


CMN 2040-660 Argumentation and Critical Thinking Spring 2024 Syllabus				
Section:	660	Course Semester hours:	3	
CRN:	31630			
Location & Time:	Asynchronous Online through D2L			
Teacher:	Dr. Andrew Robinson			
Office Hours:	<i>In-Office: 2413 Buzzard Hall Tues. & Thurs. 11:50 am-12:20 pm</i>	<i>Virtual: Tues. & Thurs. 10:20-11:50 am</i> Zoom Conference		
Email	warobinson@ciu.edu			
Website:	School of Communication & Journalism			
Links:	Grading	Course Policies	Assignments	Calendar

Textbooks (available at Textbook Rental):

Lunsford, A. A., Ruskiewicz, J. J., & Walters, K. (2016). *Everything's an argument* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Makan, J. M., & Marty, D. L. (2001). *Cooperative argumentation: A model for deliberative community*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Description: This course is a study of how to build, critique, and adapt arguments within a climate of disagreement. Practice in gathering and evaluation of evidence, selection and evaluation of reasoning, and the production, criticism, and refinement of both oral and written arguments.

Course Objectives:

1. *Recognize* and *implement* the practical and ethical elements of arguing in the public sphere.
2. *Recognize* and *critique* the components of oral and written arguments.
3. *Execute* critical thinking skills by generating effective oral and written arguments.
4. *Execute* skills of impromptu argumentation.
5. *Interpret* and *produce* quantitative arguments.
6. *Implement* public speaking skills.

Teaching Format: This is a technology delivered (TD) course (meaning the learning environment is completely online in Desire2Learn). It applies discussion, collaboration, and critical thinking and reflection. All assignments will be submitted to the instructor in D2L. An integrative, collaborative, and experiential teaching and learning approach will be utilized throughout this course. The instructor is a facilitator; one who is there to assist and provide input into the educational process. Assignments for the course will create learning opportunities from which you are to extract lessons from the experiences as well as the content. This is a much more complex method of learning since you are learning both process and content (most courses only teach content). Therefore, you are expected to actively engage in the course discussion and collaboration.

General Expectations: Please keep current in course. Learners who fall behind are less likely to get feedback from others in online discussions. If something happens that is going to cause you to fall behind, contact your instructor immediately. Since this is an online course, your attendance will be graded by your level of course participation. Use the email within the course-room to communicate with the instructor. If you need to contact your instructor immediately, you are free to call or text him.

GRADING		
Assignment	Possible Points	Percentage of Grade
D2L Weekly Discussion Posts (15 x 10 points)	150	21%
Exam Projects (2 x 100 points)	200	28.5%
Position Paper	100	14%
Impromptu (2 minutes)	25	4%
Argumentation/Deliberation (Group Assignment)	200	28.5%
Peer Review of Deliberation Presentations	25	4%

Total	700	100%
<i>Grading scale: A = 700-630, B = 629-560, C = 559-490, D = 489-420, F = 419 and lower</i>		

Grading of writing: The quality of written work will be a consideration when grading written assignments. Assessment will be based on the following: focus, organization, development, style, and mechanics. **All typed assignments must also follow APA guidelines. The [OWL Purdue](#) website will be helpful.**

General Expectations: Please keep current in class. Learners who fall behind are less likely to get feedback from others in online discussions. If something happens that is going to cause you to fall behind, contact your instructor immediately. Since this is a TE course, your participation grade will be based on classroom and online engagement. Use the email within D2L to communicate with the instructor. If you need to contact your instructor immediately, you are free to call or text or visit during office hours.

Learning Modules: Navigate through D2L first to become familiar with all the course components. Students can access weekly assignment instructions in the D2L learning modules section just prior to the beginning of each week. **ALWAYS BEGIN EACH WEEK IN THE LEARNING MODULES.** Each module begins with a brief overview of the information to be covered. The action assignments provide students with instructions of assignments to be completed for the week. The instructor has also provided students with video, slideshows, and other resources to help enhance their understanding of the information.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

D2L Online Discussion Posts (15x10 points = 150 total points): The instructor will start a discussion by posting a discussion question at the beginning of each weekly module. You will typically have two questions to answer each. The discussion will continue until the following Sunday night, at which time the discussion board will close for that week. Students are to post their initial responses to discussion questions no later than midnight on Thursday, unless stated otherwise in the weekly action assignments. Regular DQs require a minimum of 250 words to answer, while exhaustive DQs require a 500-word minimum. Please focus on the questions posted and use material from your reading assignments and connect them to personal experience and/or knowledge to fully answer the question posed. Feel free to bring in related thoughts and material, other readings, or questions related to the ongoing discussion.

Exam Projects (2 x100 points = 300 total points): Students will apply information learned over the course to complete two exam projects. Exam 1 will be a Group Presentation applying Aristotle's three proofs to build a strong argument on a topic which has two clear sides. For Exam 2 each student will write a short rhetorical analysis paper.

Position Paper (100 points): Argue a point. Take a stand. Correct a misconception. Refute an argument or belief. Question an assumption. This assignment asks you to form a position on an issue that is meaningful to you by listening to the conversation surrounding the issue, articulating your position, and using good reasons to explain why you have taken your stance.

Impromptu (2 minutes; 25 points): Impromptu is a delivery type that most college students (including communication students) dread, and yet it is one of the most used and useful delivery styles! In fact, you already use it more than you realize. At school you use it during question-and-answer sessions, or even during informal rebuttals in your classes. In the work place you will (or do) use it in meetings, presentations, and even interviews. For the purposes of this class, you will use it during the required impromptu assignment, as well as during your final deliberative presentation. The message here is: stay well informed on current issues so that you can have a fluid conversation about them. In short, on the day that you are scheduled to speak I will hand you a topic, and you will have a few minutes (e.g., 3 minutes) to prepare a short speech that presents an argument related to the topic.

Argumentation/Deliberation Group Assignment (250 points): During the semester, the material that you will have read and the activities in which you will have participated will have prepared you for this last big assignment. Your group will choose a controversial topic of interest. This assignment will involve teams engaging each other in a structured forum. After completing a research component, students will be asked to engage in formal argument on significant issues. I recommend that you look at the essays in the back of the Everything is an Argument textbook to assist you with your topic choice. We will also discuss different topics in class that

might spark your interest. You will spend a significant amount of time researching information about this topic. You will then create a presentation where a clear argument is presented about your topic. After you present your argument, you will then facilitate a discussion with the class. The goal of this assignment is to work cooperatively with the class and with those students who may present “opposing” ideas about your topic in an effort to provide your audience with sound “information” regarding the topic of controversy. The goal is NOT to win or lose! You will be graded on your application of the argumentation concepts that we will have discussed in class. There are two components to this assignment: a) an outline that presents your arguments; and b) the in-class presentation and facilitation.

Peer Review of Group Deliberation Presentations (25 points): Each student will provide substantive questions and feedback to at least two group presentations other than their own group.

COURSE POLICIES

Discussion Etiquette: Eastern Illinois University (EIU) is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, the instructor will intervene as he monitors the dialogue in the courses. Faculty will request that inappropriate content be removed from the Course-room and will recommend university disciplinary action. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to follow:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments.
- If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person. Conflicts of ideas are encouraged, while conflicts of feelings are discouraged.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive; racially or culturally insensitive, or religiously offensive, vulgar; sexually explicit, or otherwise potentially offensive.

Confidentiality of Information Shared by Learners: EIU does not guarantee the confidentiality of information shared by learners in the course environment. Students should not share any confidential information from employers unless explicitly released for public use.

Student Standards: The faculty in the School of Communication and Journalism uphold the standards of good scholarship and expect our students to do the same. We expect that students earning a degree in Communication Studies will develop superior reasoning/critical thinking, argumentation, writing, and presentational skills while also building a comprehensive knowledge of their content area. Students in Communication Studies classes will be expected to read all assigned materials, write extensively, complete their own work, and engage in respectful interactions in the classroom. We, as a faculty, agree to hold our students to these standards.

Academic integrity: Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. **An act of plagiarism can result in automatic failure for the course and being reported to the university for further disciplinary action.**

Student Email Addresses: The School of Communication & Journalism requires each student to use his/her university email address for any class, department, college, or university email correspondence. The university email address is used for many purposes, including accessing D2L and PAWS, receiving billing statements from the library, and receiving departmental correspondence and announcements through the undergraduate listserv. For information on how to obtain your email address or to obtain a password, please visit the following web address: <http://www.eiu.edu/~itshelp/email/index/php>.

Academic Support Center: Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center (www.eiu.edu/success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Academic Support Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 2230.

Religious Observances: It is university policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty, and staff. Students with classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify the instructor well in advance so that mutually agreeable alternatives can be worked out.

Students with disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1272, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Accessibility Statement: I am happy to accommodate students of all abilities. It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with a documented disability should notify me as soon as they are registered with the OSDS so we can meet to develop an implementation plan together.

Accommodations for Students Who Experience Sexual Misconduct: I am committed to providing academic accommodations for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Assault and Harassment policies. To report an incident and learn more about campus resources visit the following webpages:

<https://www.eiu.edu/civil/documents/ResourceSheetTitleIX%2007.2019.pdf>;

<https://www.eiu.edu/sexualassaultresources//index.php>

Booth Library: Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Get expert help with your research by contacting the Booth Library reference librarians. Visit, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to connect with a librarian.

The Writing Center. Students are encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, at every stage of writing, for all of their academic requirements. The Writing Center is located in room 3110 of Coleman Hall. For more information online go to: <https://www.eiu.edu/writing/> or call 217-581-5929.

Dealing with Controversy: One of the hallmarks of a true democracy is that reasonable people can and will disagree over any number of social, religious, political, ethical, or cultural questions. One of the ultimate goals of this class is to enhance your ability to evaluate, construct, and refute arguments as a skill fundamental to your own productivity as a responsible citizen. To that end the following guidelines should be kept in mind:

1. You may be offended by something that I or one of your classmates says this semester. Such is the price you pay for discussing controversial issues. It is not your fundamental right to get through college without being offended, but rather to learn how to engage someone constructively when offense does occur. That said, being respectful is a value we will practice.
2. If you have strong opinions on the topics we are examining, it is in your own interests as an advocate to listen carefully to opposing views, and even, at times, to argue an opposing view as an exercise. Doing so will ultimately make you a more persuasive advocate for your own position and will foster a better understanding and respect for opinions and positions different from your own.
3. If you do not have strong opinions on the topics we are examining, use this class to help make up your mind. If you are hesitant to argue for fear of not being a nice person, know that refusing to engage in controversy diminishes your own personal development and your education. Those who cannot critically and intelligently engage with controversy are thereby greatly limited in their ability to engage in ethical citizenship in any sort of democratic society.

Argumentation is a process of growth and understanding rather than a vehicle for humiliation and destruction.

Late work: ALL LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE GRADED AND WILL RECEIVE ZERO GRADE POINTS. Please do not blame technology (your printer, your ink, etc.) for not having an assignment ready. No emailed assignments will be accepted unless specifically noted in the assignment instructions. Speech dates are scheduled in advance in order to allow you time to prepare and plan. The course schedule does not

allow flexibility in rescheduling speeches. If you miss your speech due date, you will earn a zero on the assignment.

Electronic communication: Students are expected to visit the course D2L daily for announcements and updates. You should also check your EIU email daily. Please communicate via email in a professional manner. While electronic communication is convenient at times, please use class time to ask questions. Email responses may be delayed up to 48 hours. Your instructor will not respond to email questions that are answered the syllabus.

Communication with your teacher: After the course begins, if you need to communicate with the instructor directly or privately, please use the D2L course email or telephone. He will respond to the D2L email within 24 hours. In the event you need an immediate response, call or text his mobile 217-721-9975. You may visit him during office hours without an appointment.

Note from your instructor: I am excited to take this challenging academic journey with you. It takes genuine maturity to conceptualize that the opinion we are arguing for is simply the assumption we favor, inevitably imperfect, probably temporary, which only narrow minds can declare to be a certainty or a truth. Rather than raising your voice, learn to improve your argument.

All the best,

Dr. W. Andrew Robinson

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

(The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule if needed)

Readings are to be completed for the day on which they are noted.

Key: EIA = *Everything is an Argument*

CA = *Cooperative Argumentation: A Model for Deliberative Community*

Date:	Content:	Assignments/To Do:
Week 1: Jan 8-14	<i>Introduction to Course</i> Syllabus, calendar, & course policies	Read Syllabus, email teacher any questions you may have, & introduce yourself to the class.
	<i>“Understanding Argument”</i>	Read EIA Ch. 1 & Watch Video
		Post AA1.1 in D2L Discussion Forum
Week 2: Jan 15-21	<i>“Arguments Based on Emotions” (Pathos)</i>	Read EIA Ch. 2 & Watch Video
	<i>“Arguments Based on Character” (Ethos)</i>	Read EIA Ch. 3
		Post AA2.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 3: Jan 21-28	<i>“Arguments Based on Facts and Reason” (Logos)</i>	Read EIA Ch. 4 & Watch Video
		Post Due AA3.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 4: Jan 29-Feb 4	<i>“Critical Thinking”</i>	Read CA Ch. 1 & Watch Video
	EXAM # 1	Exam #1 - Group Presentation
		Post AA4.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 5: Feb. 5-11	<i>“Cooperative Argumentation”</i>	Read CA Ch. 3 & Watch Video
	<i>“Rhetorical Analysis”</i>	Read EIA Ch. 6
		Post DUE: AA5.1 D2L discussion forum
Week 6: Feb 12-18	<i>“Academic Arguments”</i>	Read EIA Ch. 17 & Watch Video
	<i>“What Counts as Evidence”</i>	Read EIA Ch. 18
		Post DUE: AA6.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 7: Feb 19-25	<i>“Documenting Sources”</i>	Read EIA Ch. 22 & Watch Video

	“Fallacies of Argument”	Read EIA Ch. 5
		Post DUE: AA7.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 8: Feb 26-Mar 3	“Structuring Arguments”	Read EIA Ch. 7 & Watch Video
	EXAM #2	Exam #2 Rhetorical Analysis
		Post DUE: AA8.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 9: Mar 4-10	“Elements of Argumentation”	Read CA Ch. 4
	“Evaluations”	Read EIA Ch. 10
		Post DUE: AA9.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 10: Mar 11-17	“Context and the Deliberative Community”	Read CA Ch. 5
	IMPROMPTU 10:20-12:20am, March 12, 2024	Impromptu Argument LIVE Zoom Session & Position Paper Due
		Post DUE: AA10.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Mar 18-22 SPRING BREAK		
Week 11: Mar 25-31	“Style in Arguments”	Read EIA Ch. 13
		Post DUE: AA11.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 12: Apr 1-7	“Visual Rhetoric”	Read EIA Ch. 14
	“Presenting Arguments”	Read EIA Ch. 15
		Post Due: AA12.1 D2L Discussion
Week 13: Apr 8-14	Ethical and Effective Dialogue”	Read CA Ch. 2
	Prepare for Deliberative Assignment	
		Post Due: AA13.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 14: Apr 15-21	Work on Group Deliberations	Group Deliberations due
	Work on Group Deliberations	
		DUE: AA14.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 15: Apr 22-28	Group Deliberations	Group Deliberations due
	Peer Feedback Group Deliberations	Peer Feedback Group Deliberations due
		DUE: AA15.1 D2L Discussion Forum
Week 16:	Final Reflection Exam Due by the last day of the course.	