

CATALOG INFORMATION

Dept and Nbr: COMM 9            Title: CRITICAL THINK & ARGMNT  
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	5	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:**  
Primary emphasis is on argumentation as the study of analysis, evidence, reasoning, refutation and rebuttal in oral and written communication. A significant component involves written argumentation with special attention to the essay form.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites:**  
Completion of ENGL 1A or higher

**Recommended Preparation:**

**Limits on Enrollment:**

**Schedule of Classes Information:**  
Description: Primary emphasis is on argumentation as the study of analysis, evidence, reasoning, refutation and rebuttal in oral and written communication. A significant component involves written argumentation with special attention to the essay form. (Grade or P/NP)  
Prerequisites/Corequisites: Completion of ENGL 1A 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:**

<b>AS Degree:</b>	<b>Area</b> B	Communication and Analytical Thinking	Effective: Fall 1994	Inactive:
<b>CSU GE:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b> A3	Critical Thinking	Effective: Fall 1995	Inactive:
<b>IGETC:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b> 1B	Critical Thinking - English Composition	Effective: Fall 1995	Inactive:
<b>CSU Transfer:</b>	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1994	Inactive:
<b>UC Transfer:</b>	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1994	Inactive:

### **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 argumentative essays that utilize sound reasoning, clear organization and evidentiary support.
2. Engage in debates that demonstrate knowledge of current debate guidelines and strategies.
3. Analyze and evaluate written and oral arguments in order to identify the premises for each conclusion, assess the quality of reasoning, and gauge the sufficiency of proof.

### **Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop arguments that support the traditional prima facie elements for propositions of fact, value and policy.
2. Apply stock issues analysis when supporting or opposing a resolution.
3. List, explain and apply the techniques of refutation.
4. Identify and utilize the principles of effective and efficient research in preparing arguments to support or oppose a debate resolution.
5. Compare and contrast the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning.
6. Compare and contrast different patterns of reasoning including example, analogy, causal and sign reasoning.
7. Recognize and identify logical fallacies.
8. Demonstrate the use of outlining to construct cases that support or oppose a debate resolution.
9. Critique a debate, oral and/or written, providing reasons for a decision in accordance with accepted evaluation standards.

## **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

### **III. The Reasonable Person Model: Addressing our Rational Selves**

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

### **IV. The Resolution: The Focus of a Debate**

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

### **V. The Requirements for a Properly Constructed Debate Resolution**

- A. One central idea
- B. Controversy
- C. Neutral terminology
- D. The burden of proof properly placed

### **VI. The Importance of Definitions**

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

### **VII. Traditional Prima Facie 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
- XII. Evaluating the Debate
  - A. The role of the critic
  - B. Judging paradigms
  - C. Providing constructive feedback

### Assignment:

Assignments will include:

1. Reading 1-2 chapters per week
2. Writing assignments (minimum of 6,000 words) 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
3. Skills demonstration consisting of two or three oral debates (in the classroom or via teleconferencing)
4. Attendance and class participation
5. Optional field work including critiques of live presentations
6. Exams (2-20):
  - a. midterm exam(s)
  - b. final exam
  - c. quizzes

### 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.

Argumentative essays of varying lengths

Writing  
50 - 60%

**Problem Solving:** Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Include evaluating syllogisms, identifying fallacies and identifying the problem with (and fixing) incorrectly phrased resolutions

Problem solving  
5 - 10%

**Skill Demonstrations:** All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

Include oral presentations/debates, performance exams

Skill Demonstrations  
15 - 25%

**Exams:** All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Multiple choice; True/False; Matching; Completions; Essays

Exams  
15 - 25%

**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%

### **Representative Textbooks and Materials:**

Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument. 9th ed. Barnet, Sylvan and Bedau, Hugo and O'Hara, John. Bedford/St. Martins. 2016

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

Critical Thinking and Communication: The Use of Reason in Argument. 7th ed. Inch, Edward and Tudor, Kristen. Pearson. 2013

Critical Thinking Through Debate. 2nd ed. Nelson, Mark and Corcoran, Joseph. Kendall/Hunt. 2012 (classic)

Argument! 2nd ed. Gooch, John and Seyler, Dorothy. McGraw-Hill. 2012 (classic)

Argumentation and Critical Decision Making. 8th ed. Rieke, Richard and Sillars, Malcolm and Peterson, Tarla. Pearson. 2012 (classic)

Burden of Proof: An Introduction to Argument and Guide to Parliamentary Debate. 4th ed. Crossman, Mark. Thomson Custom Publishing. 2005 (classic)