

# CMST 2063: Argumentation & Debate

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Meeting day and time: T/R

Office hours: 10:30am-11:30am Coates Hall/Blake Hall ARC Office 12:00pm-1:00pm

Sec.: 2

Term: Spring

Meeting room: Nicholson 108



## COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Principles of argumentation and debate; analysis, briefing, evidence, reasoning and refutation; debating on vital questions.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Making, critiquing, debating, and assessing arguments in society is required if you wish to be an engaged citizen and thoughtful critical consumer of media and communication. In this course, you will learn the introductory principles of argumentation, logic, and debate. We will survey different models of argument, learn how to structure and support arguments, and practice those skills in individual speaking, partnered, and group contexts. You will participate in timed debates with classmates on issues of social importance. This course aims to equip students with

the information and tools for engaging in a complex world with increasing amounts of information and communication content.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2063 enables you to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated argument, disagreement, and dialogue in democratic society.

Throughout this course, you will learn to become a more effective critical thinker and consumer of information and arguments. This will be accomplished by achieving the following:

1. Understanding, identifying and evaluating the various types of arguments, reasoning processes, and logical fallacies
2. Knowing what evidence is, how to use it to prove a claim, and how to evaluate the adequacy of your and opposing evidence
3. Learning to organize arguments into a persuasive case
4. Developing skills in refutation and cross examination
5. Being able to use these skills in a variety of formats

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The success of this course depends on the interactions generated between the instructor and the students (me and you). I do expect you to participate actively in class, share your ideas and opinions, comment on and assess those of your fellow classmates. However, I do demand that everyone treat each other with respect. Ridicule or disrespect of any sort will not be tolerated.

## COURSE WEBSITE

This course makes use of the Moodle website. You should be able to access Moodle through your PAWS account. After you log into PAWS, you will find the link to Moodle under the "Student Services" category. I will post readings, course assignments, handouts, documents, videos, as well as any announcements. Make sure to check the website regularly.

## COURSE MATERIALS

- One two-pocket folder for handing in assignments
- Additional readings/materials will be posted online.
- Access to and competency with online search engines and university libraries is essential for success in this course.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

**Refutation Speech (200 points)** Refute a single argument of policy or fact in a 3-minute speech to the class. Each speech will be followed by a 3-minute cross examination period where classmates are required to thoroughly examine and interrogate the speaker. 150 points will go towards each student's individual speech and ability to answer questions, and 50 points will be determined by your active and inquisitive participation in the cross-examination of other students.

**Letter to the Editor Assignment (150 points)** Draft a letter to the editor suitable for submission to The Daily Reveille, The Advocate, or Times-Picayune. An effective letter succinctly and effectively articulates a value position on a matter of social importance. They are often, but not always, in response to material published by the newspaper. Published letters will receive 5 extra points. In addition to your original letter, you must respond to TWO classmate's letters on Moodle, with a counter letter to the editor. Your original letter is worth 100 points and each refutation letter are worth 25 points.

**Policy Debate (200)** Each member of the class will partner with another member of the class and debate a specific policy resolution. Must follow specific debate format and requirements, including submitting a brief prior to the debate.

**Final Exam OR Project (200 points)** You will have the choice to take a cumulative final exam administered online during finals week or complete a final project/paper. Each option is designed to put into practice your ability to analyze, critique, and make arguments using the course principles and practices we have learned.

- **OPTION 1 – EXAM:** The exam is application-based, meaning it will require you to assess and apply concepts from the course to various examples and contexts. The exam may be made up of multiple choices, matching, true/false, and short answer/essays.
- **OPTION 2 – PROJECT:** Select an argument, speech, or rhetorical/media artifact and analyze its argument, use of evidence, and rhetorical situation. Produce a project that displays and communicates this analysis. This could be through the production of a YouTube video (see film theorists for an example), making an infographic, or writing a 5-page paper.

**Engagement (250 points)** This class is based on your thorough participation and critical engagement with text and exercise materials. I expect you to come to class having completed the readings for that day. Students are expected to attend all lectures and to complete all required reading. The engagement grade is composed of student contributions to class discussions and various engagement assignments given throughout the semester. In addition, you will be graded on in-class assignments and discussions for which you will lose credit if you are not present.

### Assignment Weights

ASSIGNMENT	Points
Refutation Speech	200 points
Letter to the Editor Assignment	150 points
Policy Debate	200 points
Final Exam OR Project	200 points
Engagement	Various activities/assignments/engagement = 250 points total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Point Range Needed
A+	980-1000
A	920-979
A-	900-919
B+	880-899
B	820-879
B-	800-819
C+	780-799
C	720-779
C-	700-719
D+	680-699
D	620-679
D-	600-619
F	0-599

## COURSE POLICIES

## Attendance

I do not take attendance each day. However, I do take note of who participates each day and write comments about your active participation. Additionally, there are consequences if you miss class that you should consider while you make your decision about your attendance to this course:

- You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.
- You are responsible for participating in activities and discussion, and missing class will impact your engagement grade in this course.
- We do not have readings, so the information in class is not always easily accessible.
- If you miss a class, please get notes from a classmate rather than asking me for notes.
- You will not be able to make up engagement activities/assignments.

Attendance on presentation/debate days, even when you are not speaking, is required. Failure to attend presentation days will result in a ten-point deduction from your own grade for each day missed.

## Late Work

Sometimes life just happens and you are unable to turn in an assignment on time (maybe you are stressed out, overwhelmed by other assignments in other classes, got drunk the night before and slept through your alarm, etc...). I will accept late work but with a penalty. Work will be accepted within the following week for the **maximum grade of a C** (see below for extenuating circumstances). After 7 days, late work will no longer be accepted for credit. (Life happens, but not without consequences.) Engagement activities/assignments which are given in class cannot be made up.

***Extenuating circumstances:*** I reserve the right to accept late work without penalty when a student has provided **proper documentation** of a university sanctioned emergency or conflict that has inhibited them from turning in an assignment on time. University sanctioned emergencies or conflicts include:

- family death/emergency
- debilitating or contagious sickness
- religious observance
- serious weather conditions
- varsity athletic competition
- sanctioned curricular requirements with documentation
- court-imposed legal obligations

For more information on university policy on student absences, see <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>

## Presentation Day Etiquette

On the day of your presentations, you should arrive in appropriate attire (i.e. business casual, or at least not in pajamas, no hats). Your role as an audience member is equally important to a successful presentation. As I indicate above, attendance on presentation days is mandatory for everyone. You are also responsible for being a supportive audience member. This means that working on homework, typing on a lap top, text messaging, walking in late while someone is speaking, sleeping, or simply looking like anything other than engaged in your classmates' work will be considered rude and inappropriate. This may, if done repeatedly, affect your own grade on the assignment.

## Grade Discussions and Appeals

I will not entertain discussions about adjusting your entire grade in the course. Instead, we can engage in thoughtful discuss about grades for specific assignments.

If you just wish to understand a grade you received on an assignment, you can come to my office and speak with me face-to-face or schedule a video conference appointment during my office hours. If you cannot come to my office hours, I will gladly schedule an appointment that works with your schedule. To protect your privacy and to stay in line with federal guidelines, I will not discuss grades or assignments in class, in front of other students, or through e-mail.

### Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade on an assignment, you must submit a written letter requesting to appeal your grade within 7 days of receiving the grade and feedback from me. You must follow the procedure I outline below.

1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your grade and feedback before setting up an appointment with me and submitting your written grade appeal. This grace period ensures that you have time to carefully read and consider the feedback.
2. After reading my feedback, submit a written appeal through e-mail that identifies the specific issue with the grade and explains the specific and well-supported reasons you believe the grade should be changed. Some thoughts on these appeals:
  - Please refer to any class materials that support your rationale for a change.
  - Focus less on explaining that you deserve a certain grade (i.e. "I came to every class and deserve an A"), and more on proving that you accomplished specific objectives on this specific assignment that you were not given the appropriate credit for (i.e. "You state in my feedback that I did not appropriately meet X grading criteria. However, according to lecture and the assignment description, we were expected to do Y, see pages 5-7 of my assignment where you can see I meet this criterion by doing Z.").
  - Make sure to cite specific instances from your assignment to provide support for your claims.

- Please attach to the email a graded copy of the assignment in question (i.e. exam, etc.) and any additional evidence to support your claims.
3. The written appeal should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the appointment you have scheduled with me. During this meeting, we will review your appeal.
  4. After meeting with you, I may wish to contemplate the matter. In any case, I will decide within two school days whether to change or uphold the grade. I will provide you with a written justification of my decision through Moodle (see comments on the graded item in question).
  5. Remember, you can only submit a grade appeal within one week (7 days) of the grade's issue. Grade appeals will not be considered after that "statute of limitations" has expired.
  6. If we cannot come to an agreement, you are welcome to follow the formal grade appeal procedure as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

### Technology and Electronics in the Classroom

You are more than welcome to use technology in this classroom (Laptops, iPads, etc) as long as it does not serve as a distraction to you and other students, or keep you from engaging in class discussion. If you use a laptop to take notes or look up information in class, that is fine, but it should not be out during discussions unless it's additive or needed. If technology becomes a distraction rather than supportive to your learning and the learning of others, I will warn the class once, and if it happens again technology will be banned from the whole class.

### Accessibility & Accommodations

LSU is committed to ensuring that its websites, online courses, and all online materials are accessible to everyone. Please visit the [Louisiana State University Accessibility Hub](#) to read our policies and requirements for ensuring that our courses are accessible to everyone. Louisiana State University is also committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with Disability Services in 115 Johnston Hall. Their phone number is 225-578-5919 and website is [www.lsu.edu/disability](http://www.lsu.edu/disability). To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Disability Services forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

### Academic Quality, Integrity, & Misconduct

Take pride in the quality of your work in this class. Written work must be spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofread: The quality of your writing will affect your grade. All written work must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with a clear heading up at the top. Your name must be included. You must include in-text citations and use an appropriate citation style for all sources used or engaged (MLA, APA, Chicago). If you submit an essay above or below page requirements you will receive a deduction.

For all of the assignments you will complete for this course, there is an expectation that everything you submit, either individually or as a group, will be your own original work. You can never submit an essay that you have previously written for or submitted to another class.

Scholarly procedure dictates that all information or material used from someone else's work (whether used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary) must be properly cited and documented in written work. In this course, all major written work is submitted to TurnItIn which uses an advanced algorithm to detect significant matches. Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. You can find the official LSU policies on plagiarism the [dean of students website](#).

Your work would be considered as plagiarism in part or entirely if it involves any of the following:

- Submitting work that was written by someone other than you (an online source, a friend, etc.).
- Submitting work in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references. Simply rewording a sentence does not make work your own.
- Submitting work in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.
- Submitting work that you have written together with a friend as if it was solely your own intellectual property.
- Submitting work that you wrote verbatim for another class.

Plagiarism can be both intentional and unintentional. Intentional plagiarism is when an individual claims sole authorship of a work that is primarily or entirely written and conceived by someone else. Unintentional plagiarism is plagiarism that results from the unintentional disregard for proper scholarly procedures. Examples of Unintentional Plagiarism may be:

- Failure to cite a source that is not common knowledge.
- Failure to "quote" or block quote author's exact words, even if documented.
- Failure to put a paraphrase in your own words, even if documented.
- Failure to put a summary in your own words, even if documented.
- Failure to be loyal to a source.

### **Waiting Policy**

Class members should wait 15 minutes for me in the event I am late (which I do not at all foresee). After that period of time, you should consider class cancelled and check your e-mail for any information regarding the cancellation.

## **Netiquette**

Think about how you communicate to your instructors and colleagues in person and via e-mail. When sending E-Mails:

- Address me professionally in e-mails (ex: "Hello, Pro. Robvais")
- In an e-mail, please sign your name (I might think [LSUcutiepie@gmail.com](mailto:LSUcutiepie@gmail.com) is spam and delete it).
- Check your grammar.
- Remember tone is harder to make out in e-mail. Assume a polite and professional tone, and my response will be the same.
- Make sure to include any necessary background information needed for me to "make sense" of what you are e-mailing about. Also, make sure to be clear (just like in an essay) of what you want out of the e-mail.
- Do not text me from your phone in all caps, or in broken English. Always use proper punctuation, complete spellings, etc...
- Courtesy in this class gives most people 24 hours to respond to e-mail. I will not assume you will get an e-mail in less time; don't assume I will either. Weekends may take longer.

If you fail to follow these guidelines, I will not answer your e-mail.

## **University Cancellations**

In the event that classes are canceled by the university due to snow, severe weather, or other factors, students should assume that the assignments due on the day of the canceled class are due on the next class meeting. You are expected to attend your classes as scheduled if the University is not officially closed.

## **Religious Observances**

It is University policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty, and staff. Students with exams or classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify me well in advance so that we can work out a mutually agreeable alternative.

## **Majoring in Communication Studies**

Lawyers, politicians, performers, business leaders and creative content producers recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, media, and the arts.

*A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.*

More information is available at [www.lsu.edu/cmst](http://www.lsu.edu/cmst) or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel ([kfilli@lsu.edu](mailto:kfilli@lsu.edu)), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall

**Conditions:** *Your acceptance of these conditions, as well as the policies outlined in this document, is implied by your continuance in the class. To maintain the integrity of everyone's grade, and ultimately, degree, all course policies are non-negotiable. Everything in this document, including the daily schedule, is subject to revision or modification due to unforeseen circumstances.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignments Info
TH 1/10	Course Introduction: The Role of Argumentation and Debate in Society	
T 1/15	Structuring Arguments	
TH 1/17	Typology of Claims (Fact, Definition, Evaluation/Value, Causal, Policy)	
T 1/22	Grounds	
TH 1/24	Reasoning	
T 1/29	Audience & Cognitive Dissonance	
TH 1/31	Workshop-Audience Cognitive Dissonance	
T 2/5	Refutation	*Assign refutation speech
TH 2/7	Workshop – Building a case	
T 2/12	Workshop – Cross examination	
TH 2/14	<b>Refutation Speeches</b>	
T 2/19	<b>Refutation Speeches</b>	
TH 2/21	<b>Refutation Speeches</b>	
T 2/26	<b>Refutation Speeches</b>	
TH 2/28	Ethical and Value-Based Arguments	*Assign Letter to the Editor Assignment
T 3/5	No Class – Mardi Gras Holiday	
TH 3/7	Workshop - Letter to the editor	*First Letter to the editors due on

		Moodle by midnight
T 3/12	Workshop - Responding to Arguments	
TH 3/14	Introduction to Policy Debate (Format, Resolutions, Briefs, Cross-Examination)	*Assign Policy Debates * Letter to the Editor Responses due via Moodle
T 3/19	Workshop - Sample Debate	
TH 3/21	Responding to the issues and writing briefs	
T 3/26	Workshop – practice debate	
TH 3/28	<b>Debates</b>	
T 4/2	<b>Debates</b>	
TH 4/4	<b>Debates</b>	
T 4/9	<b>Debates</b>	
TH 4/11	<b>Debates</b>	
T 4/16	No Class – Spring Break	
TH 4/18	No Class – Spring Break	
T 4/23	<b>Debates</b>	
TH 4/25	Dialogue & Debate in Democracy	Exam Review/Project overview
W 5/1	Final Exam/Project	Take online, timed