

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

Fall 2026

Section: 650

Email: kfraser@uwo.ca

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 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 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 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*. **Seventh Edition**. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2023. The textbook cost is \$64.

Strongly Recommended Text:

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, and Judy Brown. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. Third Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press, 2023. The textbook cost is \$30.

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

Note: The 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>

Course Requirements

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

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).