COMM 200: Critical Thinking and Speaking – Summer 2017

Section WB21 Online

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Office Hours: Online by appointment
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COMM 200 Course Description
In this course, students will be introduced to rhetorical theories of argument to develop and evaluate practical discourse. In doing so, students will conduct research, develop and deliver contextually driven messages, and identify and analyze others’ arguments.

General Education Learning Objectives
On completion of an Oral Communication general education course, students will be able to:
● Demonstrate competency in planning, preparing, and presenting effective oral presentations.
● Use effective presentation techniques including presentation graphics.
● Demonstrate effectiveness in using verbal and nonverbal language appropriate to the goal and the context of the communication.
● Demonstrate an ability to listen carefully.
● Demonstrate skill in asking and in responding to questions.
● Demonstrate awareness of communication ethics in a global society.

Course Specific Learning Outcomes
At the completion of the course:
● Students will be able to apply rhetorical theories of argument to develop and evaluate practical discourse. (General - Course description).
● Students will be able to identify and analyze the appeals, premises, and values in practical argument.
● Students will be able to locate and use credible evidence to build a body of related knowledge to create an argument.
● Students will be able to create and deliver messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.

Course Materials
● Plus additional readings posted on ELMs

It is imperative that you read these selections before class, and have them available during our discussions. For the majority of you, that means printing the articles and bringing them to class or accessing them from your computer in class.

ELMS/Canvas: Announcements, readings, assignments, grades, etc. will be posted to ELMs over the course of the semester so please be sure to check it regularly. In addition, Elms/Canvas will be used to communicate any emergency protocol procedures.
General Expectations and Policies
This is a performance course in two ways. We will take theoretical constructs of argumentation and put them into action. So, you will be performing in front of your peers. I also expect you to perform on another level—to participate in our class discussions. If you do not participate, this will be a really boring class. So let’s be ready and open for thoughtful and continuous discussion.

Participation/Attendance: Because this is a performance class, attendance is absolutely mandatory and necessary. I will take attendance every class period. By being absent you will miss out on graded class activities (each day will have points allocated to a class activity and if you are absent, then you will not receive those points). In addition, exams and essays will be more difficult because our exams and papers are not simply based on textual concepts, but emerge organically from both the text and the ways we apply and add to that text in class.

- There are no makeups for in-class activities or exams unless you are absent due to a university-excused absence, which include: religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness; illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

- Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence.

- For a medically necessitated absence from a single class, you may submit a self-signed note that attests to the date of the illness within one week of your return to class. The note must contain an acknowledgement that the information is true and correct and that providing false information is prohibited under the Code of Student Conduct. This option is only available one time during the semester. (Note: You may not submit a self-signed note if you are absent on a day when a Major Scheduled Grading Event is due. Major Scheduled Grading Events the narrative speech, policy speech, public forum, and argument analysis presentation.)

- If you experience additional medically necessitated absences (or if you are absent on a day when a Major Scheduled Grading Event is scheduled), you are required to provide documentation from a health care provider that specifies the date(s) of treatment and the reason(s) for your absence within one week of your return to class. In this same time, you are also responsible for arranging your make-up work with me.

- Excused absences will not result in a decreased participation score and include those based on university-excused activities, medical necessity and religious observation. Students are responsible for meeting with the instructor to discuss appropriate academic accommodation, and are responsible for determining all information and material missed due to absences. Students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of excused absences, and provide document within one week of returning to class.

- Special note: If you are absent on class days involving your presentation of material or an exam day (Major Grading Events), you are required to notify the instructor in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a healthcare professional. There is no extra credit or makeup for presentations or exams that are missed without a university-excused absence. If you miss a performance or exam, only special documentation will be accepted in very rare circumstances and only at my discretion.

- The full university attendance/absence policy can be found here: http://www.ugst.umd.edu/course-related-policies.html
**Tardiness:** If you arrive more than five minutes late to class, you will be marked “late.” If you are marked late three different times, you will accrue an “unexcused” absence. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes late to class, you will be marked absent.

**Grading Policies**

**Assignments:** For each major assignment in our class you will receive a rubric. Use it as a guide to help you understand my standards for excellence and competency. Overall, I expect both your speeches and essays to reflect: (1) your mastery of the material you are learning; (2) clear and cogent expression of thoughts; (3) proper APA, MLA, or Chicago Style.

- **Narrative Speech (100 points):** In the narrative speech you will craft a presentation that connects a personal narrative to a larger lesson or policy. The speech should be 3-4 minutes long.
- **Argument Analysis Essay (125 points):** In the Argument Analysis Essay you will use Toulmin’s theory of logical argument to analyze a published argument or editorial. The argument you are analyzing can be published in a magazine, a newspaper, some online sites, an academic journal etc. It is your responsibility to find something suitable for the assignment – but I’d be happy to offer advice. Consistent with Toulmin’s theory, your essay must represent the relationships between the claims, data, and warrants that are employed within your chosen argument. The essay should be no less than 1000 words and no more than 1500 (about 5 pages).
- **Policy Speech (175 points):** In the Policy Presentation you will give a 6–7 minute speech in which you propose a policy about an issue relevant to you. This speech will build on our discussion of argument, but it will also explore techniques of arrangement and audience analysis. A visual aid is required.
- **Public Forum (200 points):** The Public Forum will require you to build upon the work you've done throughout the course. You and several of your classmates will serve on a panel together around a single, common issue area. We will assemble these issue teams in the first half of the semester. In the forum, you will be expected to use the argumentation theories of Toulmin and Perelman to support and advance an advocacy angle pertaining to your team's issue.
- **Issue Folder (100 points):** At the beginning of the semester, I will survey the class on issues of interest. Though each student will spend considerable time researching topics individually, there will be two times when the class focuses on exploring issues together. I will do my best to ensure that the chosen issues have not already been covered by either individual speeches or the group assignment, or at least take a different angle on the issue than has otherwise been explored. Then, the class will read selected news articles, scholarship, and public discourse about that issue and complete an in-class written exercise utilizing and applying the content from COMM 200. We will discuss the folders as a class.
- **Quizzes (100 points):** There is no midterm exam in this course, only a final. So, you will take 12 quizzes during the course of the semester, so that you are properly preparing yourself for the final and are consistently doing the readings. Each quiz will consist of 5 questions and your lowest two scores will be dropped. Quizzes will be taken at the beginning of the class period on the day the quiz is noted on the syllabus. Note that the quizzes will include items we have discussed in class, a question or two from the reading due that day, and current event items.
- **Final Exam (100 points):** This exam is designed to measure your ability to synthesize concepts of logical argument and rhetoric throughout the course of our time together. To do so, the exam will take an online essay-based format that will be due during the time scheduled for our section’s final exam time.
- **Participation/Attendance (100 points):** Due to the participatory and discussion-based nature of the class, it is recommended that you do not miss class. With that said, attendance will be taken and points assigned to each day’s discussion/activity component.
Extra Credit: Up to 5 points of extra credit can be earned in this course. One point will be granted for each visit to the Oral Communication Center (OCC), Writing Center, or special event announced by the instructor. Please bring documentation of your visit to your instructor in order to receive credit.

Late Work Policy: All assignments are due via ELMS by 8:00 AM (or 9:30 AM) on the due date listed on the course schedule. Assignments submitted late will not be accepted, except under extenuating circumstances. Please notify me immediately if this is the case.

Appealing a Grade: If you want to appeal a grade that you’ve received, put your appeal in writing. Explain, based on the rubric, the syllabus, and your work, why you deserve a better grade than you received. Email it to me at ralt1@umd.edu within one week of receiving the grade. I will respond, setting up a time to meet to discuss the appeal. If we still disagree after our meeting, we will set up another meeting with the Course Supervisor, who will serve as an arbitrator.

Semester Evaluation Summary: As noted above, this class will be based on a 1,000-point grading scale. Below is a summary of points available for the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Speech</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument Analysis Essay</td>
<td>125 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Speech</td>
<td>175 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Forum (group)</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Folder</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
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</tbody>
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Final Letter Grades: I will compute your final course grade using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Point Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>1000-967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>966-934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>933-900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>899-867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>866-834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>833-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>799-767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>766-734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>733-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>699-667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>666-634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>633-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>599-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Academic Integrity: The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge: I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment). Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: http://www.shc.umd.edu
Additional Notes

A full list of course-related policies and relevant links to resources may be found at:
http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

University Classroom Climate: The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body and I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate. In this course, we will touch on stereotypes of culture, gender, and sexuality. Please be prepared to discuss these subjects in a manner that does not devalue your classmates.
You can read the full Statement on Classroom Climate here:
http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/classclimate.html

Disability Support: Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors as soon as they are registered with the DSS office. You are expected to meet with your instructor in person to provide them with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain your instructor’s signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructor will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dissup@umd.edu

Academic Accommodations for Students Who Experience Sexual Misconduct: The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As ‘responsible university employees’ faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/

Diversity: The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

Course Evaluations: Course evaluations are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. Your participation in this official system is critical to the success of the process, and all information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. (Instructors can only view group summaries of evaluations and cannot identify which submissions belong to which students.)

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