

Winter 2018 – (Syllabus as of Jan 2)
Inventing Arguments in an Age of Polarization
Professor David Frank

M/W
12:00-13:20
242 Gerlinger
FINAL: 10:15 Tuesday, March 20

Chapman 210
Office Hours
January 8 – March 16
Mondays: 9:30-11:30
Tuesdays: 1:00-3:00
No office hours finals week
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COURSE and LEARNING OBJECTIVES¹

This course satisfies an Arts and Letters Group requirement. It is designed to provide students with an understanding of the rhetorical principles that underlie the invention of arguments, i.e. the process that leads to the selection of premises and appeals that become the basis for reasoned argument. It is a study of the rational processes that underlie the contingent and situated formation of logical and quasi-logical appeals. A theoretical understanding of these principles is gained by selective readings in classical rhetoric (i.e. topical invention as described by Aristotle and stasis invention as systemized in later rhetorical theory), in informal logic (as developed by pragmatist philosophers and modern scholars), in cognitive science, and in the field of argumentation studies. A practical understanding of these principles is gained through exercises in the construction of arguments according to techniques developed by these disciplines.

- Topical invention is the development of rhetorical syllogisms (enthymemes) based on general and specific *topoi*, or premises assumed to function as grounds for all types of arguments.
- Stasis invention is a forensic technique for isolating kinds of questions at issue and the lines of reasoning necessary to address them.
- Informal logic is a study of the types of appeals made in relation to probable claims, and the pragmatic and ethical conditions that give rise to them.
- Cognitive invention studies the interactions of denotation and metaphor to map the universe of claims.
- Argumentation studies involve all of the strategic “moves” and rhetorical appeals made available according to the relation of the arguer to a particular audience.

In this course, we will explore some of the central concepts in rhetoric and argumentation theory, but the major focus will be on practicing argumentation, especially the inventing of arguments. We will use the study of rhetoric and argumentation to support that practice. You will gain a knowledge of some important concepts in rhetoric and argumentation theory, and you will gain skill in discovering the questions that drive controversies and the arguments that can be made on all the different sides of an issue.

¹ I thank Professor James Crosswhite who developed the vision and curriculum for this course. To maintain consistency, I have used significant sections of his syllabus and language in this syllabus.

Our primary learning objective will be to consider possible answers to these questions:

1) What is the relationship between rhetoric and argumentation? What are there central elements, processes, forms, structures, techniques, goals?

2) How does one create or imagine audiences and the arguments that might persuade them in an age of polarization?

3) How can you use the study of rhetoric and argumentation to support that practice?

Toward this end, I will call on you in class. You will need to think and speak on your feet, to work in groups, to participate in debate, and to learn by practicing and in part by trial and error.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Heinrichs, Sam. *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion* Three Rivers, 2013. Available at the UO Bookstore.

Everyone enrolled in the course should read a major newspaper or news website on a daily basis. I recommend the *New York Times*, but feel free to choose something different. I will occasionally draw examples of arguments and controversial issues from the NYT for use in class. You will need a good source for examples, too.

Required readings for the course will be available on Canvas.

REQUIRED TIME

From UO Catalog: “In planning a term’s studies, students should anticipate that each credit requires at least three hours a week for class meetings or homework.” This is a 4-credit course, so plan for an average of 12 hours a week. That’s three in class and nine outside of class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Exams:

1. (10%) Memoria Exam. Rhetorical Terminology.
Monday, January 22. Returned Wednesday, January 24
2. (10%) Final Exam. Friday, March 18. 8:00 Friday,
March 18, 8:00 AM.

Written Argument:

1. (15%) Rhetorical Criticism of Trump Rally: Due: Monday, February 5, returned Monday, February 12, 1:20.
2. (20%) Rhetorical Criticism of Clinton Rally and Juxtaposition: Due, Wednesday, February 21, Returned, Monday Feb 26 1:20 PM.
3. (15%) Rhetorical Criticism: You will write a 4,000 word rhetorical criticism on the speech and speaker you have been assigned. Due: 8:00 AM, Friday, March 18.

Oral Argument:

1. (10%) Text interrogations and Class Participation. I will discuss the text each day and call on students by name to explain concepts and defend their interpretations. For each day of class that reading is assigned, the reading must be completed before class begins. Each day you come to class, come prepared to participate in

discussions and exercises. If the readings are posted online, print them out and bring them to class with you—or bring your notes. No electronic devices open during class.

2. (20%) Oral Presentation of Rhetorical Criticism. Each student will provide a Eight-minute oral synopsis of the assigned rhetorical criticism.

Participation

Attendance is required. I take attendance each day. Be sure that I call your name each day, and shout out if I do not. **If you are late, and miss my taking attendance, it is your responsibility to notify me, at the end of class, that you have attended.** Do not assume that I saw you arrive and recorded your attendance. *I will calculate final grades directly from my records, and I cannot fairly accommodate requests to correct my records at the time that final grades are given.* To cover illness or other events that make it impossible for you to attend, you are allowed two absences (one week of class). I recommend saving those absences for illness, athletic events, or unforeseen demands on your time. If you get sick with something contagious, do not come to class as long as you are contagious. If the illness lasts for longer than a week, or if a situation beyond your control causes you to miss more than two classes, be sure to contact me before the absences have accumulated, so that we can agree on a course of action. Written work may be submitted electronically only if you are sick or otherwise unable to attend class.

Being on time is also required. Lateness counts in considering your participation.

No late work, please. Any late work will be graded down one full grade for each day late. Note: I cannot accept a late final paper.

Participation counts and may raise or lower your final grade.

Two absences, *for whatever reason*, count as absences, but have no penalty. Beyond two absences, for each of the next two absences, three percentage points will be deducted from your total. After four absences (two weeks), each absence will cost five percentage points.

If an emergency arises or a situation out of your control temporarily prevents you from completing work on time, contact me immediately so that we can agree on a plan—before the work is due if that is possible. Email is the best way of reaching me for this.

COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Please include your **name**, the **date** you are submitting the work, the **course** number or name, the **word count**, and **my name** on your written work.

Please give your written work a title.

You should staple papers that have multiple pages. Papers should be double spaced, with one-inch margins.

Please use a 12 or 14 point font. Include the word count for your essays.

There are computers available for you to use in the Knight Library and in other locations on campus.

RESPECT, CONSIDERATION, AND PARTICIPATION

The course requires your active involvement. Active and respectful participation is inconsistent with eating, cell phone use, texting, internet surfing, side conversations, arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, distracting other people, and coming to class unprepared. If you do not give your full attention, you will not receive what the course has to offer. **Please close and put away all laptops and electronic devices when class begins.** Listen to others respectfully, and expect the same of them. And feel free to speak up. What you have to say is important and unique. It will take effort and the best kind of cooperation to unlock the energies that are available to us as we pursue our work. This will require respectful attention to each other, and probably some kindness toward one another, too.

A LITTLE MORE

If you have a disability that may affect your ability to participate in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for your full participation.

Please be aware also that the Teaching and Learning Center (68 PLC; phone: 346--3226) provides support for all students. The Center offer tutors to help you with your writing assignments and provides other kinds of academic help. Look into it. Your fees help to pay for this.

An “Incomplete” can be given only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed because of unforeseen circumstances beyond a student’s control.

All work submitted for this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. If you plagiarize or cheat, the penalty may be an “F” in the course. The use of sources (for example, other people’s language or paraphrases of their language or ideas) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

