

ENGLISH W270: Argumentative Writing

Instructor: LAVINIA HIRSU

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Office Hours: T, R

11:00 a.m.---1:00 p.m.

(and by appointment)

Location: Herman B---Wells Library

Class: Section 2914, BH 141 (TR 1:00---2:15)



COURSE PHILOSOPHY



Strong arguments, as we will discover this semester, are essential for developing healthy relationships with others and enacting our roles as responsible citizens. The goal of our course is to provide you with different rhetorical theories and heuristics that will help you build those types of sophisticated arguments. The course will give you a wide range of opportunities to practice reading, analyzing, and evaluating others' arguments, as well as strategies for developing arguments of your own on a variety of issues, in different genres and media. Accordingly, in this course we will study strategies that will help you identify issues, determine positions, assess claims and reasons, locate and evaluate evidence, and design compelling and rhetorically robust arguments.

MATERIALS

- Ramage, John D., et al. *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*. 8th ed. (required)
- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers* (recommended) OR any other handbook of your own choosing
- 1 folder/binder for your in---class materials
- <emma> link: http://iu.calliopeinitiative.org/cocoon/emma/home_iu

TYPES OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- (1) **Six Microthemes:** short papers that will help you practice the skills and rhetorical moves necessary for the major papers
- (2) **One Group Presentation:** an in---class Powerpoint presentation that will demonstrate your critical and rhetorical capacities, as well as your ability to collaborate productively
- (3) **Final Papers:** analytical/rhetorical essays that prove your mastery of the skills practiced throughout each unit

GRADING

In order to pass this course, you must submit all assigned work. There are 1,000 possible points for the semester, and your final grade will be a sum of the points you receive, converted to a letter grade. The point breakdown is as follows:

ASSIGNMENTS	No. of Points
UNIT I – Comparative Rhetorical Analysis	
Microtheme 1 – Rhetorical Analysis of Text 1	50
Microtheme 2 – Rhetorical Analysis of Text 2	50
Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Paper	100
UNIT II – Raising an Alternative Argument in a Different Genre	
Microtheme 3 – Rhetorical Analysis of an Argument	50
Alternative Argument Paper	150
UNIT III – Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments	
Microtheme 4 – Visual Analysis of an Image	50
Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments Paper	200
UNIT IV – Arguments of an Advocacy Group	
Microtheme 5 – Report on the Rhetoric of a Cause	50
Oral Presentation – Proposal of a Different Rhetoric	100
Microtheme 6 – Proposal Critique	50
Group Advocacy Paper	150
TOTAL 1,000 total points	

Each assignment will have specific evaluation criteria with different number of points, depending on the level of difficulty and importance. We will discuss these criteria for each assignment; however, overall your projects will be evaluated depending on content, argument, depth of analysis, development, organization and coherence, language and vocabulary, and grammatical and stylistic conventions.

The final grade distribution is as follows:

A	930---1,000	94---100%	C+	770---799	77---79%
A--	900---929	90---93%	C	730---769	73---76%
B+	870---899	87---89%	C--	700---729	70---72%
B	830---869	83---86%	D	600---699	60---69%
B--	800---829	80---82%	F	599 and below	<59%

At Indiana University,

A = exemplary work that shows mastery of the concepts targeted by the assignment and significant improvement as a result of careful revision

B = very good work that shows mastery of the concepts targeted by the assignment at a level above expectations

C = adequate completion of the assignment that could benefit from more in---depth work and/or revision

D = failure to execute some portion of the assignment properly

F = failure to understand or follow through with the assignment

COURSE POLICIES

Drafts and Peer Response: Revising is an important part of inquiry and writing in this course. Throughout the semester, you will receive feedback from peers and from me. On the day when drafts are due, please make a copy of your draft available on <emma>. It is your responsibility to file it under the right tab. If your draft is not present in <emma> in its required location at the time when it is due, your work will be considered late and will be penalized accordingly – a 10--point deduction will be applied to the final grade for that paper.

Late Papers: All papers must be submitted in <emma> on their due date as indicated in the syllabus, unless I announce any alternate dates in class. Assignments are due before the class period on which they are listed as due on the syllabus. Your grade for that assignment will suffer a third of a letter grade deduction (e.g., from B to B--) for every day a paper is late (calendar day, not class meeting). If you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please let me know as soon as possible. Computer error (e.g., failure to print out your work) is not a valid excuse for missing an assignment deadline. To avoid such situations, save your work often and do not count on printing right before class!

Participation: As a successful student, you should attend class regularly and on time. Come to class on time with your reading and/or writing assignments completed, prepared to participate in discussions and group work. Your daily participation in writing exercises, group work, and class discussions is absolutely necessary and I highly encourage you to engage in class debates, even though you may not always be sure about the correctness of your answer. In order to foster a respectful and comfortable environment for class discussions, when expressing your opinion, please refrain from the use of offensive language.

Attendance: There are no excused absences. Your final grade will be dropped by a third of a letter grade (e.g., B to B--) for each absence after three. In case of tardiness, coming late 10 minutes after the beginning of the class for three different class sessions equals a full class absence. Therefore, it would be wise to save your absences for emergencies and illness. Please inform me in advance of special circumstances such as religious holidays, military duty, and extended hospitalization, for which there will be no penalties. It is your responsibility to catch up on course activities that take place while you are absent; therefore, after you miss a class, contact a classmate asking what we did that day.

Electronics: Since we are going to use <emma>, work on paper will become less necessary; this also means that you will have the responsibility of using <emma> regularly and correctly. If you are, however, unable to use the program for a technical or personal reason, you can bring your materials in print to class on the day they are due, and we will try to solve the electronic problem as quickly as possible. In the first few weeks, I strongly encourage you to become more familiar with <emma> and to read the how---to guides so that we may avoid any unnecessary glitches. If you do not have personal access to a computer, there are several computer labs available across campus (see <http://stcweb.stc.indiana.edu/Framework/Apps/Public/index.cfm> for a full list of labs, hours, and locations).

Anyone text---messaging or using iPods during class will be counted absent. Should you have special needs, please let me know.

Academic Integrity: Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the wording and ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by quotation marks and citations. As the IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct states:

“Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s work, including the work of other students, as one’s own. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged, unless the information is common knowledge. [...]

- “A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, opinions, theories, formulas, graphics, or pictures of another person without acknowledgement.
- “A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge indebtedness whenever:
 - “Directly quoting another person’s actual words, whether oral or written;
 - “Using another person’s ideas, opinions, theories;
 - “Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written;
 - “Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgement.”

We will discuss how to avoid plagiarism in class.

Evidence of plagiarism will result in an F grade for the course and a report filed with the Dean.

Writing Conferences and E---Mail: I encourage you to consider my office hours as an extension of the classroom. I will hold office hours each week during which I will offer one---on---one instruction to anyone interested. Please email me in advance to set up an appointment and to inform me about the issues you are interested in discussing. For questions and concerns outside of class or after office hours, feel free to send me a brief email, but do not expect an immediate response from me, especially after 8:00 p.m. For important matters, such as extended conversations about your drafts and/or grades, please see me in person.

Writing Tutorial Services (WTS): I encourage you to visit a tutor at Writing Tutorial Services (WTS) to work on papers at any stage of the writing process. For free help at any phase of the writing process---from brainstorming to polishing the final draft---call Writing Tutorial Services (WTS, pronounced "wits") at 855---6738 for an appointment. To be assured of an appointment with the tutor who will know most about your class, please call in advance. WTS, in the Information Commons on the first floor of the Wells Library, is open Monday---Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Walk---in tutorials are available when WTS has an opening, but the appointment book often fills in advance. WTS tutors are also available for walk---in tutorials (only) in the Academic Support Centers in Briscoe, Forest, and Teter residence halls, open Sunday---Thursday 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Support Services: Disability Services and the Adaptive Technologies divisions of the Office of Student Affairs can provide you with assistance, auxiliary aids, or related services if you think a temporary or permanent disability might prevent you from fully participating in the class. Please contact them at <http://dsa.indiana.edu> or 855---7578 with any individual concerns. Students with special needs must be registered with Disability Services before classroom accommodations can be provided.

DAILY SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS¹

UNIT I: Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Developing a toolkit for understanding and evaluating arguments

Week One

- Tues 08/30** Introduction to course and <emma>
Class introductions
Thank You for Smoking (video)
“Argument: An Introduction” (2---16)
“Difference between a Genuine Argument and a Pseudo---Argument” (65---6)
- Thurs 09/01** Comparative Analysis Paper (Assigned)
“ Classical Appeals and the Rhetorical Triangle” (62---3)
“Moving Your Audience: Ethos, Pathos and Kairos” (109---22) [in---class web evaluation]

Week Two

- Tues 09/06** “The Logical Structure of Arguments” (73---86)
McFadden --- “Amazing Facts about the Fairer, Yet Equal Sex” (509)
- Thurs 09/08** “Using Evidence Effectively” (89---103)
Kennedy --- “Plugged In, Tuned Out” (473---9)

Week Three

- Tues 09/13** Microtheme 1 (assigned)
“Analyzing Arguments Rhetorically” (146---59)
Powers --- “The Massless Media” (467---72)
- Thurs 09/15** **Microtheme 1 – Rhetorical Analysis of Text 1 (Due)**
“Informal Fallacies” (401---8)

Week Four

- Tues 09/20** **Microtheme 2 – Rhetorical Analysis of Text 2 (Due)**
Organization Strategies for the Comparative Analysis Essay
“Using Sources for Your Own Purposes” (368---76)
- Thurs 09/22** **Draft of Comparative Analysis Essay (Due)**
In---class peer review

¹The schedule may be subject to revision throughout the course of the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and over e---mail.

UNIT II: Raising an Alternative Argument in a Different Genre
Responding to and Building Strong Arguments

Week Five

Tues 09/27 **Comparative Analysis Paper (DUE)**
Alternative Argument Paper (assigned)
“Placing Texts in a Rhetorical Context” (32---8)

Thurs 09/29 “An Introduction to the Types of Claims” (200---9)
“Causal Arguments” (237---53)
Chu -- “You wanna take this online?” (434---6)

Week Six

Tues 10/04 “Evaluation and Ethical Arguments” (284---300)
Gladwell – “Brain Candy” (454---7)

Thurs 10/06 **Microtheme 3 – Rhetorical Analysis of an Argument (Due)**
“Responding to Objections and Alternative Views” (124---40)
“Separating Science from Stereotype” (510---1)

Week Seven

Tues 10/11 Analyzing Samples and Exploring Genre Conventions
Matthews – “Whales Need Silence” (274)

Thurs 10/13 **Draft of Alternative Argument (Due)**
In---class Critical Peer---review

UNIT III: Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments
Understanding and Evaluating Visual Arguments

Week Eight

Tues 10/18 **Alternative Argument Paper (Due)**
Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments (assigned)
“Analyzing Visual Arguments” (165---89)

Thurs 10/20 “Resemblance Arguments” (264---73)
Read: Helmers: “Popular Icons and Contemporary Memory: An Apology, Year 2001”
(link: http://enculturation.gmu.edu/3_2/helmets/helmets6.html)

Week Nine (Wednesday of this week is the last day to drop with an automatic grade of W)

Tues 10/25 **Microtheme 4 – Visual Analysis of Image (Due)**
Start reading: W.J.T. Mitchell – “The Photographic Essay: Four Case Studies”
Exploring Visuals In their Rhetorical Contexts

Thurs 10/27 Read: W.J.T. Mitchell – “The Photographic Essay: Four Case Studies”
Group in---class creative exercise

Week Ten

Tues 11/01 Organization Workshop

Thurs 11/03 **Draft of Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments (Due)**
In---class Critical Peer---Review

**UNIT IV: Arguments of an Advocacy Group
Evaluating and Producing Multimodal Arguments**

Week Eleven

Tues 11/08 **Comparative Analysis of Visual Arguments (DUE)**
Arguments of an Advocacy Group Paper (assigned)
“Small Group Strategies for Practicing Argument Skills” (409---13)
Setting a group agenda

Thurs 11/10 “Proposal Arguments” (310---28)
Read: TBA
Sample Project and Organization Strategies

Week Twelve

Tues 11/15 “Finding and Evaluating Sources” (344---67)
“Using, Citing, and Documenting Sources” (368---87)
Exploring the Rhetoric of a Cause – Group Workshop

Thurs 11/17 **Microtheme 5 -- Report on the Rhetoric of a Cause**
In---class Workshop – Building a Proposal Argument

Week Thirteen

Tues 11/22 Review “Analyzing Visual Arguments” (165---89)
“Constructing Your Own Visual Argument” (189---98)

Thurs 11/24 Thanksgiving Break

Week Fourteen

Tues 11/29 Oral Presentations – Draft 1 --- Proposal of a Different Rhetoric (3 groups)

Thurs 12/01 Oral Presentations – Draft 1 --- Proposal of a Different Rhetoric (2 groups)

Week Fifteen --- Free Week

Tues 12/06 **Microtheme 6 -- Proposal Critique (Due)**
Course Evaluations

Thurs 12/08 **Draft 2 -- Proposal of a Different Rhetoric (Due)**
Group Conferences

Week Sixteen --- Exams

Thurs 12/15 **Group Advocacy Paper (DUE): 12:30---2:30 p.m.**