



Department of English and Writing Studies

WR 2202F: Winning Your Argument: Rhetorical Strategy in a Visual Age Fall 2021

Section: 650

Email: Please use OWL Message

Professor: Tim Freeborn

Course Description and Objectives

Argument: n. 1. An exchange of differing or opposing views, typically a heated or angry one; 2. A reason or set of reasons given with the aim of persuading others that an action or idea is right or wrong; 3. A summary of the subject matter of a book.

--from *The Oxford American Dictionary*, 2005, p. 82

Rhetoric: n. 1. The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, esp. the use of figures of speech or other compositional techniques; 2. Language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect on its audience, but is often regarded as lacking in sincerity or meaningful content.

--from *The Oxford American Dictionary*, 2005, p. 1452

“An intensive and practical study of exposition in discursive prose,” this course, as its calendar description states, “reviews the foundations of grammar, introduces students to the rhetoric of presentation and persuasion, and considers diverse types of prose across multiple disciplines, focusing on an analysis of visual rhetoric and argumentation, including websites, advertisements, and other visual media.” In other words, this course will ask you to read, write, analyze, engage with, construct, deconstruct, and revise various types of arguments, considering the concerns of audience expectation, purpose, and rhetorical situation.

More generally, Writing 2202 will build upon what you learned in Writing 2101 F/G, continuing to help you expand on your “ability to communicate information, arguments, analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences” (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents’ statement on “university Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations,” Oct. 2005).

Throughout the semester, in addition to gaining and sharing knowledge about argumentation, you will

- use electronic resources to communicate with others, while adapting your ideas to appropriate writing technologies;
- write essays that involve rhetorical and cultural analysis and papers that involve creative nonfiction;
- critically assess both your own and your peers’ writing through group and electronic forums with consideration to both local and global issues;
- revise papers through multiple drafts; and

- analyze language and purpose as it appears in a variety of cultural contexts and rhetorical situations.

In our attempt to accomplish these objectives and to better understand how arguments of all kinds are constructed, we will examine a variety of rhetorical techniques and analyse arguments of all forms. To understand what makes a strong argument, we will consider what an argument is and how rhetoric can be helpful or harmful. What does it mean to develop argument? Readings will include short stories, political speeches, news reports, academic essays, theoretical readings, advertisements, films, and web and visual based rhetoric that attempts to create an argument in some way. By the end of the semester, you will be well versed in identifying, analysing, and creating arguments of all kinds.

Required Texts

Barnet, Sylvan, and Hugo Bedau. *From Critical Thinking to Argument: A Portable Guide*. Sixth Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2020.

Messenger, de Bruyn, et al. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Second Essentials Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Supplementary/discussion readings from various sources (to be posted on OWL).

Note: The two required textbooks are available through the Western Bookstore. You can purchase physical copies there, or you can order copies to be shipped to your address (in Canada). Shipping rates and information can be found at this link: <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/shipping-information>

Both texts are also available in ebook form for purchase or rental through VitalSource at the following links:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/from-critical-thinking-to-argument-sylvan-barnet-hugobedau-v9781319216924>

<https://www.vitalsource.com/products/the-canadian-writers-handbook-kobo-william-e-messenger-jan-dev9780199025596?term=9780199025596>

Course Requirements

Weekly Discussion	10%
Formal Media Analysis	20%
Rhetorical Analysis	30%
Formal Research Paper with Visuals	40%

Assignment Format

All essays are to be typed and double-spaced, using a 12-point serif font (e.g., Times New Roman). and submitted as a .doc, .docx, or (equivalent) format. Pdf and other “read-only” formats are not acceptable. Do not use a cover page, which is unnecessary for an online submission. You are expected to follow MLA guidelines for documentation, which will be discussed in class and are detailed in *The Canadian's Writer's Handbook* section 37 and *From Critical Thinking to Argument* Chapter 7.

Submitting Assignments

You will submit assignments through the “Assignments” module on our OWL course page. When you submit your assignments, they will be submitted automatically to Turnitin.com, a source-checking program. Turnitin.com will generate a report for you, detailing the percentage of your paper drawn from

secondary sources; you will be able to see the report, as will I. I will not grade any essay until I see the report.

All assignments are due on the date stated on the class schedule. You are expected to submit an electronic version to Turnitin.com via OWL (see below). **DO NOT EMAIL ME ASSIGNMENTS.**

Late assignments will penalized 5% per day, and they will not receive comments. Should you need an extension for any reason, **please contact me by email at least 24 hours prior to the day an assignment is due to discuss an extension.** Extensions may be granted only for the writing assignments; they will be granted neither for the forum postings nor for the peer-review sessions.

Attendance and Participation

The most successful classrooms have students and instructors equally engaged in a discussion about the readings, assignments, and daily topics. You are expected to complete the assigned readings each week. As this is a Distance Studies course, we do not meet formally; thus, attendance and participation on the class discussion board are connected. While online courses are typically asynchronous (and this one is no different), they are not self-paced. You must attend and participate in class (defined as logging into our OWL section and interacting with your peers and instructor by posting questions and responding to your peers' questions and your instructor's prompts in the relevant topic sections under the "Forums" link).

Your class discussion grade will be based on whether you have fulfilled the posting requirements, listed in more detail below. In general, the grade will be based on (1) the quality of your posts each week, (2) the frequency and number of posts made, and (3) the number of posts you read and to which you respond.

1. Quality of Posts

All posts on the forum must

- contribute something meaningful to the board;
- support your opinion with sufficient reasons and/or evidence;
- demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading and read your classmates' posts;
- display good grammar and organization.

Posts should not

- employ disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- be unrelated to the weekly topic;
- be too long (more than one screen length) or too short (shorter than three sentences);
- consist merely of statements like "I agree with you" or "Great comment!" Such posts do not contribute any substance to the discussion.

2. Frequency and Number of Posts

To earn full marks, you must post **at least three times on three separate days** covering a particular week's forum question, in addition to meeting the standards stated under Quality of Posts. **At least one post must initiate a new thread** to the discussion, and **at least one must reply to another student.** For the purposes of the participation grade, all weeks run from Monday to Sunday; late posts (i.e., posts that appear after the discussion concludes on Sundays at midnight) will not count toward your participation grade.

3. Number of Posts Read

I will also look at the number of posts you've read. For instance, if during Week 3, the class has posted

100 times in total and you only read 10 of those posts, that fact does not at all reflect positively on you when I am assigning your class discussion grade.

Peer Review

For the assignments, you will participate in a peer review, which will be conducted through the Forum tab, in an appropriately titled section, and follow the instructions posted there. You will have specific items to respond to for each assignment. Failure to upload a with a sufficiently complete draft and to participate by reviewing at least two other students' drafts ***will result in the earned marked for that assignment being reduced by 10%***. For example, what would have been an earned mark of 78 for your assignment will receive a mark of 70.

Attendance Policy

The very nature of this course requires that you attend regularly to do well. If you miss more than two weeks of class your final grade will be penalized 10%. If you miss more than three weeks, your final grade will be penalized 15%. Not attending class is defined as not posting in the class discussion at all. This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons as outlined in the Medical Accommodation Policy below.

Email Policy

Because this is an online course, we will communicate exclusively via OWL. When you contact me using OWL Message, you can expect a response within twenty-four hours. If you email me using Outlook/Western email, you can expect a response within one week. If you email me using a non-UWO account, you will not receive a response. If I foresee that I cannot respond to emails within times listed above, I will post an announcement

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf”

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision

may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101F/G, 2125F/G (or the former 2121F/G), 2111F/G, 2130F/G, or 2131F/G; or b) a final grade of 70 or more in one of Writing 1000F/G, 1030F/G, 1031F/G, or c) Special Permission of the department.

Academic Accommodation and Consideration

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation. All requests for consideration for assessments worth more than 30% of a final grade must be directed to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s Home Faculty.

In this course, all requests for academic consideration must be directed to the Academic Counselling office of the student’s Home Faculty if a SRA will not be used.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Special Requests (Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing)

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Major Assignment Due
Week 1: Sept. 8-19	Introductions. How do we read?	
Week 2: Sept. 20-26	Critical Reading and Arguments	
Week 3: Sept. 27- Oct. 3	Critical Reading (cont’d)	
Week 4: Oct. 4-10	Visual Rhetoric	Peer Review: Media Analysis
Week 5: Oct. 11-17	Using Sources	Media Analysis, Due Oct. 10, 11:55 p.m.
Week 6: Oct. 18-24	Developing an Argument	
Week 7: Oct. 25-29 5 p.m.	Developing an Argument (cont’d)	Peer Review: Rhetorical Analysis
October 29 5 p.m.– November 7	FALL READING BREAK	
Week 8: Nov. 8-14	Analyzing an Argument	Rhetorical Analysis, Due November 14, 11:55 p.m.
Week 9: Nov. 15-21	Toulmin Model	
Week 10: Nov. 22-28	Deductive and Inductive Arguments	
Week 11: Nov. 29- Dec. 5	Fallacies	Peer Review: Research Paper
Week 12: Dec. 6-8	Research Paper	Research Paper, Due December 8, 11:55 p.m.