

The Passionate Questioner and The Humane Persuader

WR 122: English Composition (Argument)

Winter 2015

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Text: Perspectives on Argument, 7th edition, by Nancy Wood, and a reference handbook.

This Is A “Thinking” Course As Well As A “Writing” Course.

What is this course about? Asking questions, thinking, persuading, researching, evaluating, finding common ground, and decision-making. In other words, it's about “argument.” In this course, we use the word “argument” to mean a respectful process of persuasion, negotiation, and inquiry, rather than just combative, confrontational discourse.

We do many things in life to persuade others – to love us, to give us a job, to respect our ideas, to give us a good grade, to loan us money, to buy our goods. And people spend lots of time and energy to persuade us to buy things, believe things, act certain ways, or vote for certain people. In fact, much of life involves this give-and-take of persuasion, negotiation, evaluation, and exploration. So it's important to understand how we can persuade others effectively and ethically, and to learn how to decide whether we should believe or act on other people's arguments. We'll practice all these skills.

This course is also about using inquiry and ethical thinking tools to explore ideas and beliefs and to decide for ourselves what we think is valuable or harmful, true or false, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. By debate, discussion, conversation, experimentation, and other forms of inquiry, we begin to be clear about what we think and how we want to live.

And of course, this is also a writing course. In addition to practicing all the thinking skills I've just mentioned, we'll explore how we can persuade other in writing, and how we can evaluate and respond to the written arguments of others.

Course Outcomes:

As a result of taking academically-oriented transfer-level writing classes at LBCC (WR 115, 121, 122, 123, 227), students will be able to:

1. *Analyze the rhetorical needs* (the interaction of audiences, purpose/outcome, and subject) of a variety of academic and practical writing assignments.

2. *Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies* (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
3. *Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization* (introduction, thesis, development and support, rebuttal, visuals, narration, conclusion, etc.) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
4. *Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion* in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
5. *Craft sentences and paragraphs* that communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions to make their writing clear, credible, and persuasive.

While these are universal academic writing outcomes, WR 122 will focus on writing academic and informal arguments, analysing and evaluating the persuasive writing of others, and assessing the ethical dynamics of persuasion.

Course Content and Learning Activities

Three Papers. You'll write three papers – an Argument Analysis and Response, a Position Paper, and a Rogerian or Personal Argument. The Analysis paper will help you learn to analyze and evaluate the arguments that other people direct at you, and the Position and Rogerian argument papers will teach you two different modes of persuading or influencing others.

Reading Response/Summaries and Preparatory Assignments. This course is a “project-oriented” course. You'll write three papers for this class, and each paper will require you to understand and practice specific thinking and writing skills. To help you do this, there will be a significant amount of informal reading summary/responses and preparatory writing that you will do before writing each paper. These will be informally graded.

Peer Feedback – In addition to the preparatory work for each paper, I'll ask you to give extensive feedback to your classmates' rough drafts.

Methods of Evaluation

3 Papers (3-5 pages each) (3 @ 100 points)	300
Reading Response/Summaries, Preparatory assignments, and Peer Feedback	300
Total	600

IMPORTANT: You cannot get an A, B, or C on points alone, since I often give 80-100% credit for completion of the informal assignments, and I want your grade to reflect the overall quality of your papers. **To receive an A, you must earn 90% of points possible and your papers must have a 90% average or higher. For a B, 80% of points and your papers**

must have an 80% average or higher. For a C...etc.

Revisions: Your first two essays may be revised for a higher grade. They must be turned back in for grading one week after being returned to you.

Late work: Late papers will lose half a grade, late homework assignments will lose 20% credit, and both kinds may be turned in up to a maximum of a week late unless you contact me about your circumstances.

Plagiarism Policy: All work must be your own. You must document all appropriate quotations, paraphrases, data, images, etc. using either MLA or APA format. Failure to cite and document your sources will result in a loss of credit, ranging from a drop of one grade to an F, depending on the severity of the plagiarism. Turning in a paper (or significant portions of a paper) that someone else has written or that has been copied off the Internet will result in no credit for the paper, and your name will be given to the Academic Dean. Mistakes and unintentional plagiarism will not result in such penalties, but in my asking you to correct them.

Disability statement: If you have emergency medical information for your instructor, need special arrangements to evacuate campus, or have a documented disability, please meet with me no later than the first week of the term to discuss your needs and present your ODS accommodation letter.

LBCC Comprehensive Statement of Nondiscrimination

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

(for further information <http://po.linnbenton.edu/BPsandARs/>)