ENC 3312 (02A2) Advanced Argumentative Writing: Digital Rhetoric

#### MTWRF Period 4, Turlington Hall B310

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| **Instructor:** Jacob Greene | **Office:** TUR 4103 |
| **Email:** jacobwgreene@ufl.edu | **Office Hours:** Wed. period 3, and by appointment |

# Course Description

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle defined rhetoric as “the ability to discern the available means of persuasion in any given case.” For Aristotle, however, the practice “persuasion” was limited to a very narrow set of practices carried out by an even more narrow set of individuals: wealthy, male statesmen giving speeches to one another. However, Aristotle’s definition is still interesting in that it encourages us to think about rhetoric as not only something that we do (i.e. persuading) but also something that we can analyze as an object of inquiry.

Today, our “available means of persuasion” have evolved to encompass a much larger set of practices, contexts, technologies, and individuals. Specifically, the unprecedented growth of digital media over the last two decades has had a profound impact on the way that we act, think, read, and argue. ENC 3312 Advanced Argumentative Writing: Digital Rhetoric explores the rhetorical implications of this shift to digital writing. In this class, students will produce and analyze texts in a variety of media (blogs, Facebook posts, tweets, vines, videos, etc.).

# Course Materials

Lowe, Charlie and Pavel Zemliansky. *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*. Parlor Press: 2016. <http://writingspaces.org/>

All other course materials will be provided as hyperlinks within the course schedule or as pdf’s

through Canvas.

# Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, students enrolled in ENC 3312 should be able to:

* Identify argumentative strategies within online discourses
* Isolate the rhetorical affordances of a variety of online media and genres
* Argue from different perspectives
* Write clear, concise sentences suitable for online environments
* Adapt writing to different media and genres
* Integrate multimedia components (videos, images, etc.) into online documents
* Incorporate research into a written argument from a variety of sources
* Critique and revise documents for online publication

# Major Assignments (Check Canvas for up-to-date descriptions)

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| **“Is Anybody Buying This?” (Analyzing Arguments, 1500 words)**  For this assignment, you will need to track down an argument that you believe to be utter nonsense and explain the rhetorical techniques and contexts that convince people to “buy” this argument. In researching your argument, don’t rely on a single source or media. Search for occurrences of this argument in a variety of places, such as newspaper articles, news broadcasts, YouTube videos, memes, tweets, FB posts, etc. In total, you should gather at least 7-8 primary sources (all related to the same overall argument) that you will analyze for this assignment.  After your argument is written, you will adapt it into a short 2-3 minute video using only images and an audio voiceover. | 20 points |
| **Dissoi Blogoi (Writing Counter-Arguments, 2000 words)**  In Ancient Greece, teachers of rhetoric would travel from polis to polis offering their expertise in oratory and argumentation in exchange for money. Unlike the philosopher Plato, who advocated for dialectic, or productive discourse in search of a shared, general truth, the sophists taught rhetoric with little concern for such lofty philosophical aims. One of the most prominent sophists, Gorgias, was famous for his practice of “dissoi logoi,” or the ability to argue both sides of an argument in order to demonstrate his rhetorical prowess to his students and potential customers.  For this assignment, you will enact a modern-day dissoi logoi (or dissoi blogoi, if you will) by writing from the perspective of two antagonistic blogging personas that you create in response to a controversial public issue. Using these personas, which you will design fake accounts for through Google’s free blogging platform, you will write four blog posts (two per account at 500 words apiece) in an online, back-and-forth rhetorical battle. Feel free to choose any public issue to argue about. For your public issue, feel free to choose something serious (e.g. the ending of *Mad Men*, the best burrito in town, etc.) or something silly and frivolous (e.g. gun control, climate change, existence of God, charter schools, etc.). The only requirement is that the issue is debatable and that you can find online sources that support both sides.  **Extra Credit**: Use blogger’s comments function to create a mini-back and forth on at least two of your blog posts. | 20 points |
| **Digital Issues (Researching Arguments, 1500 words)**  The rise of digital media in the 21st century has created lasting consequences within various aspects of modern society. Throughout this course, we have discussed the impact of digital technology within a variety of areas, such as education, sustainability, journalism, automation, and much more. For this assignment, students will isolate a particular area, perhaps within their own discipline, that has been (or will be) profoundly affected by digital technologies.  Feel to draw on resources from class readings, but you will also be need to conduct outside research for this assignment. Your final paper should have at least 8-10 sources in a variety of formats (scholarly publications, news articles, blogs, documentaries, etc.). | 20 points |
| **(Es)say It Like You Mean It (Personal Essay, 1000 words)**  We tend to think of writing an argument as the pursuit of a one-sided, rationally-motivated claim supported by empirical evidence. Although this is certainly true for many arguments (particular those that spark controversy in online spaces) this is not always the case. In fact, many of the most compelling, well-written arguments are the exact opposite: wandering, personal excursions into the multi-faceted complexity of an issue or idea supported by personal or anecdotal evidence.  Using example personal essays and other writing guides, students will “essay” an argument about their personal experience(s) in regard to a specific issue, event, person, object, or space. The goal of this assignment is not to produce an airtight, rational argument, but rather to use writing as a tool for opening up (rather than closing off) new perspectives and ideas about this issue, event, person, or space.  **Extra Credit:** Adapt a portion of your essay to one of the emerging new media genres we have discussed and used this semester (tweets, vines, etc.). Make sure to utilize the unique rhetorical affordances of the media you choose to work in. | 15 points |
| **Discussion Posts**  Students will write discussion posts through Canvas. Each post must be at least 300 words. In addition, I will sometimes ask students to respond to at least two other posts with substantive critique, feedback, or additional support. See Canvas for prompts and check course schedule due dates and response instructions. | 15 points |
| **Homework and in class activities**  Students are expected to keep up with readings and participate in all in-class/online activities including debates, discussions, group work, and writing. | 10 points |
| **TOTAL** | 100 points |

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| **Grading Scale** | | | | | | | |
| A | 93-100 | B | 83-86.9 | C | 73-76.9 | D | 63-66.9 |
| A- | 90-92.9 | B- | 80-82.9 | C- | 70-72.9 | D- | 60-62.9 |
| B+ | 87-89.9 | C+ | 77-79.9 | D+ | 67-69.9 | E | 0-59.9 |

### General Assessment Rubric

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| --- | --- |
| A | * Follows ALL instructions specific to the assignment description * Generates and elaborates on original ideas relevant to the course content * Assignment provides evidence to support claims * Assignment incorporates source material appropriately and effectively * Assignment displays clear organizational forethought * Assignment is free of rhetorically unaware grammatical, stylistic, and/or technical errors |
| B | * Follows most instructions specific to the assignment description * Incorporates and elaborates ideas relevant to the course content * Assignment provides evidence to support most of its claims * Assignment incorporates source material appropriately * Assignment has an identifiable organizational structure * Assignment contains rhetorically unaware grammatical, stylistic, and/or technical errors |
| C | * Follows some instructions specific to the assignment description * Incorporates ideas relevant to the course content * Assignment provides evidence to support some of its claims * Assignment incorporates source material * Assignment has an identifiable organizational structure * Assignment contains rhetorically unaware grammatical, stylistic, and/or technical errors |
| D | * Follows very few instructions specific to the assignment description * Incorporates ideas irrelevant to the course content * Assignment provides little to no evidence to support its claims * Assignment incorporates no (or very little) source material * Assignment has an unclear organizational structure * Assignment contains distracting and rhetorically unaware grammatical, stylistic, and/or technical errors |
| E | * Does not follow instructions specific to the assignment description * Incorporates no ideas relevant to the course content· * Assignment has no identifiable organizational structure * Assignment incorporates no source material * Assignment provides no evidence to support its claims * Assignment contains distracting and rhetorically unaware grammatical, stylistic, and/or technical errors |

# Course Policies

### Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are crucial. Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class on time, prepared with books and homework; preparing for in-class activities; providing adequate drafts for group work; collaborating and participating in group activities; and overall working and paying close attention to the lectures and activities of the classroom. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session. **Because this course relies heavily on workshops, students should bring computers, the textbook, paper, and writing utensils to each class meeting.**

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy. **If students miss more than four periods during the term, their grade will drop by 5 points for each subsequent absence.** The university exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, students can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades.

**Please Note:** If students are absent, it is their responsibility to stay aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Tardiness creates a problem for the entire class since it can disrupt work in progress. If you know that you will need to leave class early or will be arriving late, please alert me ahead of time.

### Collaborative Work

Workplace writers often find themselves contributing and completing documents and projects with co-workers. Learning how to collaborate is an essential and valuable skill. In this course, students will complete some assignments in groups. I will also require students to respond and/or evaluate to each other’s writing. Each student is responsible for completing work for both individual and group work thoroughly and in a timely fashion. Failing to effectively contribute to collaborative work will negatively impact grades.

### Classroom Conduct

Please treat classmates and myself with respect. Keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that students demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from their own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning: phones, personal data assistants, iPods, etc. are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please turn them off and keep them out of sight.

### Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is the student’s responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

# University Policies

### General Education

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### Statement of Composition (C) Credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### Statement of Writing Requirement

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

### Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### Statement of Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

### Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

# Course Schedule (Unless otherwise stated, all readings and assignments are due by the start of class on the day they are listed)

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| **Week One: May 9-13** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | What is “digital rhetoric?” | [Plato - Gorgias](http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/gorgias.html)  Neil Postman- “The Judgement of Thamus” (available on Canvas) |  | | **T** | The elements of argument: Why bother? | [Rebecca Jones – “Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother with Logic?”](http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/jones--finding-the-good-argument.pdf)  <http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/anderson-cooper-donald-trump-5-year-old-1201741634/>  [Plato Would Be Horrified By Trump’s Rise](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/plato-would-have-predicted--and-been-horrified-by--trumps-rise/2016/04/26/3805cb80-0bec-11e6-a6b6-2e6de3695b0e_story.html)  [Colbert Report – “Double Barrel Blam-O-Rama”](http://www.cc.com/video-clips/8zsm19/the-colbert-report-stephen-colbert-s-double-barrel-blam-o-rama---piers-morgan---james-yeager) |  | | **W** | Digital Issue: serious games | Ian Bogost – “Persuasive Games” (selections)  Choose a game at [molleindustria.org](http://www.molleindustria.org/) and play it  [Podcast: “The Cathedral” by Radiolab](http://www.radiolab.org/story/cathedral/) | Discussion post 1 | | **Th** | Writing arguments |  | Discussion post 1 responses (comment on at least two other posts. No more than three comments per discussion post.) | | **F** | Analyzing arguments in different media/visual rhetoric | [2013 DoGooder award winners](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGmeFIOjhJzcvy1PnCW16_4sfXMbsJ12D)  [“Colbert PAC Ad”](http://www.cc.com/video-clips/hagj8b/the-colbert-report-colbert-pac-ad)  Don Delillo – “Videotape” |  | |
| **Week Two: May 16-20 (NO CLASS MEETINGS May 18th-20th)** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading/Viewing/Listening** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | Providing and responding to feedback |  | “Is Anybody Buying this?” (draft) | | **T** | Video production | Student example videos (on Canvas) | “Is Anybody Buying this?” (final paper) | | **W** | NO CLASS MEETING  Writing tutorials/finding resources | Check out example tutorials in [Collaborative Video Production Guide](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XfMVn6XblIqP-JgMTot2tEhtKrjgxKhAKJY7xV3L-iI/edit?usp=sharing) |  | | **Th** | NO CLASS MEETING  Digital Issue: Self-directed learning | [Podcast- “Are Brick and Mortar Colleges Obsolete?”](http://www.npr.org/2014/04/09/299178029/debate-in-an-online-world-are-brick-and-mortar-colleges-obsolete)  [Matthew Yglesias- "Giving Poor Kids Computers Does Nothing"](http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2013/05/23/fairlie_and_robinson_on_computers_and_education_no_change.html) | Discussion post 2 | | **F** | NO CLASS MEETING  Contributing to online discussion |  | Discussion post 2 responses | |
| **Week Three: May 23-27** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | Writing in online spaces | [Alex Reid- “Why Blog?”](http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/reid--why-blog.pdf)  [“Writing Hyperlinks”](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/writing-links/) | “Is Anybody Buying this?” (final video) | | **T** | Digital Issue: polarizing media | [Podcast- “Is the internet closing our minds politically?”](http://www.npr.org/2012/04/23/151037080/is-the-internet-closing-our-minds-politically)  Colbert, “The Word-Truthiness” |  | | **W** | Counter-arguments | [Steven D. Krause- “On the Other Hand: The Role of Antithetical Writing in FYC Courses”](http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/krause--on-the-other-hand.pdf) |  | | **Th** | Digital Issue: cyber-voyeurs and digital identities | [“The Psychology of Online Comments” (New Yorker)](http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-psychology-of-online-comments)  David Foster Wallace- “E Unibus Pluram: Television and US Fiction” | Discussion Post 3 | | **F** | Blogging technologies and best-practices |  | Discussion Post 3 responses | |
| **Week Four: May 30-June 3** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | Incorporating multimedia into your blog | [“Creating Awesome Visual Content”](https://blog.bufferapp.com/a-complete-guide-to-creating-awesome-visual-content) |  | | **T** | Blog presentations |  | Dissoi Blogoi | | **W** | Essays and arguments | Read one of the personal essays below, and come prepared to discuss.  [“What Nobody Told Me About Small Farming”](http://www.salon.com/2016/01/01/what_nobody_told_me_about_small_farming_i_cant_make_a_living_2/)  [“I’m Having an Abortion This Weekend”](http://www.salon.com/2014/12/23/im_having_an_abortion_this_weekend_2/)  [“Confessions of a Secret Muslim”](http://www.salon.com/2014/12/23/confessions_of_a_secret_muslim_2/)  [“A Frat Boy’s ‘gay experience’”](http://www.salon.com/2014/12/24/a_frat_boys_gay_experience_2/) |  | | **Th** | Essays and Arguments | [Paul Lynch – “The Sixth Paragraph: A Re-Vision of the Essay”](http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/lynch--the-sixth-paragraph.pdf) |  | | **F** | Digital Issue: Social Media Rhetorics | [How brands are winning with Vine](http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/vine-videos-10-brand-examples/)  [“The $100 content farm that is killing the internet”](http://motherboard.vice.com/read/the-100-million-content-farm-thats-killing-the-internet)  John Cheever- “The Enormous Radio” |  | |
| **Week Five: June 6-10** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | Rhetorical Delivery |  | (Es)say it like you mean it personal essay | | **T** | Digital Issue: e-waste | Jonathan Sterne – “Out with the Trash: On the Future of New Media”  Italo Calvino- “Continuous Cities 1” from *Invisible Cities*  [“The Word- F\*\*k It”](http://www.cc.com/video-clips/k6jlhl/the-colbert-report-the-word---f--k-it) |  | | **W** | Narrowing research topics |  | Bring in three potential topics for Digital Issues assignment | | **Th** | Online research | [Randall McClure- “Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skills”](http://writingspaces.org/mcclure--googlepedia) |  | | **F** | Outlining research arguments |  |  | |
| **Week Six: June 13-17 (NO CLASS MEETINGS June 13th-17th)** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | | | | |  | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignments Due** | | **M** | Incorporating sources into your writing | [Kyle Stedman- “Annoying Ways Students Use Sources”](http://writingspaces.org/stedman--annoying-ways) | Discussion post 4 | | **T** | Incorporating sources into your writing |  | Discussion post 4 responses | | **W** |  |  | Digital Issues (draft for online peer review in Google Docs) | | **Th** |  |  | Peer review comments in Google Doc | | **F** |  |  | Digital Issues (Final) | |

### Progress Conferences

I encourage students to see me during my office hours, especially when they have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on their work.