

ENG 300 Expository Writing: Argument

Syllabus

Summer 2009

July 1-Aug 11

T/R 5:30-8:40

Location: The Lodge/Reeves

Instructor: Martha Cheng , Asst. Prof., English

Email: mcheng@rollins.edu

Office: Carnegie Hall #135

Office hours: TR 4-5:30 and by appointment

Course Description

We hear, read, construct, and participate in persuasive arguments every day. These arguments can range from advocating a movie choice to listening to the president defend some public policy. In this course we will take a systematic look at arguments in order to understand how they are constructed and then practice constructing them effectively.

We will study ideas and methods of how to persuade audiences. Although some of these methods look at persuasion from different perspectives, they can be understood as complementing one another in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of a very complex phenomenon. My goal is to have you understand persuasion as a human endeavor: at one level it means thinking about thinking, thinking about people, and thinking about yourself as an advocate of a position; at another level it involves effectively using language and language structure to build relationships, explain events, and advocate certain positions.

Required Texts available at bookstore:

1. Rottenberg, Annette T. & Winchell, Donna Haisty. *Elements of Argument*. 9th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2009.
2. Williams, Joseph. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 9th Edition. New York: Pearson. 2007.

Other **required readings** will also be handed out in class.

Recommended Text available at bookstore:

1. Raimes, Ann. *Keys for Writers*. Wadsworth

OR a similar college-level writing handbook

Grades

| Grading Breakdown: | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------|----------|
| Short Writing 1 | 10% | 93-100 A | 73-76 C |
| Short Writing 2 | 15% | 90-92 A- | 70-72 C- |
| Short Writing 3 | 15% | 87-89 B+ | 67-69 D+ |
| Class Preparation & Participation | 20% | 83-86 B | 63-66 D |
| Final Paper | 40% | 80-82 B- | 60-62 D- |
| | | 77-79 C+ | < 60 F |

Student grades are based on the following definitions.

Grade 'A' is reserved for work that is *exceptional* in quality and shows *keen insight, understanding, and initiative*.

Grade 'B' is given for work that is consistently *superior* and shows interest, effort, or originality.

Grade 'C' is a respectable grade. It reflects consistent daily preparation and satisfactory completion of all work required.

Grade 'D-' is the lowest passing grade. It is below the average necessary to meet graduation requirements and ordinarily is not accepted for transfer by other institutions.

Grade 'F' is failing.

**See attached English Department Grading Scale for papers

Course Policies

© **Attendance:** You are allowed ONE absence during the course for any reason. A second absence will affect your participation grade. A third absence is automatic failure of the course. Lateness or early departure will also affect your grade. Over 15 minutes late is an absence. Leaving more than 15 minutes early is an absence. If you miss class, you are responsible for any materials or homework assigned during that class period. You should contact a classmate in order to find out what you have missed.

© **Class Preparation and Participation grade:** You must keep up with the reading and contribute actively to class discussion as well as participate in class exercises and assignments.

© All assignments must be written in clear, concise, coherent and grammatically correct prose. **Quality of writing** is ALWAYS part of your grade. See grading criteria above.

© All assignments must be properly formatted according MLA guidelines (see your writing handbook for criteria)

© Assignments must be turned in by their due date and time. **Late assignments will not be graded (i.e. you'll get a 0 for them).**

© Written assignments must be turned in as *hardcopy*. Emailed papers will not be accepted unless previously arranged with the professor.

© **Short Writing Optional Revisions:** You will hand in each Short Writing Assignment for a grade on its due date. It will be peer reviewed in class. You may, if you wish, revise that Short Writing to improve the grade by *at most* one letter (e.g. D→C, C→ B, B → A). The revision must merit that new grade—it must substantially improve the paper. Mere superficial changes will not be considered a true revision. Some revisions may only merit a half-grade raise. The revision must be handed in, with the original graded short writing, on the date indicated on the course schedule. Late revisions will not be accepted.

THE ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following pledge is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to all papers, quizzes, tests, lab reports, etc., the following handwritten abbreviated pledge followed by their signature:

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Students with Disabilities

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodation in order to participate in this class, please make appropriate arrangements with Gail C. Ridgeway, Disability Services Coordinator, located in the Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, (407) 646-2354, e-mail gridgeway@rollins.edu

Communications

The official means of communication outside of class is email. PLEASE be sure your ROLLINS email is working. You are responsible for checking your Rollins email for class information.

Schedule (may be revised as needed)

| | Class Topics | Reading/Assignment Due |
|------------------|---|--|
| Thur 7/2 | 1. Introduction 2. Writing exercise/topic brainstorming | Tannen: "Argument Cultures" |
| Tues 7/7 | 1. Purposes/parts of arg 2. Writing style | Rottenberg Ch 1; Herrick Ch 1 (handout) Williams Lessons 1 & 2 |
| Thurs 7/9 | 1. Exigence and Problems 2. Motivating Coherence | Smith, Ch 1(handout) Williams Lesson 10 Text Analysis |
| Tues 7/14 | 1. Claims/support/warrants 2. Claims/support/warrants | Rottenberg Ch 6, 7, 8 Short Writing #1 |
| Thur 7/16 | 1. Qualifications/Rebuttals 2. Writing: Global Coherence | Toulmin (handout) Williams Lesson 11 |
| Tues 7/21 | 1. Definitions/Language 2. Writing: Actions/Characters | Rottenberg Ch 5 & 10; Williams Lessons 3 & 4 Short Writing #2 |
| Thur 7/23 | 1. Definitions/Language 2. Writing: coherence & cohesion | Herrick Ch 12 & 13 (handout) Williams Lesson 5 Revised Short Writing #1 (optional) |
| Tues 7/28 | 1. Ethos/Pathos 2. Rogerian Argument | Short Writing #3 YBP Ch 8, 9, 12 (handout) |
| Thur 7/30 | 1. Fallacies 2. Writing: Concision | Rottenberg Ch 9 Williams Lesson 7 Revised Short Writing #2 (optional) |
| Tues 8/4 | 1. Argument Review 2. Writing Workshop | Final topic/outline |
| Thur 8/6 | 1. Writing Style Review 2. Writing Workshop | Revised Short Writing #3 (optional) Final Draft |
| Tues 8/11 | 1. Review | Final Paper |

The English Department's specific grading criteria for papers:

GRADING CRITERIA FOR PAPERS

Acceptable standards for college-level writing are defined by these virtues:

Characteristics of an A Paper

- ❖ Excellence in all respects – conceptual, rhetorical, grammatical. Highest quality work, revealing superiority of thought & insight as well as knowledge
- ❖ Clear subject and framework of interpretation throughout
- ❖ Keen understanding of needs and expectations of a particular audience
- ❖ Skillful organization – unified, ordered, coherent, and complete
- ❖ Variety: sentence type/length to meet rhetorical demands (topic & audience)
- ❖ Effective word choice – precise denotation, connotation, and tone
- ❖ Correctness in grammar, mechanics, and usage

Characteristics of a B Paper

- ❖ Subject & interpretive framework clear. Superior approach to topic
- ❖ Clear understanding of needs and expectations of a particular audience
- ❖ Clear organization with rare lapses in unity and/or coherence
- ❖ Clear focus on framework, subject, and details for each paragraph – fresh, appropriate examples and supporting evidence
- ❖ Variety: sentence type/length to meet rhetorical demands (topic & audience)
- ❖ Language use imaginative and appropriate
- ❖ Correctness in grammar, mechanics, and usage

Characteristics of a C Paper

- ❖ Examination or argument presented clearly with no deviation from stated or implied focus/intention
Though subject & framework evident, paper may not seem consistent and/or forceful in presentation or interpretation
- ❖ Organization acceptable, though less clear or forceful than in A or B paper
- ❖ Quality of support details uneven; examples and supporting evidence adequate
- ❖ Few errors in sentence structure, but sentences ineffective, unvaried
- ❖ Word choice generally correct; diction rarely imprecise or monotonous
- ❖ No major sentence level errors; few mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics

Deficient papers fail to meet college-level writing standards as follows:

Characteristics of a D Paper

- ❖ Adequate or only marginally acceptable examination of topic or idea
- ❖ Rational paragraphing, but body paragraphs underdeveloped or disorganized--marked problems with unity, order, coherence, and completeness
- ❖ Use of generalization without detail or detail with no controlling idea
- ❖ Sentence level errors frequent enough to distract the reader
- ❖ Inattention to audience needs
- ❖ Marginal grasp of rhetorical and grammatical principles.

Characteristics of an F Paper

- ❖ Failure to address assigned topic or change topic in a manner satisfying to both writer and audience
- ❖ Superficial attention to topic or attention to a trite or obvious topic
- ❖ Gross assertions taking the place of carefully developed evidence/examples
- ❖ Simplistic sentence structure; frequent errors in grammar, mechanics, usage
- ❖ Inappropriate use of sources, including failure to provide documentation

