.

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 [45%]: 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. You will have the option to revise select essay if you are unhappy with your first submission.

Discussions [20%]: 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.

Applied Exercises [22%]: 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.

Presentations [10%]: There are two major presentations in this class: One in week 4, which is a solo presentation and one in week 11 which is a group presentation linked to a major project. I will have certain expectations regarding extemporaneous delivery, clear citation of sources and organization, but I am not assessing these with the same scrutiny that you'd see in a Public Speaking or Fundamentals of Oral COMM course. These are pre-recorded presentations done asynchronously and posted to Canvas.

Course Orientation Activities [3%]: This category consists of small assessments at the beginning, midpoint and towards the end of the term. They're fairly straightforward, but important enough that I consider them part of your overall assessment for the course.

Last Call: Most weeks have a discussion thread at the end where you can reflect upon the learning exercises, share your responses to the practice exercises, or weigh in on any of the week's lessons. Participating in 3 of these throughout the term and providing thoughtful, in depth responses will give you credit for **one** missed applied exercise.

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.

Grading Scale

A+ [100%]	A [99%-94%]	A- [93%-90%]	B+[89%-87%]	B [86%-84%]
B [86%-84%]	B-[83%-80%]	C+[79%-77%]	C[76%-70%]	D+ [69%-67%]
D[66%-64%]	D-[63%-60%]	F [59% and below]		

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be offered in this class. The leniency built into the course) with revision opportunities, dropped discussions, the current event threads, 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
UNIT I: Introduction to Critical Thinking & Argumentation		
Week 1 9/25-9/29	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**)	**9/27:** Course Orientation Activities Discussion #1: **9/29:** Exercise #1
UNIT II: Researching Arguments		
Week 2 10/2-10/6	Argumentation Basics: Structures & Models (**Mills Ch.2.2; Priebe 8-12**) Visual Rhetoric (**Priebe p.44-48**)	**10/4: Essay #1;** Discussion #2 **10/6:** Exercise #2; Discussion Response
Week 3 10/9-10/13	Research & Source Documentation (**Mills Ch.6; Priebe p.52-70**)	**10/11:** Discussion #3 **10/13:** Exercise #3; Discussion Response
Week 4 10/16-10/20	Presenting Oral Arguments Assessing Arguments: Peer Review (**Priebe p.24-25**)	**10/18:** Discussion #4; Presentation #1 **10/20:** Discussion Response
UNIT III: Analyzing & Evaluating Arguments		
Week 5 10/23-10/27	Evaluating Evidence & Claims (**Mills Ch.4; Ch.9**) Structuring Analysis Essays (**Mills Ch.10**)	**10/25:** Discussion #5 **10/27:** Exercises #4 Midterm Check-In
Week 6 10/30-11/3	Warrants: Underlying Assumptions (**Mills Ch.4.4**) Logical Reasoning (**Van Cleave p.17-24; p.139-169**)	**11/1:** Discussion #6 **11/3:** Exercise #5; Discussion Response
Week 7 11/6-11/10	Faulty Arguments: Logical Fallacies (**Priebe p.14-16; Van Cleave Ch.4**)	**11/8:** Discussion #7; Exercise #6 **11/10:** Exercise #7; Discussion Response

UNIT IV: Writing for Persuasion – Bringing it All Together / Policy Argumentation		
Week 8 11/13-11/17	Language & Persuasion (**Mills Ch.8**) Clarifying Arguments Policy Arguments: Stock Issues	**11/15: Essay #3;** Discussion #8 **11/17:** Exercise #9; Discussion Responses
Week 9 11/20-11/24	Response, Rebuttal, & Refutation (**Mills Ch.5**)	**11/22:** Discussion #9 **11/24:** Exercise #9; Discussion Response; Final Checkin
Week 10 11/27-12/1	Debate Structures **Online Debates**	**11/29:** Initial Debate Post **12/2:** Debate Responses
Week 11 12/4-12/8	Policy Project Finalizations Considerations for Virtual Presentations	**12/6:** Essay #4 **12/8:** Presentation #2
Finals Week	**Final Exam Period**	**12/13: Policy Rebuttal (Final Discussion)**