

CMST 2063-2 Argumentation & Debate¹
Fall 2017
T/TH 12:00-1:20PM
Coates Hall 130

Instructor: Christopher J. Vincent
Office: Coates Hall 319
Email: cvinc22@lsu.edu
Office Hours: T/TH 1:30PM-2:30PM or by appointment

Required Texts/Materials

- Readings/Materials will be posted on Moodle.
- Access to and competency with online search engines and university libraries.

Course Description/Objectives

CMST 2063 awards General Education Humanities credit, addressing the achievement of the following General Education Competency:

LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity, which supports sophisticated discourse.

Everyday we are engaged in and surrounded by debates—with friends, family, peers, coworkers, and many others. These interactions often require us to take a position, develop it, and then defend it. This course introduces students to both the theory and practice of argumentation, seeking to improve your ability to effectively state and defend your position, and analyze and respond to the arguments of others. Upon the completion this course students should be able to:

- Identify the elements of effective and ethical argumentation and debate
- Know what evidence is, how to use it to prove a claim, and to evaluate the adequacy and quality of you and your opponents evidence
- Construct and defend arguments
- Identify, understand and evaluate arguments, reasoning, and logical fallacies
- Develop refutation skills and cross examination skills
- Be able to use these skills in a variety of forums.

Course Policies

Attendance/Participation:

This class is discussion and practice oriented. Success in this class is directly correlated to your faithful attendance and participation in class discussions and most obviously debates. Your class participation will be determined based on in-class discussion, assignments/exercises, and analysis of in-class presentations throughout the semester.

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Ashley Mack, Dr. Bryan McCann & Mary Mudd for sharing their ideas and syllabi with me.

Students are given two unexcused absences before losing points. **Attendance on debate days is required. This is non-negotiable. Failure to attend on a debate day will result in a 10point deduction from your own debate grade for each day missed.** If you are absent for more than two classes, you must provide documentation of an emergency, which kept you from class. In addition, habitual tardiness or leaving class early will count as an absence. If you are participating in a university sanctioned/sponsored activity (forensics, athletics, etc.), it is your responsibility to negotiate your debate days, and to communicate your absence in a timely better.

Group Work:

The success of this class hinges on your ability and willingness to be accountable to learning partners/classmates. Every debate assignment relies on a minimum of two people to show up on designated presentations days and to work together beforehand.

Few things can derail this course more than the failure of even one member of the class to fulfill their responsibilities by missing a debate, dropping the class the day before they are scheduled to debate, etc. It does a disservice to your partner, classmates, and professor.

Furthermore, if your debate partner is able to indicate that you have been incommunicado during the lead-up to the debate and I cannot reach you either, I will automatically drop you from the debate and you will receive a zero.

Debate Days:

On debate days students should arrive dressed in the appropriate attire (i.e. not pajamas) prepared to debate. All individuals must submit a folder containing materials pertinent to each specific assignment. Please see the specific assignment details for what is required. While you may use a laptop or other device to hold and reference material during your debate, you may not access the Internet while the debate is taking place.

Your role as an audience member is equally important to a successful debate. As noted in the attendance policy, attendance on debate days are mandatory. This means that working on homework, typing on a lap top, text messaging, walking in late while someone is speaking, sleeping, or simply looking like anything other than engaged in your classmates' work will result in a verbal warning from me, followed by a ONE LETTER GRADE DEDUCTION from your own debate grade.

Technology Policies:

Laptops and other similar devices may be used only for the purpose of note taking. All other technology is strictly prohibited during class. Students caught violating this will lose participation points for the day. In case of emergencies requiring cell phone access during the class session, you should notify your instructor before class begins and attempt to sit near the entrance to the classroom.

Academic Integrity:

Don't plagiarize. Any student found to have turned in material not his or her own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) in part or in whole will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students.

The Internet has made plagiarism very easy and very tempting. Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own. See the LSU policies on plagiarism here:

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>

Your paper would be considered as plagiarized in part or entirely if you do any of the following:

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references. Simply rewording a sentence does not make work your own.
- Submit a paper in which you “cut and paste” or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.

Accommodations:

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitations Act of 1973 states: “If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged.” After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (“LSU”) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This

policy establishes a mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, LSU programs and/or an academic environment.

Grade Appeals:

With any returned graded work, you should **wait 24 hours** before submitting an appeal of grade. If you feel an error has been made in the grading of an assignment and would like to have the grade reviewed, you should submit a typed statement explaining the reason for the review and the original graded assignment to me **within seven days** of receiving the graded assignment. No grade adjustments will be made after the seven-day period.

Late Work:

Major class assignments are to be turned in by the time class starts on the day that they are due. Assignments will not receive credit if turned in after the end of class on the day that they are due. Any work turned in during class will be considered late. Debates **CANNOT** be made up.

Prior arrangements must be made with the instructor if extenuating circumstances prevent you from meeting an important deadline. If prior arrangements have been made, a penalty of 10% will be assessed to any late work for each day it is late. If you miss work due to a university approved absence, you will be responsible for providing documentation to confirm the excused dates and for coordinating make-up work, making every effort to make arrangements before the absence when possible. In class activities cannot be made up.

Standards of Work:

It should be assumed, unless specified otherwise, that all work done outside of class should be typed, double-spaced, and in 12 font print. I will not accept handwritten assignments. All work using citations should be completed in MLA format. If you have questions, please let me know.

Grading

Final grades will be assigned as follows. All work must be completed in the semester.

Assignment	Points Possible
Refutation Speech	50
Debate 1	150
Debate 2	200
Quizzes	100
Ballots	100
Argument Analysis Paper	200
Participation/Reading Responses	200
Total Points Possible	1000

A+ ... 970-1000 points
A ... 930-969 points
A - ... 900-929 points
B + ... 870-899 points
B ... 830-869 points
B - ... 800-829 points
C + ... 770-799 points
C ... 730-769 points
C - ... 700-729 points
D + ... 670-699 points
D ... 630-669 points
D - ... 600-629 points
F ... 0-599 points

* REGARDLESS OF YOUR POINT TOTAL, YOU CANNOT PASS THIS CLASS IF:

- A) You fail to complete your debate brief
- B) You fail to perform a speech or debate
- C) You conduct yourself in a way that seriously threatens your debate partner's performance in this class.

Assignment Descriptions:

Refutation Speech: (50points)

The refutation speeches require students to give a 2-minute speech to the class, followed by a 2minute cross-examination period where they will refute a particular issue.

Debates: (350points)

Each class member will participate in two debates over the semester. One is a value debate **(150points)** where each member of the class will partner with another member to debate a specific resolution. The other is a policy debate **(200points)** where two members of the class will partner up to debate two other members of the class on a specific resolution. One person/team will represent the affirmative side and one person/team will represent the negative side. You must follow specific debate format and requirements, including submitting briefs prior to each debate.

***Briefs:** Briefs are the equivalent of papers in this class and consist of a logical outline and series of evidence cards that each team will research and gather for the preparation of their policy and value debates. Briefs will be typed and submitted both electronically and in hard copy. No one will be permitted to participate in the class debates without turning in their briefs.*

Argument Analysis Paper: (200points)

This is a 5-6 page essay analyzing an argument. You will receive a detailed assignment sheet later in the semester.

Quizzes: (100points)

There will be six quizzes throughout the semester (5 of which will count towards your final grade) based on the readings for the week. They will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer questions. You are welcome to use any notes on the readings, but may not consult the readings during the quiz.

Ballots (100 points)

For both the policy & value debates, students will need to submit ballots for the debates. Full credit will be given to ballots that identify a winner and include an explanation for the decision that reflects a critical analysis of what was said in the debate. The explanation should briefly reflect your reasoning and should offer feedback to the debaters. NOTE: Ballots cannot be submitted by students who are not present for the entire debate (missing any part of any speech or cross-examination disqualifies you)

Participation/Reading Responses (200 points)

The final component of this class is based on your participation and engagement with the text and in-class exercises/homework. This includes coming to class having read for the day, engaged in class discussion, and completing all in-class or assigned homework. This will also include producing and responding to two forum reading responses throughout the semester (25points) that illustrate a theoretical tension or concept in the class.

Extra Credit:

Over the course of the semester I will make you aware of extra credit opportunities. They will typically involve viewing or attending an event relevant to course material.