

# Communication 114

## Argument and Critical Discourse

### Course Syllabus

#### Fall 2023

*“He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion.”*

John Stuart Mill  
*On Liberty*

September 25<sup>th</sup> to December 8<sup>th</sup>  
TR 10:30-11:50am  
Room: Benton Center 246  
CRN: 27637

### Instructor Information

Mark Urista, M.A.  
[uristam@linnbenton.edu](mailto:uristam@linnbenton.edu)

**Office:** Benton Center 246

**Office Hours:** TR 12-12:30pm

Also available by appointment

### Course Description

This course examines argumentation as a part of human interaction and investigation. Emphasis is placed on the processes by which people give reasons to gain adherence and justify beliefs and actions. Students will develop, deliver, and critically analyze persuasive arguments through written assignments and in-class presentations.

### Special note about this Comm 114 section

This class is part of [LBCC's Cornerstone Project](#). It will give you an opportunity to broaden your understanding of the world and yourself while strengthening your skills to read closely, write clearly, speak with confidence, and contend with differing viewpoints and perspectives. These skills will prepare you for future careers and university coursework.

An important part of this class involves reading and discussing “transformative texts.” Together, we will be reading excerpts from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty*. Be ready to experience uncertainty and ambiguity—and to grapple with questions that don’t always have obvious or unanimous answers—as we relate these texts to contemporary issues and our individual lives.

### Outcomes

#### State of Oregon

As a result of taking General Education Speech Communication courses, a student should be able to:

- Engage in ethical communication processes that accomplish goals
- Respond to the needs of diverse audiences and contexts
- Build and manage relationships

## LBCC

As a result of taking Comm 114, a student will be able to:

- Engage in ethical communication processes that accomplish goals
- Respond to the needs of diverse audiences and contexts
- Build and manage relationships
- Analyze, evaluate, and rationally respond to the arguments of others
- Present effective arguments and rebuttals

## Student Learning Objectives for This Course

Students who pass this class will demonstrate the ability to:

- Develop persuasive claims using the Toulmin Model
- Locate appropriate sources of information through proper research
- Critically analyze propositions and identify fallacies
- Effectively deliver and refute arguments in a professional manner
- Empathize and collaborate with others
- Participate in rational discourse

## Course Text

Crossman, Mark. *Burden of Proof (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. McGraw-Hill.

**Access E-Book:** <https://connect.mheducation.com/class/m-urista-argument--critical-discourse-27637>

## Assignments & Quizzes

### Speaking Assignments

|                   | Points    |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Advocacy Speech   | 5 points  |
| L/D Debate        | 15 points |
| Fact/Value Debate | 20 points |
| Policy Debate     | 20 points |

### Quizzes

|         | Points    |
|---------|-----------|
| Quiz #1 | 10 Points |
| Quiz #2 | 10 Points |
| Quiz #3 | 10 Points |

### Written Assignments

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| In-Class Debate Critiques | 5 points |
| Reflection Paper          | 5 points |

## General Information Pertaining to Debate Assignments

Debate assignments will require four important steps:

- 1) Gathering appropriate information on your debate topic
- 2) Meeting with your partner outside of class (team debates only)
- 3) Preparing a brief
- 4) Rehearsing your arguments before the day of your debate

Your grade for each debate will be based primarily on your research, organization, and delivery of the topic and position you are assigned. The format for the debates will be described in class and through supplemental reading material. If your partner flakes on your assigned date, you will have to debate by yourself.

Each debate will require you to speak extemporaneously with a brief. You must bring two briefs to class on the day you speak. You will give one to me prior to the debate and will use the second copy to deliver your arguments.

The use of complete source citations is a critical element of a well-developed argument. Each debate will require a minimum number of sources. Full credit will only be given for stating complete source citations orally while delivering your argument. Because you are speaking to a college audience, it is also expected that you will use credible sources. Information from tabloids and websites produced by extremists, bigots, or ignoramuses must be avoided.

### **In-Class Debate Critiques**

You are required to complete six critiques over the course of the quarter. *Two critiques will be required for each debate. You will not receive credit for a critique that is poorly written or not turned in.* The critiques must be turned in on the day that the debates occur. You will only earn five points if every required critique is completed and turned in. You will not be allocated points for each individual critique.

### **Quizzes**

Each quiz will be multiple choice and have true or false questions. You will need an 882 scantron for each quiz. Questions will be based on material from assigned readings, class discussions, and lectures. You can use any handwritten notes you make for each quiz. Make-up quizzes are not permitted without a valid, documented excuse.

### **Classroom Policies**

Success is your choice! If you choose to be successful, I will be happy to help you. If you do not choose to be successful, I will honor your choice. *Every student has the potential to succeed in this class.*

\*Please note that college-level reading and writing skills (WR 121) are strongly recommended for success in this course.

**Attendance & Participation:** Your attendance impacts the quality of each student's learning experience. Thus, students are allowed to miss only two days of class. Your final grade will be lowered by five points for each day you miss class without a valid, documented excuse. If you are going to drop the course, you need to do it yourself. If you stop showing up without dropping, you will receive an F for the course.

*\*You must speak on the day you have been assigned.* If you miss class on a day you have been assigned to speak without a valid, documented excuse, you will receive 0 points for the assignment. If you show up on the day you are assigned to debate without a brief, you will receive 0 points for the speech. If you cannot attend class on the day of your debate due to an illness or emergency, you must email me your brief

and a video of you properly delivering your arguments before our class begins to verify you were prepared to complete the assignment on time. Upon reviewing your brief, video, and documentation, I will determine if you can speak in front of our class to receive points for the assignment. If you foresee a time conflict with a debate date, please provide me with advance notice.

**Tardiness:** Two tardies equal one absence. If you are tardy by over 15 minutes, you will be marked as absent. If you leave class early, you will be marked as absent for the day. If you arrive late, let me know after class so I can sign you in on the roll sheet. *Please do not enter the room when another student is speaking. If you arrive late, wait to be let in.*

**Cell Phones:** Turn them off before entering the classroom. Text messaging is annoying and disrespectful. Don't do it.

**Tolerance:** In this class, there may be times when you disagree with opinions being expressed. It is important that you respond to these opinions in an appropriate, respectful, and professional manner. Healthy disagreement and discussion are a central component of this class and are encouraged, but must be done so on a professional and constructive basis.

**Special Needs:** Individuals requiring accommodations due to a documented disability or other barriers that interfere with being successful in this class, should meet with me. I will do my best to assist you provided that it does not compromise the academic integrity of LBCC or poses an undue hardship. Students with disabilities should contact the [Accessibility Resources](#) at 541-917-4789.

## **Honor Code**

LBCC is dedicated to maintaining an optimal learning environment and insists upon academic honesty. To uphold the academic integrity of the institution, all members of the academic community, faculty, staff, and students alike, must assume responsibility for providing an educational environment of the highest standards characterized by a spirit of academic honesty. Accordingly, if you exchange information with another student during a quiz, use unauthorized sources, and/or submit someone else's work or ideas as your own in any of your assignments, you will receive an "F" and may be subject to further discipline.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws.

## Tentative Course Schedule

| Date                  | Activity/Lecture   | Readings       |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|
| Sep. 26 <sup>th</sup> | Introduction to Course<br>Discuss Advocacy Speech                                |                |
| Sep. 28 <sup>th</sup> | Introduction to Argumentation  | Ch. 1          |
| Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | <b>Advocacy Speeches</b>   | Ch. 9          |
| Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>Advocacy Speeches</b>   |                |
| Oct. 10 <sup>th</sup> | Parliamentary Debate   | Ch. 4          |
| Oct. 12 <sup>th</sup> | Audience Analysis<br><b>Quiz #1 (Ch's 1, 4 &amp; 9)</b>                          |                |
| Oct. 17 <sup>th</sup> | Inductive Arguments<br>The Toulmin Model   | Ch. 2          |
| Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> | Assign L/D Debates<br>Inductive Arguments cont...<br><b>Reflection Paper Due</b> |                |
| Oct. 24 <sup>th</sup> | Discuss L/D Debates<br>Fallacies   | Ch. 5<br>Ch. 3 |
| Oct. 26 <sup>th</sup> | Fallacies cont...<br><b>Quiz #2 (Ch's 2, 3 &amp; 5)</b>                          |                |
| Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup> | <b>L/D Debates</b>   |                |
| Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | <b>L/D Debates</b><br>Assign Fact/Value Debates                                  |                |
| Nov. 7 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>L/D Debates</b><br>Discuss Fact/Value Debates                                 | Ch. 6          |
| Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Refutation<br>Work with Partner  | Ch. 8          |
| Nov. 14 <sup>th</sup> | <b>Fact/Value Debates</b>  |                |
| Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup> | <b>Fact/Value Debates</b>  |                |

|                                     |  |       |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------|
| Nov. 21 <sup>st</sup>               | <b>Fact/Value Debates</b><br>Policy Debate<br>Discuss and Assign Policy Debate | Ch. 7 |
| Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup>               | Thanksgiving (college closed)  |       |
| Nov. 28 <sup>th</sup>               | Work with Partner<br><b>Quiz #3 (Ch's 6, 7 &amp; 8)</b>                        |       |
| Nov. 30 <sup>th</sup>               | <b>Policy Debates</b>  |       |
| Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup> (9:30-11:20am) | <b>Policy Debates</b>  |       |

\*Please note that assignments, policies, and schedules are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.