

COMM 171: Argumentation and Debate

Fall 2016 – Ms. Maggie Franz | mfranz@live.unc.edu

Class time: MWF 10:10 am-11:00 am
Office hours: MW 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Class location: Bingham 101
Office location: Bingham 303

Purpose of the Course:

Public debate is a political and educational tradition with roots in Ancient Greece and the earliest European universities. Advocates of public debate stress its importance to democracy and good decision-making, while detractors argue that it is a practice in sophistry and nihilism. The purpose of this class is to explore the theory and practice of argumentation and debate as an instrument of democratic discourse, a method for improved deliberation and decision-making, and a template for portable skills useful in other academic and professional pursuits.

Textbook and Class Readings:

There is no required textbook for this class. All readings will be found on SAKAI, on the UNC article database, or online.

It is pertinent that you come to class having read all assigned material since class time will be focused on discussion and exercises. I will give pop quizzes periodically.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Participation:	5%
Crafting the Controversy Debate:	10%
Supplementary Reading and Analysis	10%
Lincoln-Douglas Debate	15%
Policy Debate Research Activity	15%
In Class Policy Debate	20%
Ballots:	5%
Midterm:	10%
Final:	10%

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend each scheduled class meeting, to be on time, and to be prepared for each class session. UNC's attendance policy specifies that students may miss up to **three** class meetings (10% of class time) without penalty. **Each absence after the third will result in a penalty of 1 point off of your final grade.** In addition to showing up to class, students are expected to participate thoughtfully and engage with the course material and their peers. Since there will be various in-class participation activities that will factor into the final evaluation, grade penalties will result if the student fails to show up for and participate in class.

Crafting the Controversy Debate

In this assignment, students will break into groups of four. Together, the groups will come up with a single controversy, phrased as a debatable resolution. The controversy should be balanced,

timely, and clearly defined. Students from each group will then be assigned either Pro or Con for their resolution on the basis of a coin flip, and will debate their group's controversy in front of the class. The debate format will proceed as follows:

- 3 minute pro first speech
- 3 minute con first speech
- 2 minute pro rebuttal
- 2 minute con rebuttal

Supplementary Reading and Analysis Assignment

This is a semester long assignment that has two components. **First**, for the entirety of the semester you will be required to read or listen to ONE of the following publications or podcasts about once or twice a week. **3 times during the semester you will post a brief summary** (250-500 words) of an editorial, article, or a podcast that you thought was especially interesting, appalling, or pertinent. These will be posted under the designated forum in Sakai.

- *The New York Times*
- *The Economist*
- *The New Yorker*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *The Diane Rehm Show* on NPR <https://thedianerehmshow.org/>

Second, you will be asked to choose TWO editorials* and write a comparative analysis of their argumentation. You should identify one letter that you think uses sound argumentation and one that does not. You will then write a 3 page paper analyzing the argumentation strategies that each letter employs. This paper will be due on **Monday, November 30**.

*If you choose to listen to the *Diane Rehm Show*, you will choose two speakers from a single episode.

Lincoln Douglas Debate

Prior to doing the policy debate, your team will debate another team (4 v. 4) in the style of Lincoln-Douglas. Receiving full points for your participation in these debates will require active and engaged participation during the debates, a willingness to work cooperatively and productively with your group, good use of your preparation and research time before the debates, a rudimentary command of public speaking, a basic grasp of the LD debate format, and an ability to execute argumentative strategies discussed in class and in the readings. Absence or tardiness during any of the debates (even those that you are not participating in) will harm your grade.

Policy Debate Research Activity

In groups of four you will be collaboratively producing evidence briefs in preparation for your final policy debates. This is a research intensive course, which means that a substantial portion of your final grade will be determined by your contribution to your group's research efforts this semester. Each group will be expected to produce **two 10-12 page research briefs, one affirmative and one negative**. Receiving full points for these briefs requires following correct format, finding evidence that is well qualified and pertinent to the topic, and working collaboratively to match the needs of your research group.

Policy Debate

The main project that this class builds toward is a 2 vs. 2 policy style debate. Receiving full points for your participation in these debates will require active and engaged participation during the debates, a willingness to work cooperatively and productively with your group, good use of your preparation and research time before the debates, a rudimentary command of public speaking, a basic grasp of the policy debate format, and an ability to execute argumentative strategies discussed in class and in the readings. Absence or tardiness during any of the debates (even those that you are not participating in) will harm your grade.

Ballots

On days when your team is not debating, you will be responsible for flowing (advanced debate note-taking), deciding who won the debate, and writing a ballot explaining your decision. Ballots will be posted on SAKAI before the next class period. Ballots should demonstrate that you carefully considered and weighed the main arguments presented in the debate and should demonstrate a mastery of class concepts. Your ballots should be written in full sentences and should be about 250 words.

Midterm and Final

You will have an in-class midterm exam based on course materials and discussions from the first half of class. The midterm will be given on **Monday, September 28**. You will have a final exam on **December 11th at 8:00 am**. Bring blue books for both exams.

Grading Scale:

A	94-100	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	0-59

What Grades Mean:

Grading is a form of communication between instructors and students. This means that you should view each grade that you receive as part of an ongoing learning process. With that in mind, a grade of **C** means that you completed the assignment adequately and according to the given guidelines, demonstrating competence of the concepts. A **B** means that you executed the assignment thoroughly, using well-reasoned analysis, and demonstrating more than cursory understanding of the concepts. An **A** means that your work demonstrates a deep understanding of the concepts, an attention to detail, and well-reasoned and well-executed analysis. **Ds** and **Fs** mean that you did not complete the assignment, did not follow directions, and/or did not demonstrate competence, and/or employ language.

Course Policies:

- **Participation and attendance** are important in a class that focuses on audience persuasion. It is your responsibility to ensure that you attend class and arrive on time, especially when we have to complete an entire debate in the short time allotted to us. If you are late on days when you are debating, there will be significant penalties for inconveniencing your teammates.
- **Assignments** must be turned in on time as hard copies for you to receive a grade.

- Be **polite** and **respectful** to other students. The class encourages argument, of course, but argument and abuse are not the same thing.
- **Laptops and tablets** are permitted for note-taking and research during class **EXCEPT** during rebuttals, during exams and quizzes, and/or when the instructor says to put them away. I expect that as adults, students will refrain from browsing social media, buying shoes online, or conversing on whatever chat platform is in vogue. If the aforementioned uses of electronic devices outweigh note-taking and research, everyone will have to use paper and pen/pencil for the rest of the class. **Cellphones and ipods** or any non-note-taking electronic devices are **not permitted** at any time during the class.
- The **UNC honor code** will be in effect for the duration of this course
- At UNC, **plagiarism** is defined as the “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” Please be sure that you have read and understand the UNC-CH writing center’s handout on plagiarism. If you have any questions concerning this document or plagiarism in general, be certain that you get them answered. Please note that **plagiarism is grounds for automatic failure of this course.** <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism>
- The instructor will facilitate the accommodation of this course to make it more accessible for students who use **Accessibility Resources**. UNC-CH facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to final exams. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have their accommodations honored until the next semester. Visit their website at <http://accessibility.unc.edu> for more information.
- This course has a heavy emphasis on **speaking in public**. If a student requires assistance or accommodation due to any range of issues including speaking English as a foreign language, speech impediments like stuttering, and/or public anxiety please see the instructor to ensure that the student receives the necessary accommodations.

Course Schedule*

Wednesday, August 24—Course Introduction

I. Argumentation 101—What? Why? How?

Friday, August 26—Why care: On policy analysis and bullshit

READ: Fischer and Frank, “The argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning”
Pennycook et al, “On the Reception and Detection of Pseudo-Profound Bullshit”

Monday, August 29— Stating the controversy in propositional form

READ: Steinberg and Freely, “Stating the Controversy”
In class activity: “I couldn’t disagree more”

Wednesday, August 31— Origin of argument theory and its use today
READ: Aristotle, Book I, Sections 2, 3
Heinrich, “Soften them up”

Friday, September 2— Crafting the Controversy work and research

Monday, September 5—NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 7— Crafting the Controversy debates

Friday, September 9— Crafting the Controversy debates

II. How 2.0: Building Sound Arguments Using Formal and Informal Logic

Monday, September 12— Informal Logic
READ: Toulmin, “Uses of Argument” p. 1-10; 11-15; 87-100
Edwards, “Making Sense of Argument”

Wednesday, September 14—
READ: McInerney, “Principles of Logic,” p. 23-43
DUE: Post a brief summary of your supplementary reading on Sakai

III. Deconstructing Arguments (aka the ‘dark arts’ of rhetoric)

Friday, September 16—Fallacies and Biases
READ: McInerney, “Being Logical,” p. 101-129
Cohen, “Reason Seen More as Weapon Than Path to Truth” online at
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/15/arts/people-argue-just-to-win-scholars-assert.html?_r=0

Monday, September 19—Lying with Numbers
READ: Seife, 1-38
Huff, 62-75

Wednesday, September 21—Lying with Numbers 2.0
READ: Seife, 223-242
Ellenberg, “There Is no such Thing as Public Opinion”

Friday, September 23—Logic, Illogic, and the Truth
READ: Ellenberg, “Out of Nothing I have Created a Strange New Universe” and “How to be Right”
In class review for midterm

Monday, September 26—Midterm

IV. Prepare, Research, and Debate

Wednesday, September 28—LD and Policy Debates at a glance

COMM 171 Fall 2015

READ: Edwards, “An Introduction to Lincoln Douglas Debate”
Edwards, “An Introduction to Policy Debate”

Friday, September 30—Groups and Proposition for LD

Monday, October 3—LD: Value Hierarchy and Impact Analysis

READ: Edwards, “Value Hierarchies and Philosophy in Lincoln-Douglas Debate”

Wednesday, October 5—Research for LD

READ: Edwards, “How to Read a Book”

Friday, October 7— Refutation

READ: Hollihan and Baaske, “Refuting Arguments”

Monday, October 10—Cross-examination

Wednesday, October 12—Preparation for LD

DUE: Post a brief summary of your supplementary reading on Sakai

Friday, October 14—Lincoln Douglas Debate

Team 1 v. Team 2

Monday, October 17—Lincoln Douglas Debate

Team 3 v. Team 4

DUE: Ballots for Team 1 v. Team 2

Wednesday, October 19—Lincoln Douglas Debate

Team 5 v. Team 6

DUE: Ballots for Team 3 v. Team 4

Friday, October 21 Fall break begins

Monday, October 24—Discuss LD and Watch Policy Debate (i.e. NOT Presidential Debates...)

DUE: Ballots for Team 5 v. Team 6

Wednesday, October 26— Policy: Affirmative Case Structures

READ: Edwards, “Affirmative Case Structures in Policy Debate”

Friday, October 28— Affirmative Case Structures

READ: Sample Affirmative Case and Sample 1AC

Monday, October 31— Policy: Negative Case Structures

READ: Edwards, “Negative Case Structures in Policy Debate”

Wednesday, November 2— Policy: Negative Case Structures and Refutation

READ: Sample Negative Case

Friday, November 4— Research and Writing Briefs for Policy Debates

READ: Zigemuller, “Organizing and Briefing Arguments”

READ: Steinberg and Freely, “Tests of Evidence

Monday, November 7—Cross Examination 2.0

Wednesday, November 9— In class preparation

Friday, November 11—In class preparation

DUE: Brief summary of your supplementary reading on Sakai

Monday, November 14—In class preparation

DUE: Team research project. Post on Sakai or email to instructor (depending on your chosen format)

Wednesday, November 16—Policy Debate 1

Friday, November 18—Policy Debate 2

DUE: Post Debate 1 ballots on Sakai

Monday, November 21—Policy Debate 3

DUE: Post Debate 2 ballots on Sakai

Wednesday November 23-25 Thanksgiving

Monday, November 28—Policy Debate 4

DUE: Post Debate 3 ballots on Sakai

Wednesday, November 30—Policy Debate 5

DUE: Post Debate 4 ballots on Sakai

DUE: Reading Analysis Paper. Hand in a hard copy in class

Friday, December 2—Policy Debate 6

DUE: Post Debate 5 ballots on Sakai

Monday, December 5—Debate discussion and analysis

DUE: Post Debate 6 ballots on Sakai

Wednesday, December 7—Review for final

FINAL EXAM : Friday, December 16 at 8:00 am

*Teaching, like everything else in life, requires flexibility and improvisation. For this reason, I may have to make changes to this schedule depending on inclement weather, class interest and progress, and any other contingency that may occur throughout the semester.