



CMST 302 • Argumentation

Department of Communication Studies Fall 2020
Room: P 1838 & through Zoom Section: 60
Dates & Times: Thursdays, 6:00—7:45pm Course ID: 005471

Instructor: Justin J. Rudnick, Ph.D. (“Dr. J”) (pronouns: he/she/they)
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Office Hours: [Click here to schedule a meeting through MavConnect!](#)
Tues/Thurs: 1:00—3:30pm (Online only)
Wednesdays: 1:00—5:00pm (Online only)
**I am also available by appointment. Please contact me to set up a meeting.*

Required Texts:

This course has one **required** textbook. It is **necessary** for the successful completion of this course:

Rieke, R. D., Sillars, M. O., & Peterson, T. R. (2013). *Argumentation and critical decision making* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. (ISBN: 9780205210596)

Additional required readings will be made available on the Desire-2-Learn (D2L) system (<https://mnsu.ims.mnscu.edu/>).

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of CMST 302 is to provide you with an exploration of the field of argument, addressing structure, types, and critical analysis. We will explore the construction, analysis, delivery, and evaluation of arguments. This class will encourage you to think critically about a position, the evidence used to support that position, the logic behind those connections, and the emotion used to convey those arguments. You will learn to identify types of reasoning, argument fallacies and pseudo-reasoning. You will also apply concepts in the construction and refutation of argument positions.

Your successful completion of this course will fulfill the following learning objectives:

1. Identify the basic elements and structure of arguments;
2. Demonstrate sound argument construction and delivery;
3. Analyze arguments for their structure and function;
4. Collect sound evidence to support an original argument;
5. Design and deliver an original argument;
6. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of opposing arguments;
7. Defend your own argument from criticism.

Nondiscrimination and Classroom Etiquette:

We live in a multicultural world that is diverse, distinct, evolving, and complex. This class will likely involve discussions and debates about a number of issues, some of them controversial. I hope we will all be mindful of each other regarding these issues and how they might easily relate to our identities. I also expect us to conduct ourselves with the utmost civility with each other as mature and educated adults. My hope is that you will come to realize that positions are neither right nor wrong—but they can be argued better or worse. In this class, we will encounter

different and opposing perspectives that will make us more aware, empathetic, and open to the difference and similarities we share. As an instructor, I will work to facilitate an amiable environment where ideas and thoughts can flow freely, creatively, and comfortably. As students, I hope you will enter our class with a similar commitment. As a final note, all MNSU nondiscrimination policies will be upheld and enforced in our class.

Accessibility and Academic Accommodations:

Minnesota State University, Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities, and/or services. Students with documented disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with Accessibility Resources (Memorial Library 132, ph: 507-389-2825, TDD 711, or email Julie.Snow@mnsu.edu) to establish an accommodation plan and then contact me as soon as possible. Through our Partnership Center, MSU, Mankato will cooperate with Normandale Community College to set up any accommodations you need to succeed in this class. I will gladly incorporate any accommodations you might need in order to successfully complete this course.

Rigor and Academic Honesty:

In keeping with MNSU's Academic Honesty policy, all work that engages in such inappropriate activities as plagiarism, cheating, or collusion will be subjected to the appropriate academic sanctions. These sanctions may include anything ranging from re-doing the assignment to receiving an automatic failing grade in the course. For more information on your rights and responsibilities as they relate to academic honesty, consult the university's policy at <https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>.

Face Coverings (Mask) Requirement:

Our campus community thrives on mutual respect, trust, and commitment to our health. In our collective effort to create and maintain a learning environment that is as safe as possible, we expect all members of the Maverick family to be familiar with state and university public health guidelines. These include:

1. Maintaining appropriate social / physical distancing (six feet minimum);
2. Wearing a face covering on campus, as per guidance from Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-74 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This requirement applies to anyone on the main campus or any of our additional locations, including (but not limited to) students, staff, faculty, contractors, vendors, suppliers, and visitors. The requirement includes wearing face coverings when:
 - Entering a campus building, including a residence hall hallways, classrooms, public spaces, common areas, and office spaces if social distancing of six feet is not possible. (When in a dorm room, the wearing of a mask is not required.)
 - Outdoors, if and where safe social distancing and gathering practices are not possible.

Additionally, face coverings must be worn correctly, i.e. must cover both mouth and nose. Individuals may supply their own face masks—but the University will provide a cloth mask to

all students, faculty and staff prior to the start of the fall semester. Students who would prefer to have additional masks will need to supply their own.

Students who do not wear a face covering in instructional spaces (such as classrooms, studios, and labs) will be reminded about the requirement, directed to obtain a temporary disposable mask from the Department or College Dean's Office. In the case of refusal to abide by the face covering requirement, the student will be asked to leave. If a student refuses, the instructor may leave the course to complete the class remotely.

Should you have specific concerns about the mask requirement, please contact the Department Chair (Dr. Sachi Sekimoto, sachi.sekimoto@mnsu.edu) and/or Dean of the College (Dr. Chris Brown, Christopher.brown@mnsu.edu). [Click here for more information on face coverings.](#)

Covid-19 Positive Notification Processes

The University values the health and safety of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. To assist with maintaining a healthy campus community, the University asks students and employees to complete the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to assist with any response to positive COVID-19 cases. [Click here for more information.](#)

Reporting is optional! Each individual with a positive COVID-19 case has the option to notify the University of their positive test result. This is not a requirement, and no one will be compelled to notify us. However, it is our hope that the individual will notify us so we can take appropriate steps to protect the campus community.

Potential Shifts in Class Format and Instruction

Due to higher education COVID-19 guidelines or other factors outside the University's control that results in a decision to end face-to-face instruction before the end of the semester, the format of this class will adapt as needed. In the case of such a scenario, the instructor will communicate with the students and clarify the nature of these changes.

Should the instructor become ill for an extended period, the department will take steps for a substitute instructor to teach the remainder of the class.

Should you, as the student, need to change your class attendance plan that was developed by the instructor, contact the instructor to discuss this further.

Attendance and Participation in a Hybrid / FlexSync Course:

CMST 302 is a performance-based class in that you cultivate a mastery of the course material by actively putting it into practice. As such, regular attendance and participation is required. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has created unusual and difficult circumstances in which our learning must take place. To provide you with an exceptional educational experience AND preserve the health and well-being of everyone in the class (myself included), our course will take place in a hybrid and FlexSync format. Video lectures, quizzes, and pre-meeting activities will be made available on D2L for you to complete at your own pace and schedule **before our regularly assigned class session**. We will then spend a shortened amount of class time (2 hours instead of the usual 4) focusing on workshops, activities, and exercises that build on the work you completed before class. These short sessions will occur at the regularly scheduled time each week in two formats: in-person at Normandale Community College (available to a limited

number of people), and real-time attendance through Zoom. Regardless of your attendance method, your attendance is required. I will take attendance every day and keep track of your meaningful participation in class discussions. **Due to the uncertainty of studying during the pandemic, there is no set number of “excused” absences. If you are unable to come to class for any reason, please check in with me so I know not to expect you.** Please note that it is your responsibility to make up any work you miss as a result of missing class. Any student missing more than 1/3 of the semester’s class sessions should withdraw and re-take the course in another term, as you will not be awarded a passing grade in the class.

Work Policies:

Any late work will be subjected to an automatic 50% grade deduction. I will not accept ANY late work more than a week after the due date.

I also have stylistic expectations for all written work in this class. Any written work, unless specified otherwise, should comply with the following expectations:

- All work must be submitted electronically through the appropriate dropbox on D2L;
- All work **MUST** be in a Word document or a format I can open with Microsoft Word;
- Type your work and double-space everything evenly;
- Use an APA-approved font and size (e.g., Times New Roman-12, Calibri-11, Arial-11, Georgia-11);
- Margins should be 1” all around;
- All assignments must include a cover page in proper APA format;
- Anything written by someone else and referenced in your assignment **in any way** should be cited in-text and included in a reference section according to the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide, 7th edition.

If the above requirements are not met, I will return the work to you—ungraded—and you will have the ability to make corrections, subjected to the late work penalty.

Course Assignments and Grades:

The following grading scale will be used in this course:

A- = 90—92.9%	A = 93—96.9%	A+ = 97—100%
B- = 80—82.9%	B = 83—86.9%	B+ = 87—89.9%
C- = 70—72.9%	C = 73—76.9%	C+ = 77—79.9%
D- = 60—62.9%	D = 63—66.9%	D+ = 67—69.9%
	F = 0—59.9%	

Some students seem to have the misconception that simply doing an assignment results in an “A.” Failure to follow directions or meet criteria will result in you earning fewer points. Also, simply doing an assignment does not guarantee a passing grade regardless of perceived “effort.” Please note the definition of each letter grade:

- “A” is reserved for work that is exceptional;
- “B” is reserved for work that is above average;
- “C” is reserved for work that is average (meets criteria);
- “D” is reserved for work that is below average;
- “F” is reserved for work that is failing, late, or not submitted for evaluation.

A note about contesting your grade: If you have questions about your grade, I encourage you to come discuss your grade with me, with these exceptions: (1) you may not ask me about your grade before you have received my feedback; and (2) I will not discuss specific assignment grades more than 2 weeks after they are distributed.

A note about final grades: At the conclusion of the course, I will assign letter grades based on the above percentage scale. As indicated by the scale, *I will round grades to the nearest tenth decimal (0.x)*. I will not round beyond this, so do not ask me to. ☺

The following assignments will be completed by each student in the class. You can determine your percentage (and grade) by totaling the points you have accumulated and dividing those points by the number of points possible.

<u>Assessment:</u>	<u>Points Earned / Points Possible</u>
1. Reading Quizzes (10 @ 10 pts each)	_____ / 100
2. Video lecture extra credit	varies
3. Balloon Debate	_____ / 25
4. Annotated Bibliography Draft	_____ / 10
5. Annotated Bibliography Final	_____ / 60
6. Argument Analysis Essay	_____ / 30
7. Debate Case Draft	_____ / 10
8. Debate Case Final	_____ / 50
9. Position Presentation	_____ / 100
10. Refutation Presentation	_____ / 100
11. Argumentation Appraisal Essay	_____ / 100
 TOTAL	 _____ / 585

- 1. Reading Quizzes (10 points each):** Whenever you have assigned readings, you will complete a short online (D2L) quiz to assess your comprehension of the material. These quizzes are always 10 questions, multiple-choice, and 1 point per question.
- 2. Balloon Debate (25 points):** Your first in-class project will require you to practice making claim statements in a fun activity to see who is the last person “standing” in a plummeting hot air balloon. This assessment is a competition in a small team of 4-5, and your goal is to be the last person kicked out of the balloon.
- 3. Annotated Bibliography (70 points total):** To prepare you for your final in-class debate, you will collect 12 reputable sources to help you settle on a position and craft your debate case. You will compile these sources into an APA-style bibliography and identify relevant or useful evidence from *each* of these sources. You will bring a complete draft to class for a workshop, which you will revise into a final version.
- 4. Argument Analysis Essays (30 points each):** To practice identifying the aspects of a successful argument, you will write a short essay analyzing the argumentation of one of the sources you collected from your bibliography. In each essay, you will apply Toulmin’s model of argumentation to see how the author constructed the argument, and determine the effectiveness of the argument.
- 5. Debate Case (60 points total):** In preparation for your final “debate,” you will draft a persuasive case which presents your argument for the chosen topic. This debate case will

take the form of a single-spaced, full-sentence outline where you identify the proposition you wish to defend and present four possible arguments to advocate for that proposition.

- 6. Position Presentation (100 points total):** After you have outlined your position on the debate issue, you will create a persuasive presentation advocating for your stance. Your presentation will be recorded, graded, and then distributed to one peer in the class.
- 7. Refutation Presentation (100 points):** You will be assigned one peer's position presentation to review who disagrees with or argues against your own position. After reviewing their presentation, you will need to critique that position, outline a persuasive response, and create a refutation presentation where you attempt to refute your peer's stance on the issue. Your refutation will need to clearly address logical pitfalls or apparent weaknesses in your peer's proposal, and illustrate why those weaknesses make your own stance the preferable or more reasonable position. Your presentation will be recorded, graded, and then returned to the peer you refuted.
- 8. Argumentation Appraisal Essay (100 points):** Your final semester paper will require you to review your Position Presentation and the Refutation Presentation you receive and analyze the strategies used by both persons. In that analysis, you will draw from all of your studies throughout the course to determine the effectiveness of each person's argumentation, and who you think was the better arguer. You are encouraged to save this essay for possible inclusion in your senior seminar portfolio in CMST 485.

Tentative Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I will attempt to give you fair warning and make reasonable accommodations if I need to adjust the schedule.

Week	Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Thurs 8/27	Introduction to Argumentation & Topic Selection <i>Assign: Balloon Debates</i>	Read: Chapter 1 (textbook) Due: Quiz 1
2	Thurs 9/3	Establishing Credibility	Read: Chapter 9 (textbook) Due: Quiz 2
3	Thurs 9/10	Balloon Debates <i>Assign: Annotated Bibliography</i>	Due: Balloon Arguments
4	Thurs 9/17	Evaluating & Using Evidence; Library Resources Workshop	Read: Chapter 7 (textbook) Due: Quiz 3
5	Thurs 9/24	Identifying & Appealing to Values; APA Workshop & Bibliography Review <i>Assign: Argument Analysis Essay</i>	Read: Chapter 8 (textbook) Due: Quiz 4 Due: Bibliography Draft
6	Thurs 10/1	What's in an Argument?	Read: Chapter 4 (textbook) Due: Quiz 5 Due: Bibliography Final
7	Thurs 10/8	Crafting Propositions & Claims <i>Assign: Debate Case</i>	Read: Chapter 5 (textbook) Due: Quiz 6 Due: Argument Analysis Essay
8	Thurs 10/15	Building & Outlining a Persuasive Case	Read: Chapter 6 (textbook) Due: Quiz 7
9	Thurs 10/22	Analyzing your Audience; Case-Building Workshop	Read: D2L Chapter Due: Quiz 8 Due: Case Draft
10	Thurs 10/29	Refutation <i>Assign: Position Presentation</i>	Read: Chapter 10 (textbook) Due: Quiz 9 Due: Case Final
11	Thurs 11/5	Review Position Presentations <i>Assign: Refutation Presentation & Review Partners</i>	Due: Position Presentation
12	Thurs 11/12	Fallacies in Argumentation	Read: Chapter 11 (textbook) Due: Quiz 10
13	Thurs 11/19	Review Refutation Presentations <i>Assign: Debate Appraisal Essay</i>	Due: Refutation Presentations
14	Thurs 11/26	No Class—Thanksgiving Break	
15	Thurs 12/3	Final Debrief	
F	Thurs 12/10	No Class—Final Papers Due by 11:59pm	Due: Argumentation Appraisal Essay