

**English 7/8823**  
**Topics in Composition: Argumentation**  
Th. 5:30-8:30  
Dr. Brad McAdon  
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*Should educators care about argumentation?*

This course is a mix of theory and pedagogy. It will examine theoretical considerations of historical and contemporary argumentation and critical thinking theory, and then consider different ways of incorporating these theories into the teaching of composition and oral argumentation. We will divide the course into three units. In the first unit, we will trace a history of Western argumentation theory from Aristotle through Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Toulmin, and Rogers. One stop along the way in this unit is to consider the value (or not) of the *ethos, pathos, logos* approach to academic argument. In the second unit, we examine several conceptions of critical thinking and informal logic, and, in the third, we consider methods of incorporating argumentation and critical thinking theories into our teaching of argumentation in undergraduate writing courses. The semester projects could be adapted for either Composition or Communication interests. Emphasis will be placed upon assisting graduate students to become more careful and articulate thinkers and writers of argumentative essays and to provide them with a foundation from which they can teach students how to craft academic, argumentation essays more effectively.

**Objectives**

The primary objectives of this course are:

- to ground students in key concepts concerning argumentation and critical thinking theory;
- to help students become better critical thinkers and more effective at argumentation;
- to provide graduate students with helpful and effective tools to teach students how to write academic arguments; and
- to provide students with opportunities for practice teaching aspects of argumentation.

**Required texts (to be purchased)**

Booth, Wayne. *The Craft of Research*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., U Chicago Press, 2016 (978-0226239736).

Kennedy, George. *Aristotle's Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford. 2007 (9780195305098).

Perelman, Chaim and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver. Trans. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971 (9780268004460).

Toulmin, Stephen. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1958] (9780521534833).

Turabian, Kate. *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 2019 (9780226430263).

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Hackett, 2018 (9781624666544).