

COMM 9 Course Outline as of Fall 2025**CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: COMM 9 Title: CRITICAL THINK & ARGUMENT
 Full Title: Critical Thinking and Argumentation
 Last Reviewed: 4/9/2024

Units	Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks		Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	4	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: SPCH 9

Catalog Description:

Students will focus on written argumentation with special attention to the essay form. Students will also employ analysis, evidence, reasoning, refutation, and rebuttal in oral and written discussions and debates to develop strong arguments for their final-draft papers.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Completion of ENGL 1A OR EMLS 10 (formerly ESL 10) or higher

Recommended Preparation:**Limits on Enrollment:****Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: Students will focus on written argumentation with special attention to the essay form. Students will also employ analysis, evidence, reasoning, refutation, and rebuttal in oral and written discussions and debates to develop strong arguments for their final-draft papers. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Completion of ENGL 1A OR EMLS 10 (formerly ESL 10) or higher

Recommended:

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	B	Communication and Analytical Thinking	Fall 1994	

CSU GE:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	A3	Critical Thinking	Fall 1995	

IGETC:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	1B	Critical Thinking - English Composition	Fall 1995	

CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1994	Inactive:
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UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1994	Inactive:
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CID:

CID Descriptor: COMM 120 Argumentation or Argumentation and Debate

SRJC Equivalent Course(s): COMM9 OR COMM3

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Both Certificate and Major Applicable

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Compose well-organized argumentative essays that utilize expert evidence and sound reasoning.
2. Engage in dialectic processes to create stronger Aristotelian arguments or more reasoned Rogerian syntheses.
3. Analyze and evaluate written and oral arguments to identify the premises for each conclusion, assess the quality of reasoning, and gauge the sufficiency of proof.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Develop arguments that support claims of fact, value, and policy.
2. Apply stock issues analysis when supporting or opposing a claim.
3. List, explain, and apply the techniques of refutation in an Aristotelian system of argument.
4. Identify and utilize the principles of establishing common ground in a Rogerian system of argument.
5. Identify and utilize the principles of effective and efficient research in preparing arguments to support or oppose a claim.
6. Identify and demonstrate both inductive and deductive reasoning.
7. Compare and contrast different patterns of reasoning including example, analogy, causal, and sign reasoning.

8. Recognize common logical errors or fallacies of language and thought.
9. Demonstrate the use of outlining to construct argumentative essays.
10. Critique an argument or set of arguments.
11. Compare and contrast Aristotelian Argument with Rogerian Argument.
12. Analyze, criticize, and generate complex ideas.
13. Identify the enthymemes, warrants, or assumptions upon which conclusions depend.
14. Identify the components of sufficient proof.
15. Reflect critically on one's own thought processes.
16. Demonstrate appropriate use of texting, blogging, or influencing, with attention to the intended audience, purpose, and social context.
17. Identify knowledge versus belief.
18. Identify a fact versus a judgment.
19. Evaluate sources with respect to their relevance, reliability, and appropriateness to the rhetorical context.
20. Identify which kinds of arguments prove particularly open to cultural sensitivity

Topics and Scope:

I. Introduction to the Course

- A. The relationship between argument and critical thinking
- B. The role of critical thinking in life, politics, professions, and education
- C. Argumentation and epistemology in the Western rhetorical tradition
- D. The roles and responsibilities of arguers

II. The Nature of Argumentation: From Arguing to Debating

- A. The meaning of argumentation
- B. The basic unit of rhetorical argument: the enthymeme
- C. The relationship of debate to argumentation
- D. The world of debate
- E. Rogerian argumentation as an alternative to Aristotelian debate

III. The Reasonable Person Model: Addressing our Rational Selves

- A. Defining the "reasonable person"
- B. The parties to a dispute
- C. The role of argumentation in problem solving
- D. The ethics of argumentation

IV. Defending or Opposing a Claim

- A. The burden of proof
- B. Presumption
- C. The standard of proof
- D. The burden of refutation

V. The Requirements for a Properly Constructed Discussion or Debate Topic

- A. One central idea
- B. Controversy
- C. Neutral terminology
- D. The burden of proof properly placed
- E. Culturally diverse and inclusive topics

VI. The Importance of Definitions

- A. Types of definitions
- B. Standards for evaluating competing definitions

VII. Traditional Stock Issue Requirements

- A. Resolutions of fact
- B. Resolutions of value
- C. Resolutions of policy

VIII. Affirmative Strategies in Debate

- A. Needs analysis
- B. Comparative advantage
- C. Alternative justification
- D. Goals/criterion

IX. Negative Strategies in Debate

- A. Topicality
- B. Defense of the status quo
- C. Minor repair
- D. Counter policies
- E. Reliance on presumption
- F. Disadvantages

X. Critical Thinking

- A. The Toulmin Model
- B. Fallacies of reasoning
- C. Syllogisms
- D. Inductive reasoning
- E. Deductive reasoning
- F. Determining valid and invalid arguments

XI. The Role of Research in Support of Claims

- A. The need for evidence
- B. The evaluation of evidence
- C. The application of evidence
- D. Conducting basic research
- E. Evaluation of expert sources

XII. Evaluating the Debate

- A. The role of the argument critic
- B. Judging paradigms
- C. Providing constructive feedback

XIII. Rogerian Argument

- A. Understanding both sides
- B. Finding common ground
- C. Using interest-based or win-win negotiations
- D. Building a solution
- E. Defending a solution

Assignment:

1. Reading 1-2 chapters per week
2. Writing assignments (minimum of 5,000 total words) must include at least one extended argument for which the student participates in a debate or discussion and receives instructor feedback on research, draft-writing, and the discussion or debate itself. Based on the instructor feedback and the dialectic process, the student revises the paper to create the best final draft possible, with attention to effective argumentative writing. Additional writing to meet the 5000-word requirement may include:
 - A. Sequential writing on opposing viewpoints
 - B. Essays emphasizing analysis and evaluation of arguments from a critical viewpoint
 - C. Formal argumentative term papers that advocate for or against a policy change on a significant contemporary issue
 - D. Formal argumentative term papers that advocate for or against a value assessment
 - E. Formal argumentative term papers that advocate for or against a factual determination on a current social or political topic

- F. Formal argumentative term papers that advocate a Rogerian solution to a polarized issue
 - G. Written peer responses, and other forms of informal writing which informs students' inquiry-driven research and writing processes
3. Analysis and evaluation of arguments from a critical viewpoint
 4. Debates or Rogerian discussions, with options of a minimum of three possible topics, at least two of which will reflect the histories and lived experiences of California Community College students
 5. Attendance and participation in discussions and group exercises
 6. Additional assignments as determined by instructor may include field work critiques of live or media presentations
 7. Exams and quizzes (2-20)

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Writing assignments	Writing 50 - 60%
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Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Analysis and evaluation of arguments from a critical viewpoint	Problem solving 5 - 10%
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Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

Debates or discussions	Skill Demonstrations 15 - 25%
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Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Exams and quizzes	Exams 15 - 25%
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Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Class attendance and participation in discussions and group exercises	Other Category 5 - 10%
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Representative Textbooks and Materials:

Arguing, Reasoning, and Thinking Well. Gass, Robert and Seiter, John. Routledge. 2019. (classic).

Argumentation and Debate. 13th ed. Freeley, Austin and Steinberg. David. Wadsworth Publishing. 2013. (classic).

Critical Thinking Through Debate. 3rd ed. Nelson, Mark and Corcoran, Joseph. Kendall/Hunt. 2019. (classic).

Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument. 11th ed. Barnet, Sylvan and Bedau, Hugo and O'Hara, John. Bedford/St. Martins. 2022

Elements of Argument: A Text and Reader. 13th ed. Rottenberg, Annette and Winchell, Donna. MacMillan Learning. 2021

From Critical Thinking to Argument: A Portable Guide. 7th ed. Barnet, Sylvan and Bedau, Hugo and O'Hara, John. MacMillan Higher Ed. 2023

How Arguments Work - A Guide to Writing and Analyzing Texts in College. Mills. LibreTexts. [https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Advanced_Composition/How_Arguments_Work_-_A_Guide_to_Writing_and_Analyzing_Texts_in_College_\(Mills\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Composition/Advanced_Composition/How_Arguments_Work_-_A_Guide_to_Writing_and_Analyzing_Texts_in_College_(Mills)) . CC BY-NC 4.0