



**English 4180: Argumentation and Logic  
Spring 2010  
Amy Vidali, Ph.D.**

University of Colorado Denver

Mon/Wed 1-2:15p, NC 1326

Office Hours: 2:30-3:30 Mondays and by appt

Office Location: North Classroom 4022B (take the elevator near the Speer side of the building)

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BlackBoard: <http://blackboard.cuonline.edu>

**About This Class**

This class is about better understanding the arguments you come into contact with, learning to critically respond to such arguments, and developing arguments of your own. We'll accomplish these goals by looking at audience, narrative argument, classical rhetoric, metaphor, Rogerian argument, fallacies and appeals, online rhetorics, and more. To get us talking about these rhetorical ideas and strategies, we will take up topics including disability, gay marriage, staring, media arguments, health websites, etc. In some cases, I'll ask you to make arguments about a specific topic, but you'll also often need to choose your own topic in order to critique and generate arguments. See the unit descriptions in the following pages for more details about course content.

This course has English 1020, English 2030, and English 2070 as pre-requisites. If you're feeling rusty regarding the basics of argument, I suggest reviewing Anthony Weston's *A Rulebook for Arguments* (we'll also read a few chapters in class) and/or Andrea Lunsford's *Everything's an Argument* (often used in English 1020). Note that English 4180 is a course about critical thinking and argument, and thus does not focus (only) on producing argumentative essays.

**Disability Accommodations**

I am dedicated to including and/or accommodating students with disabilities in my course. I can work in conjunction with the UCD Office of Disability Resources and Services to provide what you require, or we can work it out between us if you would prefer. I'm willing to take suggestions specific to this class to meet your needs.

**Assignments, Grading & Expectations**

This course is oriented around a series of projects. The four unit projects are exercises in critical thinking, and will ask you to try different argumentative modes. I'll also ask you to regularly complete smaller assignments/homework, which are primarily graded on a check/check-plus/check-minus system, with some assignments being worth more than others (I'll let you know).

The final project is a portfolio of all your work for the course. For the portfolio, you will *significantly* revise two of the unit projects, and write a brief argument about your progress in the course. The portfolio must include all the projects (with the original grades), plus your new work, so keep track of

your materials! We'll talk about the expectations and criteria for the portfolio later in the course. Due dates (below) are tentative, as the course will necessarily shift to meet your needs. Workshops are *required*.

Argument and Audience Project (Unit One)	15%	due 2/15
Argument and Rhetoric Project (Unit Two)	15%	due 3/3
Argument as War (Unit Three)	15%	workshop 3/31, due 4/5
Arguing Online (Unit Four)	15%	workshop 4/26, due 4/28
In-Class Work & Small Assignments	15%	calculated at end of course
Final Portfolio	25%	due during final exam period

In general, I break class sessions into a few different activities, which may include freewriting, small group work, lecture, large-class discussion, and screening of examples (such as film). I regularly update BlackBoard and expect you to check the site often, as well as your email (daily is ideal). My assignments tend to be detailed, and I believe work that "meets" expectations merits a C. This is a senior-level course, and students who do well tend to be those who attend class and come to office hours with ideas and questions.

### **Attendance & Late Work**

Much of what you'll need to know to do well in this course will occur in class (and isn't in the readings). Regular attendance is required, but I will allow two absences without penalty (for sickness, etc.). After this, each absence will lower your final grade by one third (so a B becomes a B-, etc.). Being more than 5 minutes late constitutes an absence. Find out what happened when you miss class, ideally from a classmate and/or BlackBoard. If you have particular reasons to miss class, talk to me.

No assignments will be accepted via email – assignments are only accepted in person in class. All work is due at the beginning of class or will be counted late. For major assignments, the late penalty is one half grade per class period late (an A- would be a B, a C would be a D+, etc.). I provide half-credit for late in-class work (when you are absent), though in many cases, the work cannot be made-up (such as a workshop or in-class freewrite), and no points will be awarded in such cases.

### **Trouble**

The biggest bummer about plagiarism is that it means you don't think your own work is valuable. I do, and I encourage you to talk to me with any questions. But if we get there, my policy for handling plagiarism is based on the guidelines from the CLAS Faculty Guidebook (<http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/clas/facultyGuide06.pdf>). If I believe you have committed plagiarism, I will meet with you to discuss the incident. Should the case move forward, a formal letter will be delivered to you, the Chair of the English Department, and the Associate Dean of CLAS. The penalty for plagiarism is failure of English 4180.

If you have a grade complaint, please begin by talking to me. I will ask you to bring details of your complaint and all graded course materials. If you disagree with my decision, you may then appeal the grade to the Chair of the English Department.

### **I'm Right Here**

I want this course to be more than the fulfillment of my expectations (though I want that, too). I want to help you find ways to make course projects and readings connect to your other classes, passions, and goals. So please, while everybody loves email, we can do so much more in person. Come by office hours or make an appointment early on – I'm here to help and support you.



### Argument and Audience: An Introduction

In this first unit, we'll focus on the importance of audience in argumentation. You'll get a quick review of writing basic arguments, practice adapting your work for different audiences, and gain increased understanding of the many forms argument can take. In these discussions, we'll take disability as our class example, and you'll produce narrative arguments written to different audiences.

\*\*the readings need to be read by the date below

- M 1/25      Shannon, Jeff. "Timmy of 'South Park' Challenges Viewers' Attitudes About People with Disabilities." *The Seattle Times*. November 28, 2005. Originally printed in *New Mobility* ([www.newmobility.com](http://www.newmobility.com)). [http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?document\\_id=2002648630&zsection\\_id=2002113064&slug=timmy28&date=20051128](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?document_id=2002648630&zsection_id=2002113064&slug=timmy28&date=20051128) (Website link is on BlackBoard under "Readings.")
- Shapiro, Joseph P. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Times Books: 1993. 12-40.
- W 1/27      Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995. xi-17.
- Corbett, Edward P.J. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. 3-9.
- M 2/1      Loewen, James W. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New Press, 1995. (intro & Chapter 1)
- Porter, James E. *Audience and Rhetoric: An Archaeological Composition of the Discourse Community*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992. 1-14.
- W 2/3      Simpson, Paul. "A Sociological Model of Narrative: Labov's Narrative Model." *Stylistics*. New York: Routledge, 2006. (4 pages)
- [http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415281059/about/pdf/Stylistics\\_C5.pdf](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415281059/about/pdf/Stylistics_C5.pdf). (Website link is on BlackBoard under "Readings.")
- M 2/8      Kleege, Georgina. "Blind Rage: An Open Letter to Helen Keller." *Sign Language Studies*. 7. 2 (2007): 186-194.
- W 2/10      Finger, Anne. "Helen and Frida." *Call Me Ahab*. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 1-14.



EXTRA CREDIT: Attend a reading by Anne Finger. More information in class, but mark your calendar for Thursday, 2/25 at 5:30p!



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### Argument and Rhetoric: The More Things Change...

*This unit does some heavy lifting, as it introduces many of the terms of argument from classical rhetoric. I think you will find that much of what Aristotle said in 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE still holds today (for better and worse). To help learn these terms and strategies, you'll produce arguments about staring that complicate the deceptively simple dictum: "Don't stare."*

\*\*the readings need to be read by the date below

- W 2/17 Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. "Ancient Rhetorics: Their Differences and the Differences They Make" (Chapter 1). *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004. 1-26.
- M 2/22 Gorgias. "Encomium of Helen." Written approximately 415 BCE. (Website links are on BlackBoard under "Readings.") <http://www.phil.vt.edu/MGifford/phil2115/Helen.htm>.  
Toulmin review: <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/reading/toulmin/>. (Go through links on left column.) (Website link is on BlackBoard under "Readings.")
- W 2/24 Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. "Logical Proof: Reasoning in Rhetoric" (Chapter 5). *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004. 133-146.  
Aristotle. *Rhetoric*. Written approximately 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. (Website links are on BlackBoard under "Readings.")
- Read entirety of Book I, Chapter 1:  
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~honeyl/Rhetoric/rhet1-1.html>.
  - Read first four paragraphs of Book I, Chapter 2:  
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~honeyl/Rhetoric/rhet1-2.html>.
- M 3/1 Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Ways of Staring." *Journal of Visual Culture* 5.2 (2006): 173-181. (excerpt)



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### Argument as War: Modern Debate, Old Strategies, New Alternatives

*In this unit, you'll use some of the skills/ideas learned so far and stretch them a bit. We'll look at what argument has become in our age, and what alternatives there might be for a rhetorical environment that some argue is becoming abusive. You'll be making arguments on an issue of your choosing using the strategies we'll discuss (metaphor, stasis theory, and Rogerian argumentation).*

\*\*the readings need to be read by the date below

- W 3/3 Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936. 104-109, 135-139.
- M 3/8 Tannen, Deborah. *The Argument Culture: Stopping America's War of Words*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1999. 3-26.  
Macfarquhar, Larissa. "Thank You For Not Fighting." *New York Times*. April 5, 1998.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/04/05/reviews/980405.05macfart.html>. (Website

link is on BlackBoard under "Readings.")

- W 3/10 Knowles, Murray and Rosamund Moon. *Introducing Metaphor*. London/New York: Routledge, 2006. 1-12.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 3-9, 22-24, 33-40.
- M 3/15 Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. "Stasis Theory: Asking the Right Questions" (Chapter 3). *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004. 53-94.

→ Class is canceled on Wednesday, 3/17. I will be at a conference in Louisville.

March 20-28 – Spring Break

- M 3/29 Wood, Nancy V. *Perspectives on Argument*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998. 246-253.



### Arguing Online: Appeals to Fear and Pity

This unit builds on what we've learned about arguments, and more specifically focuses on fallacious logic, particularly appeals to pity and fear. After learning about these appeals, you'll examine the rhetorical process of diagnosing health symptoms online.

\*\*the readings need to be read by the date below

- W 4/7 Tindale, Christopher. *Fallacies and Argument Appraisal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 1-18.
- We will access various online resources that categorize fallacies (such as <http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/files/Rhetorical%20Fallacies%2006.pdf> and <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/rfreeman/CHAPTER3.pdf>). (I will clarify the websites we will focus on in class.)
- M 4/12 Walton, Douglas. *Media Argumentation: Dialectic, Persuasion, and Rhetoric*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 127-147.
- W 4/14 Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: Picador, 1989. 3-9, 63-71, 93-104.
- M 4/19 Warnick, Barbara. *Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web*. Frontiers in Political Communication, v. 12. New York: Peter Lang, 2007. 45-57.
- Battelle, John. *The Search: How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture*. New York: Portfolio, 2005. 19-37.

The final weeks of the course will be spent in individual conferences and workshop – this remains an active time in our course! Your portfolio will be due during the finals period.

