**Argumentation, Fall 2016**

**Tuesdays, 6-8:30 PM, Cathedral of Learning 135**

**Dr. Calum Matheson**

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**Office hours by appointment, T/W/R, 1109Q Cathedral of Learning**

**Purpose of the Course:** This class is designed to instruct students in the practice, analysis, and criticism of argument. Argumentation is an ancient field of study, long connected to civic life through decision making and democratic responsibility. The structure and use of argument is also vital to academic and personal success, clear thinking, and ethical judgment. Students engaged in this course should improve their capacity to apply logical arguments to their own decisions, better understand the link between argument and democracy, and more effectively persuade others through appeals to logic, emotion, and credibility.

**Course Information:** No textbook is necessary. Course materials are available online or provided for you. Class instruction will include lecture, videos, and discussion.

**Course Policies:** Attendance is important, especially given that the class meets only once a week. It is the **student’s responsibility** to **attend class, arrive on time, and make up for missed lectures** by getting notes, etc., **from classmates**. To be counted, all assignments **must be submitted in hard copy** at the beginning of the class session the week that they are due. If you wish to discuss an assignment grade, you must wait 24 hours after you have received it back to schedule a meeting, and the meeting must be scheduled to occur within 7 days. Late work will be penalized at my discretion. To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, **students may not record** classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student’s own private use. Students in this class will be asked to complete a Student Opinion of Teaching Survey. Surveys will be sent via Pitt email and appear on your CourseWeb landing page during the last three weeks of class meeting days. Your responses are anonymous. Please take time to thoughtfully respond, your feedback is important to me. Read more about Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys. **Be polite and respectful to other students**. The class encourages argument, of course, but argument and abuse are not the same thing. Your continued enrollment in this class signifies your agreement to be bound by all requirements in this syllabus.

**Assignments:** Students will be required to complete four assignments.

* Analysis Papers (2): These papers will analyze one of the longer videos shown in class by applying concepts from readings and class discussions. Briefly summarize the main elements of the speech, debate, or media example, identify arguments, and evaluate their use using concepts from the course. 5-7 pages. 20% of grade each.
* Midterm examination: The midterm will review material covered in the first part of the course. The format will combine term identification with short essays. 20% of grade.
* Final examination: The final will be cumulative, covering all material in the course, but focusing on the second half. It will have an essay format. 25% of grade.

The remainder of your grade (15%) is derived from meaningful class participation.

**Disability Statement:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html. This may include, but is not limited to the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating the University Policy.

**Course Schedule**

**I. WHY ARGUMENT MATTERS**

**Aug 30—Class Introduction: Why do we argue?**

READ:

--Syllabus

--On Pseudo-Profound Bullshit (courseweb)

**Sep 6—Why Argument Matters: The public sphere**

READ:

--“The Public Sphere” http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR2/habermas.pdf

--Matt Stannard, “Deliberation, Debate, and Democracy in the Academy and Beyond,” http://theunderview.blogspot.com/2006/04/deliberation-democracy-and-debate.html

--Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” Perspectives on Politics, Sep. 2014. Available through library.pitt.edu

**Sep 13—Modes of Proof and Origins of Argument**

READ:

--Aristotle, Book I, Sections 2, 3. http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html

**Sep 20—Public Argument I**

--Watch: 2014 Idaho GOP Gubernatorial Debate

**Paper 1 Assigned**

**Sep 27—Context of Argument**

READ:

--Bitzer, Lloyd F. “The Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* Issue 1, no. 1 1968. Available through library.pitt.edu.

--Jasinski, “Decorum” 146-150. Courseweb.

--Shulevitz, Judith. “In College and Hiding from Scary Ideas.” New York Times, March 21, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/opinion/sunday/judith-shulevitz-hiding-from-scary-ideas.html?_r=0>

**II. HOW (NOT) TO MAKE AN ARGUMENT**

**Oct 4—Logical argument: The Toulmin Model**

READ: Toulmin. Courseweb.

**Paper 1 Due**

**Oct 11—Principles of Logic**

READ: McInerny 23-43 (Principles of Logic). Courseweb.

**Oct 18—No Class**

**Oct 25—Logical Fallacies**

READ:

--McInerny 101-129 (Being Logical)

**November 1—Midterm Exam**

**Nov 8—Public Argument II**

--Watch: Nixon-Kennedy Debate

**Paper 2 Assigned**

**Nov 15— Lying with Numbers**

READ:

--Seife, 1-38. Courseweb.

--Huff 62-75. Courseweb.

**Nov 22—Bad Arguments in Public**

READ:

--Hoffstader, Courseweb

--Seife, 223-242

**Nov 29—“Proofiness” and Democracy**

**Dec 6—Final Review**

**Dec 13—Final Exam**