

WRITING 122: ARGUMENT

(Online - Spring 2020)

Instructor: Matt Usner

Email: matt.usner@linnbenton.edu

Phone: 312-498-7320 (call or text weekdays between 8:00 AM-7:00 PM)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:00 via Zoom; use [this link](#). For other times, please contact me to schedule a phone call or videoconference using Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, or Google Meet.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SYLLABUS: This syllabus contains all the vital information about this course—what you'll be learning, what will be expected of you, and what you can expect from me. In short, it states what is required of both of us during the term. This is a valuable document, so please refer to it often! **The better you know the syllabus, the better the chance that you'll do well in the course.**

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION: WR 122: Argumentation “Emphasizes the logical means of supporting claims in argumentative essays, thesis statements, and reasoning. Includes logic, style, and research. Prerequisite: WR 121 English Composition or equivalent with a grade of ‘C’ or better.”

COURSE OVERVIEW: The focus of our coursework will be *argument*--by which I mean a process of inquiry driven by *reason*. This course is grounded in the premise that argument is everywhere—at school, at home, in the workplace, in our communities, and in the world at large. Argument is used to try to persuade us of all kinds of things, such as voting for someone, or buying something, or believing something. In this class, we'll aim to understand, analyze, and construct different types of arguments. Along the way, I hope you'll reflect on some of your existing ideas and beliefs--and be nudged to consider new perspectives. My goal is to make this class a productive space that promotes viewpoint diversity and stimulates thoughtful, informed discussion.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students who complete this course will be able to:

- **Analyze the rhetorical needs** (the needs of your audience in relationship to the assignment) for college-level persuasive writing assignments.
- **Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies** (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in your written assignments, with emphasis on analysis and evaluation/persuasion.
- **Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization** (introduction, thesis, development and support, counter-argument, conclusion, etc.) in our written assignments, with an emphasis on standard argument models, particularly the Toulmin model.
- **Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion** appropriate for college-level analysis and argument assignments.
- Craft sentences and paragraphs that **communicate your ideas clearly and effectively** using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions at a high college level to make your writing clear, credible, and persuasive.

ONLINE LEARNING WITH MOODLE: There are no required textbooks for this course; all course content will be posted on our Moodle class site. An easy way to get to Moodle is to start at the [LBCC homepage](#), and then click on the yellow Moodle logo at the top right. Alternatively, you can go directly to [the sign-in screen](#). If you've never logged-in to Moodle before, you will first have to claim your account at <https://identity.linnbenton.edu/>. If you have any problems logging, please contact the Student Help Desk at 541-917-4630 or student.helpdesk@linnbenton.edu.

Because online learning requires a high level of independence and self-motivation, students who lack time management skills and self-motivation typically don't fare well in courses like this. You give yourself the best chance to do well in the course by being proactive: logging-in to our course site frequently, reading online instructions carefully, paying close attention to the course calendar, and contacting me well ahead of time when you have questions, not a few hours before an assignment is due. Because this is a fully online course, it is essential that you have uninterrupted access to a reliable computer and internet connection.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE: Course content will be organized into weekly sections. Each week's section will be made available at **9:00 AM on the Friday before the upcoming week**. So for example, the Week 2 materials will be available starting at 9:00 AM on Friday of Week 1. I always encourage you to start your weekly work as early as you can, but be aware that this isn't a self-paced course where you can work ahead and finish the term early.

ACTIVE PURSUIT OF THE COURSE: Students often take online courses because they believe they are easier. This is a misconception that often results in poor academic performance. This course may be more flexible than a traditional one in terms of giving you some choice in when and where you complete the required work, but I suspect most of you will find that it requires a higher level of commitment and independence than a traditional course. It's important to get off to a good start; get your first week's assignments done on time. **Note that students may be dropped from the class if they do not complete all of the first week's assignments on time.** Also, students who are not earning a passing grade at midterm and/or are not actively pursuing the course (i.e., many missed assignments, infrequent log-ins, etc.), may want to consider withdrawing (see more information about this below in the "Last Day to Withdraw" section). **I reserve the right to require a videoconference or phone call with students who are not earning a passing grade at midterm (the end of Week 5).**

COMMUNICATING WITH ME: My main communication tool with you will be email so it's **essential that you check your LBCC student email at least once daily**. (You can find information about accessing your LBCC email [here](#)). In addition to having useful reminders for upcoming tasks, my emails will also often provide valuable course content that complements the current assignment we are working on. **Checking email frequently and reading my messages carefully is your best way to stay current in the class!** I have a 24-hour turnaround when replying to emails Monday through Friday, although I typically reply much sooner than that. On weekends, I observe a 48-hour turnaround. When you have questions about an assignment, do not wait until a few hours before it is due to email me. Instead, be working on the course content early, and allow yourself time for questions--and time for me to answer those questions. I'm also happy to **videoconference** with you; just email me to schedule a time.

ASSIGNMENTS: All assignments will fall into one of three categories:

1. Major Assignments:

- **Rhetorical Précis:** A rhetorical précis (pronounced *pray-see*) is a paragraph-length writing that is similar to a summary in that it condenses the essential content of a text, but it also briefly analyzes the methods that the author uses to present the content.
 - **Rhetorical Analysis:** A rhetorical analysis is an essay that focuses in-depth on the specific methods that the author of a text uses to achieve their purpose--or not. In a rhetorical analysis you are making an argument about the writer's use of language and argumentative techniques; you are **not** making an argument in favor of or against the author's stance on the essay's topic.
 - **Debate Analysis:** The longest and most complex of the major assignments, the debate analysis will require you to look in-depth at the opposing sides of a debatable issue.
2. **Minor Assignments:** There will be **6 smaller writing assignments**. I call these "minor" to distinguish them from the "major" assignments, but that's not to say that they are not important; they definitely are. They will each reinforce key skills needed for the major writing assignments.
 3. **Small Group Discussions:** There will be **6 small group discussions**, which are designed so that you can interact with a group of your classmates informally, but while still making connections to the course goals. For each discussion, I will provide a starting prompt--it may be a question or an article excerpt or an image--something to get you thinking. Then you will do some writing in response to the prompt and have a chance to comment on your classmates' ideas. This works in much the same way as a face-to-face class discussion, but of course your writing will be a bit more thought-out and organized than it might be in a spoken conversation.

GRADING AND REVISION POLICY: My experience teaching college writing has shown me that most students concern themselves more with writing for a grade than with writing to learn the practices and mindsets that writers use to communicate effectively. Dr. Asao Inoue, Professor and Director of the University Writing Program & Writing Center at the University of Washington Tacoma, sums up this idea nicely:

[U]sing conventional grading systems to compute course grades often leads us to think more about our grade than about our writing, to worry more about pleasing a teacher or fooling one than about figuring out what we really want to learn, or how we want to communicate something to someone for some purpose. Additionally, conventional grading may cause us to be reluctant to take risks with our writing or ideas. It doesn't allow writers to fail at writing, which many suggest is a primary way in which people learn from their practices.

For the reasons outlined above, I use a grading system that clearly spells out what work is required to attain a final course grade. **The higher the grade, the more work that is required. In other words, if you want an A as your final grade, it will require more work than if you want a B.** When it comes to improving your writing, my firm belief is that "more is better."

Instead of assigning letter grades or points or percentages for your assignments, I will give them one of three marks:

- **Complete:** this means that you submitted your assignment on time, and it meets all of the standards spelled out in the instructions. (This is good!)
- **Incomplete:** this means that you submitted your assignment on time, but it needs to be revised in order to be considered complete. (This is ok because I'll give you feedback to help you revise!)
- **Not Completed:** this means that you did not submit your assignment by the due date, and no credit or makeup will be given. (This is a missed opportunity, but depending on the final course grade

you're pursuing, it may not have a negative impact. See the grading table below for details.)

As long as you submit your assignments on time, they can be revised within one week after I post feedback on them. (Note: Peer feedback assignments are excluded from this revision policy.) You can revise **as many times as you wish until Sunday of Week 9**. This means that you may be submitting assignments multiple times until they are marked complete. That's ok; writing is a process that needs to be practiced often! Be aware, however, that **if a revision is not completed within a week, the option to revise will then be forfeited, and the assignment will be permanently marked "incomplete."**

An important note: Not completing an assignment by its due date means that no credit or revision option will be given. Missing a due date means that you forfeit the opportunity to complete that assignment. Thus, it's always in your best interest to submit *something* by the due date.

Even though your assignments won't be receiving traditional letter grades or points, you will be receiving lots of feedback from me. You will know how well you're doing in the course based on my feedback and on the number of assignments you have successfully completed compared to how many you need to complete to earn the grade you desire. **The table below lays out the requirements needed to earn a final grade of A, B, and C. Study it carefully!**

	To earn a C	To earn a B	To earn an A
Major Assignments	Earn a "complete" on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>2</u> rhetorical précis ● <u>1</u> rhetorical analysis ● <u>1</u> debate analysis 	Earn a "complete" on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>3</u> rhetorical précis ● <u>1</u> rhetorical analysis ● <u>1</u> debate analysis 	Earn a "complete" on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>4</u> rhetorical précis ● <u>2</u> rhetorical analyses ● <u>1</u> debate analysis
Minor Assignments	Earn a "complete" on <u>3</u> minor assignments.	Earn a "complete" on <u>4</u> minor assignments.	Earn a "complete" on <u>5</u> minor assignments.
Small Group Discussions	Earn a "complete" on <u>3</u> small group discussions.	Earn a "complete" on <u>4</u> small group discussions.	Earn a "complete" on <u>5</u> small group discussions.

For grades of D or F, I will determine which of these two grades is most appropriate based on how close the student is to earning a grade of C.

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES AND CAMPUS RESOURCES:

- **No-Show Policy:** Students may be **dropped from the class** if they do not complete all of the first week's assignments on time.
- **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Presenting someone else's ideas in writing as if they are your own is plagiarism, and it is a serious academic offense. **Any plagiarized elements in your writing will result in, at minimum, a zero for the assignment and, at maximum, automatic course failure.** If you ever borrow information from an outside source to put in an essay, you must cite it properly. If you're not sure how to do this, please ask me for help before submitting your paper. Once you submit a paper, the policy mentioned above will be enforced.
- **LBCC Student Email:** Please make sure that you check your student email regularly throughout the term. Should I need to contact you, I will be emailing your student account. You can find information about accessing your LBCC email here: <http://www.linnbenton.edu/roadrunner-mail>

- **Google Docs and Google Drive:** This class will require that you use Google Docs, a free text editing program, to complete many of your writing assignments. Google Docs is part of [Google Drive](#), a free, cloud-based file storage system that you can access from your school email. From your inbox, click on the “Google Apps” icon at the top right corner and choose “Drive.” Let me know if you need help.
- **The LBCC Writing Center:** The LBCC Writing Center (WH-200) is a fantastic free resource for students. Get more info about the WC here: <http://www.linnbenton.edu/learning-center/writing-center>
- **The LBCC Library:** The LBCC library is located on the first floor of Willamette Hall. Get more information here: <http://library.linnbenton.edu/home>
- **Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR):** LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in this class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations, but are not yet registered with CFAR, please go to <http://linnbenton.edu/cfar> for steps on how to apply for services or call 541-917-4789.
- **Non-Discrimination Policy:** Everyone in the LBCC community has the right to think, learn, and work together in an environment of respect, tolerance, and goodwill, and we will honor that right in our classroom.
- **Basic Needs:** Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Roadrunner Resource Center for support (resources@linnbenton.edu or www.linnbenton.edu/RRC . I am also happy to put you in touch with them.
- **Last Day to Withdraw:** Each term, the Friday that concludes Week 7 is the last day for students to withdraw from a course. If you are still enrolled after this point, you must receive a grade. Be aware that withdrawing from a course can impact your financial aid, so be sure to consult with the [Financial Aid Office](#) if you have questions before withdrawing.

COURSE CALENDAR: The week-by-week schedule below is a key to success; follow it carefully!

DATE	TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES (all due by 11:59 PM)
WEEK 1 Mon 4/6 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)	COURSE INTRODUCTION, VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY, AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #1: Student Introduction (due Tue) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #2: SOAPStone Graphic Organizer (due Thur)
WEEK 2 Mon 4/13 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)	WRITING A RHETORICAL PRÉCIS AND BEGINNING SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #1 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Précis #1 (due Thur)

<p>WEEK 3 Mon 4/20 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>ANALYZING ARGUMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #2 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis #1 first draft (due Sun) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Précis #2 (due Sun) <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-up by 11:59 PM Sunday if you plan to complete Minor Assignment #4: Peer Feedback
<p>WEEK 4 Mon 4/27 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>ANALYZING ARGUMENTS (con't) AND INTRODUCING PEER REVIEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #3 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #3: Peer Feedback (due Tue) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis #1 final draft (due Sun) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Précis #3 (due Sun)
<p>WEEK 5 Mon 5/4 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>INTRODUCING THE DEBATE ANALYSIS, CHOOSING A TOPIC, AND EVALUATING SOURCE CREDIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #4 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Post your topic choice for the Debate Analysis by Thursday! <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #4: Evaluating Source Credibility (due Sun) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Précis #4 (due Sun)
<p>WEEK 6 Mon 5/11 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>UNDERSTANDING THE TOULMIN METHOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #5 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #5: Toulmin Analysis (due Thur) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis #2 (due Sun)
<p>WEEK 7 Mon 5/18 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>PEER FEEDBACK ON FIRST DRAFTS AND UNDERSTANDING ROGERIAN ARGUMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Discussion #6 (first post due Tue; see assignment instructions for due dates for follow-up posts) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Debate Analysis first draft (due Thurs) <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-up by 11:59 PM Thursday if you plan to complete Minor Assignment #6: Peer Feedback (due next Tue)
<p>WEEK 8 Mon 5/25 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>POLISHING FINAL DRAFTS OF THE DEBATE ANALYSIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Assignment #6: Peer Feedback (due Tue) <input type="checkbox"/> Major Assignment: Debate Analysis final draft (due Thurs)
<p>WEEK 9 Mon 6/1 (weekly materials available the Friday before at 9 AM)</p>	<p>LAST REVISIONS AND FINAL QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Final chance to submit revisions (due Sunday)