

Writing 2202F: Winning Your Argument: Rhetorical Strategy in a Visual Age

Fall 2023

Section: 650

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen Fraser

Course Description and Objectives

Argument: n. 1. An exchange of differing or opposing views, typically a heated or angry one; 2. A reasoner set of reasons given with the aim of persuading others than 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 2202F/G will build upon what you learned in Writing 2101 F/G or another introductory Writing course, 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 non-fiction;
- 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 may 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 and Course Materials

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: Third Essentials Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2023.

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 e-book form.

Course Requirements

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

Attendance policies

We do not meet formally as a class in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, attendance and participation on the Discussion Board are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging into our OWL section) and participate by introducing yourself and posting questions and thoughts during the first week, and by posting (by participating in a given week's set discussion topic) in subsequent weeks where a Discussion topic is indicated on this syllabus. During such weeks (a week is defined *for this purpose* as running from Monday to Sunday), you must contribute at least three separate posts, **at least one of which must be a response to another student, and at least one of which must be a new post**. Extended absences, defined as a failure to post into the OWL classroom for more than five consecutive days, must be

coordinated with the instructor.

