**Argumentation and Advocacy**

**COMM 3321**

**Course Description**

We grow up told that “argument” is a bad word, or that arguing indicates a defect from a more ideal state. Moreover, for those whom society and law have historically kept out of full participation in public life, “argument” has marked a threat to the established order of things.

*Argumentation and Advocacy* addresses these related contexts – the contrast of argument to an ideal state and the power of argument to alter what we know and believe – by exploring the theoretical, methodological, interpretative, and inventional dimensions of argument.

Why we argue, how we argue, what arguments mean, and what arguments do mark our central questions.

**Degree Objectives**

Addressing these questions will help achieve three (3) of the Communication Studies concentration’s objectives for the BA.

* *Performance and Creation* Competence in articulating messages across a variety of media for different professional and civic purposes and contexts.
* *Analysis and Critical Thinking*Analyze, interpret, and evaluate messages across various forms and contexts.
* *Knowledge* Understand theories, perspectives, principles, concepts and/or histories of communication and film.

**Expectations, Rights, and Responsibilities**

I expect you to treat each other and me with respect. We will discuss these expectations further as the class progresses. For general guidance see the [student handbook](https://www.memphis.edu/academicsuccess/pdfs/student_handbook.pdf). Of note: Use of electronic devices, including laptops, is prohibited in our classroom without written permission from the instructor

**Deadlines**

Each assignment has a deadline. You get a zero – that is, no points at all – if a deadline passes, and you have not completed the assignment. You do, however, have one (1) chance for a 24-hour extension, but only after email consultation with the instructor before the due date.

**Attendance and Breaks**

Attendance is mandatory. Absences lower your grade significantly. You must be in attendance when class officially starts to qualify as present. Class officially starts after (insert time) when the classroom door is closed. If door is closed, please do not attempt to enter the classroom. If you exceed two (2) absences, I drop your final grade two (2) points per additional absence. If you have perfect attendance, I add two (2) bonus points to your final grade. Any absence, regardless of your reason, disqualifies you from this incentive. I count absent students who are not in the classroom once the door is closed, who leave before class is over, or who leave class repeatedly.

**Course Content**

In addition to materials distributed in class and via eCourseware, you are required to read (2) books:

* *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments* by Ali Almossawi
* *At the River, I Stand* by Joan Turner Beifuss

Bring assigned readings to class, or you may be asked to leave.

**Intellectual Integrity**

I expect that no one will cheat, plagiarize, or fabricate. I report instances of cheating when I find them, because they are serious breaches that damage the institution as a whole. Review the University [statement](http://libguides.memphis.edu/c.php?g=94263&p=610780) on academic dishonesty immediately.

**Assignments and Grading**

You start with zero (0) points. Throughout the term, you accumulate points toward your final grade. Each assignment has a maximum number of total points. Quizzes and Lightning Presentations can earn you ten (10) points each. The Research Proposal and the Research Briefing can earn you five (5) points each. The Advocacy Presentation and the Final Project can earn you twenty (20) and thirty (30) points, respectively. Here's how that breaks down overall and totals 100pts:

* Quizzes – 30pts
* Lightning Presentations – 10pts
* Research Proposal and Briefing – 10pts
* Advocacy Presentation – 20pts
* Final Project – 30pts

See the COMM 3321-Assignment Descriptions and Prompts handout on eCourseware (and attached) for details on each grade item.

**Course Schedule for Argumentation and Advocacy**

**Why We Argue-It’s Never Just One Thing: Dreams/Theory**

Wed 1/22 Rhetoric, Civic Controversy, Arguing to “Win”

Mon 1/27 Demonstration ≠ Argumentation: Audiences and the Core Binary

Wed 1/29 Argumentation: Clarify/Judge/Defend/Enjoy Discuss

Mon 2/3 Advocacy: Structure, Agency, Rhetorical Character, Spheres of Argument (Review course assignments)

Wed 2/5 The Riddle of the Starting Points

Mon 2/10 Values and the Ways of Adherence (Distribute fallacies for Lightning Presentation assignment)

Wed 2/12 Adherence and the Work of Hierarchy

Fri 2/14 **Quiz 1 due by 2:30pm via eCourseware**

**How Arguments Work-Even When (Maybe) They Shouldn’t: Schemes/Method**

Mon 2/17 Style and the Labor of Presence

Wed 2/19 Logic of Form > Formal Logic

Mon 2/24 **Lightning Presentations (Team Sneaky)**

Wed 2/26 **Lightning Presentations (Team Tricky)**

Mon 3/2 Recap and preview

Tues 3/3 **Research Proposal due by 2:30pm via eCourseware Discussions**

Wed 3/4 Discuss proposals

Fri 3/6 **Quiz 2 due by 2:30pm via eCourseware**

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**What Arguments Mean-The Case of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike: Themes/Interpretation**

***Monday March 9* through *Friday March 13\*Spring Break\*Read* At the River, I Stand *and “*Melodramas of Memphis*”***

Mon 3/16 *At the River, I Stand* (book) discussion and **in-class Quiz 3a**

Wed 3/18 Stasis Method, Mapping Controversy, and the Precise Virtues of *In Utramque Partem*

Mon 3/23 In-class viewing of *At the River, I Stand* (documentary)

Wed 3/25 Compare and contrast how argument functions in book and film

Mon 3/30 Tour the “I Am A Man: Memphis Sanitation Strike 1968” exhibit at the National Civil Rights Museum

*Meet at museum entrance at exactly 2:20pm; $15 entrance with student ID; we will finish by 3:45pm*

Wed 4/1 Discuss museum and exhibit as argument

Fri 4/3 **Quiz 3b due by 2:30pm via eCourseware**

Sun 4/5 **Research Briefing due by 10:00pm via eCourseware Discussions**

**What Arguments Do-Advocacy and Display: Dreams/Invention**

***Monday April 6* through *Thursday April 9 \* One-on-One Meetings\*Check eCoursware for link to make appointment***

Mon 4/13 Research Presentations (Group A)

Wed 4/15 Research Presentations (Group B)

Mon 4/20 Research Presentations (Group C)

Wed 4/22 Research Presentations (Group D)

Mon 4/27 Research Presentations (Group E)

Wed 4/29 Research Presentations (Group F)

Wed 5/6 **Final Projects due by 4pm via eCourseware**