COMM 230

Argument and Advocacy

SPRING 2015

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Messages may be left on voice mail or sent by e-mail. No home phone calls after 8 pm. Appointments may be made by calling, via email, or by speaking with the instructor.
OPEN DOOR POLICY: *If my office door is open, please come in. If it is shut, please respect my privacy. I am either working with a student, on the phone, or in need of quiet time to finish work. If you have an appointment, please knock. Otherwise, please make an appointment, call, or email me.*

Course Description

While studying the requirements of cogent argument, students practice advocacy and refutation in value and policy disputes, giving special attention to rational approaches to moral issues.

Bethany Lutheran College Academic Catalog 2012

Students will learn to understand how people develop opinions by analyzing context, values, and moral/ethical beliefs. Students who can understand how opinions form are more successful at advocating for their position.

Jon Loging 2008

Required Reading

Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. Thinking Critically About Ethical Issues. 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Carnegie, Dale. How to Win Friends & Influence People. Revised ed. New York: Pocket Books, 1981.

Format

This class is discussion based and requires students to take an active role in their education. Students will display their knowledge through in-class presentations and with homework assignments. Students need to apply what is learned in class with the theories learned in the texts.

Students need to have a general understanding of public speaking and the basics of persuasion. These skills can be learned in COMM 111 – Fundamentals of Speech, which is why it is a prerequisite for this class.

Disabilities

Please inform the instructor of any documented mental or physical disabilities as soon as possible. Arrangements will be made to assist students who need it.

Major and Course Objectives

The Communication Major has seven main outcomes for its students to achieve. A student in the Communication major should improve in the following areas:

1. Presentations: Increased confidence and competence in public presentations.
2. Relationships: Knowledge of the manner in which communication creates, maintains, and transforms relationships and the ability to engage in effective and productive relational communication.
3. Contexts: Knowledge of the crucial role communication plays in community, professional and civic contexts, and the ability to use communication behaviors ethically and effectively in various contexts.
4. Diversity: Knowledge and respect for the role of culture and diversity in communication, and the ability to effectively communicate within and across cultures.
5. Influence: Competency in the construction and analysis of arguments and discourse intended to influence beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices.
6. Technology: Ability to effectively use communication technology and to critically evaluate how technology affects communication.
7. Research: Competence in systematic inquiry, including the process of asking questions, systematically attempting to answer them, and understanding the limitations of the conclusions reached.

Students taking COMM 230 – Argument and Advocacy have specific objectives for the course that also fulfill the Communication Major objectives. Below are the course objectives and the major objectives they fulfill.

A student who has taken COMM 230 – Argument and Advocacy will be able to…

1. …use Stephen Toulmin's patterns of argument. (COMM Outcome #5 and 7)
2. …construct logical arguments supported by evidence. (COMM Outcome #5 and 7)
3. …identify and counter logical fallacies with proper responses. (COMM Outcome #1 and 5)
4. …practice ethical argumentation and advocacy. (COMM Outcome #2, 3, 4 and 5)
5. …give persuasive presentations to a variety of audiences. (COMM Outcome #1, 3, 4, 5 and 6)
6. …find and organize necessary resources to support claims and advocacy. (COMM Outcome #7)

Cell Phones/Laptop Computers

Interruption of class by cell phones will not be tolerated. Students should **turn off** their cell phones before class. If a cell phone rings, or vibrates enough to be noticed, the instructor reserves the right to answer the phone and then confiscate the phone for an undetermined period of time. The student's final grade will be affected with repeat occurrences.

Technology can be a wonderful thing. It can also be a major distraction. Laptop and tablet computers are welcome in class if they are being used for the purpose of learning in the class. No Facebook, email, chatting, web surfing, game playing, or other non-class related activity should happen. Students who abuse this privilege will not be allowed to use their computer during class time.

Attendance

Due to the discussion nature of this class, attendance becomes very important. Students may only have one unexcused absence or three excused absences. The student's grade will be lowered starting with the second unexcused absence or the fourth overall absence.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the teacher of an absence **before** the class that they will miss. Email is the preferred method to inform the teacher. It is still the student's responsibility even if a coach or advisor sends a notice to the faculty.

All assignments are still due on the day they were assigned. No extensions will be given.

Late work

Written assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class. Late work will only be accepted with permission of the instructor. Permission must be obtained as soon as possible **before** the assignment is due. Crashed computers, printer problems, and dogs that eat homework are your problems, not the instructor's. All excuses are good excuses, but none will be accepted. All other late work will only receive evaluation. No credit will be given.

Written work and citations

When turning in work, please remember the following statement, "**Be the professional you want to be**". You are attending college to prepare for a professional career. Start acting like the professional you would like to become. Set the standard for yourself. Let your work reflect the commitment you have to excellence.

All written work that is handed in will be typed. Hand written work will not be accepted. Work of more than one page must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner. You may print on both sides of the paper if you choose to do so. Use the following format: Double spaced with one inch margins on all sides. Point 12 Times New Roman font. Name, class, and section will be on top of the first page, along with pages numbers on all consecutive pages following MLA or APA format. All sources will be properly cited using MLA or APA format. See the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) for a free reference resource. Purchasing an up-to-date style manual is recommended for a successful college career.

All written work is due at the beginning of class. It will either be turned in during class, emailed to the teacher or uploaded to My BLC. **Work handed in late will receive no credit.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious breach of ethics and will not be tolerated in the classroom. If you intend to pass off another's work as your own, expect to face serious consequences. Minor offences such as forgetting to cite a source may reduce your grade for that assignment. Giving a speech which you did not write will earn you a failing grade for the semester.

The MLA Handbook* has defined plagiarism as follows:

1. repeating another's sentences as your own
2. adopting a particularly apt phrase as your own
3. paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own
4. presenting someone else's line of thinking as though it were your own.

In short, to plagiarize is to use someone else's work as your own, without crediting or citing the source. Direct word-for-word copying is permissible if the material appears in quotation marks and if the source is cited. Rephrasing and summarizing is permissible if the source is cited. With spoken work, the source must be given during the speech.

The instructor reserves the right to fail any student involved in plagiarism.

* *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, Dissertations* (New York, Modern Languages Association, 1977)

Assignments

This class is designed to be a dynamic class, changing to fit the current needs of the class. The assignments listed below are only part of the assignments students will complete. Other assignments will be given during the semester in response to the needs of the class.

Quizzes/General Assignments/Exams

Students will randomly be quizzed on material from lectures and readings. This is to insure they are keeping up with the reading and understand the material. There will be two exams through the course of the semester. (10% of final grade)

Hearing

Students will be divided into groups and given a side of a current issue. Each group will be involved with two hearings, one in favor of an issue and another opposed to the issue. The hearings will happen in class and the classmates who are not participating will be deciding the outcome of the hearing. (15% of final grade)

Debate Tournament

Students will be divided into three person debate teams. During several class periods, students will debate each other on a variety of topics. The goal is to persuade the judge of the round to their side of the issue using logic, wit, and other persuasive techniques learned in class. (15% of final grade)

Debate Analysis

Students will observe a debate, either in person or via multimedia (subject to approval by the instructor). The students will then analyze the arguments and determine which side of the debate won and why. (15% of final grade)

Proposal Defense

Students will create a proposal for some policy change. They will create documentation supporting that change, present the proposal to the class, and then defend their position and continue the advocacy. (25% of final grade)

Carnegie Assignments

Students will do smaller assignments based on the Dale Carnegie book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. These assignments will also include quizzes on the reading. Students will be given adequate time to complete the assignment. (10% of final grade)

Ruggiero Assignments

Students will do assignments from the Ruggiero text, *Thinking Critically About Ethical Issues*. These assignments will reinforce the concepts introduced in the text as well as assess the student's comprehension of ethical decision making. (10% of final grade)

On-Campus Research

In order to minimize confusion, clutter, and apathy, students are not allowed to survey the student body as a whole through email or paper survey or questionnaires. In order to do such research, students would need permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please talk with the professor before starting on-campus research.

Discussion

Due to the discussion nature of this class, some "rules" will be put in place in order to maintain respect and the education value of the discussion.

1. **Only one person speaks at a time.**
   The class does not have to raise their hand before speaking (though that is nice). However, no one should intentionally interrupt another classmate. Be patient. Think through your point. It might not be as good as you think!
2. **Pay attention!!**
   Even if you are not speaking, pay attention to the person who is. Do not start side conversations. Do not work on other class assignments. You might be called on to give your point of view. It would be beneficial to you to know what you are talking about.
3. **Show understanding of the previous speaker.**
   Do your best to tie what you have to say with that of the previous person or persons. Continue the discussion. Do not simply throw in your two cents just to be heard.
4. **Inquire if the speaker had more to add.**
   If you are responding to a specific point, ask the person who made the point if they have a follow-up to your point. It helps to conclude one topic at a time. It hurts discussions to have to constantly go back five minutes to rehash another point.
5. **Do not shift topics until the current topic is done.**
   Just because you want to talk about a different aspect of a topic does not mean it is time to do so. Wait for the opportune time. Discussion is a group effort. Think about everyone and not just yourself.
6. **"It depends…" is an allowable response if only followed by a credible argument.**
   Life is rarely a black and white place. Therefore, you may answer a question with "It depends…" However, you must have a credible argument to back up your point. You must use an argument that pertains to the current discussion. Do not go to extremes. Stay within the scope of the current discussion.
7. **Ultimately, the instructor is in charge.**
   While it might not often seem like it, the instructor will be the discussion leader. The conversation may go on without input from the instructor. Keep the discussion going until the instructor tells you to stop.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus as the curriculum and/or program requires. Students will be notified with sufficient time to complete their assignments.