

Reading and Writing for Argumentative Essays (Level B)

Course No. 14201102 (118/119)

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Credit: 2

Office Hour: Wednesday, 13:30 – 15:00

Office: Room 208A, Mingli Building

Course Description:

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. Argumentative essay assignments generally call for extensive research of literature or previously published material. Detailed research allows the students to learn about the topic and to understand different points of view regarding the topic so that they may choose a position and support it with the evidence collected during research. The purpose of this course is to encourage students to test or examine their ideas concerning a particular topic, and establish a clear thesis statement and follow sound reasoning.

Course Aims:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

Reading:

- Grasp essential meaning, analyze linguistic features, and understand cultural implications whilst reading materials of medium linguistic difficulty on a variety of topics likely to be encountered in academic domains, such as **Business and Economics** (Unit 1), **Engineering** (Unit 2), **Science** (Unit 3), **Information Technology** (Unit 4), **Philosophy** (Unit 5), **Social Science** (Unit 6), **Life Science/Health** (Unit 7), and **Environment** (Unit 8) .
- Distinguish different positions in materials of medium linguistic difficulty containing opposing argumentation.

Writing:

- Select and use relevant information from sources
 - Develop a critical approach to evidence
- Establish your own position
 - Use reliable sources to develop their own argument
 - Know how to support an argument in terms of cause and effect, comparison and contrast, deductive and inductive reasoning
- Present your position in a coherent manner
 - Learn the basic structure of an argumentative essay

- Learn cohesive devices

Textbook:

- *Reading and Writing for Argumentative Essays* 《英语议论文读写教程》，刘梅华，2013, Tsinghua University Press (hardcopy available from the campus bookshop; e-copy available from <http://reserves.lib.tsinghua.edu.cn/>)

Assessment and Evaluation:

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| 1. Attendance and participation (in-class activities) | 10% |
| 2. Reading quizzes (Unit 1-2; Unit 3-5; Unit6-7) | 30% |
| 3. Reading report (group presentation on text selected from the Textbook: U1-B; U2-B; U3-A; U4-A; U5-A; U6-C; U7-A) | 5% |
| 4. Writing assignments (paraphrase; summary; responding to sources; peer review; a 300-word argumentative essay (10%); etc.) | 25% |
| 5. Term project | 30% |
| - an argumentative essay of 800-1000 words based on literature review and evidence (25%) | |
| - group presentation on the term project (5%) | |

Reading report. Students are encouraged to work in a group in order to share opinions on reading. Groups of the reading report (**5 students** each) will be formed on Web Learning during the second teaching week. Each group will be assigned one unit to deliver a lecture of **15-20 minutes**, including **a summary of the text, main linguistic features, and some questions for discussion.**

—After grouping, please specify your preference for unit choice. Alternative units for your choice range from U1 to U7 (**U1-Text B; U2- Text B; U3- Text A; U4- Text A; U5- Text A; U6- Text C; U7- Text A**).

—Other groups are responsible for scoring group performance. The scoring sheet will be prepared by the lecturer.

Writing assignments. Students will be assigned tasks on Web Learning, each of which is worth a number of points depending on the significance and length of the assignment. We will follow writing skills to assign tasks, such as **paraphrase, summary, responding to sources, peer review, and argumentative essay**. Please notice that you are required to finish ALL assignments. Failure to submit homework on time will be penalized 5 points off your final grade of this course.

Term project. Instead of a final exam, students of this course are required to complete a term project. This project consists of the following tasks:

- **investigating a chosen topic (same as the reading report unit topic)**

- **conducting secondary research based on collected literature**
- **a group presentation (around 8 minutes)**
- **a final essay of 800-1000 words (individual-based).**

Your team works out one or more dimensions of your interest under the general topic of your reading report, making a group presentation, and submitting an 800-1000-word essay individually. This is an ongoing project, which will begin around mid-term and culminate near the end of the semester.

Schedule for Term Project (tentative)

- **Week 2:** Form a team of 5 students (the same with the reading report team) and designate a team leader
- **Week 6:** Specify a topic for your research under the general unit topic
- **Weeks 7-11:** Read, research & share (group meeting)
- **Week 12:** The 1st draft of your final essay is due (peer review; face-to-face advice will be given)
- **Week 15:** Group presentation (on topic selection, sources collection, reflections after reading, and any interesting/unexpected experiences you'd like to share...)
- **Week 16:** Final essay due (individual work)

The final argumentative essay will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- a) Evidence of in-depth analysis and critical thinking;
- b) Fulfilment of all requirements (format and content);
- c) Timely submission.

If any student is found to be plagiarizing, he/she or all students involved will fail the project.