COMMUNICATION STUDIES 160: Argumentation and Critical Thinking
Miramar College, Fall 2025
Syllabus

Professor: Paul "Pablo" Martin, M.A.

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Student Support Hours (aka Visiting or Office Hours):

- Monday through Thursdays from 9:00-9:30
- Monday through Thursdays from 1:30-2:00
- By appointment (in person, H-110L or via Zoom, https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/93742123704)

This course is hosted on Canvas (https://sdccd.instructure.com/). There you can find the course grading policies, assignments, schedules, and all other important information.

MySDCCD (this is where you can access everything else related to your student account at Miramar and SDCCD)

Other Important Contacts: School of Liberal Arts Administrative Assistant, Jeanette Moore – 619-388-7873

Note: if I need to make any changes to this syllabus, I will notify you both during class and via Canvas.

Required Text:

Primary Text: How Arguments Work: A Guide to Writing and Analyzing Texts in College (Mills et al. 2020)

Ancillary Text: Arguing Using Critical Thinking (Marteney)

These are OERs (Open Educational Resources). All assigned readings are available via linked assignments within Canvas (our course LMS) and Perusall (a third-party app). They are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License.

Other required materials:

1. Have a working SDCCD email account (feel free to forward this to any email account that you check regularly). A student email webpage has also been setup to help with Microsoft accounts, login instructions, and how to contact email support. https://sdccd.edu/student-email

2. A way to access [Canvas](#), our course management system (any private or public computer with an Internet connection will suffice).

3. Access to the course syllabus and course schedule on [Canvas](#).

A Description of the Course

This course is a study of argumentation and development of critical thinking through the rhetorical tradition. Emphasis is placed on research, analysis of propositions, testing of evidence, and development of constructive and refutation cases through the writing and revision of a sequence of critical compositions as a foundation for oral debate. Students locate, evaluate, and integrate outside sources into their writing assignments, which total at least 6,000 words for the semester. This course is designed for communication studies majors and anyone interested in argumentation and the development of critical thinking skills through composition and spoken discourse.

Assessing Student Performance (i.e. Grades):

Students' final grade in this course will be based on their performance in two areas, Skill-Based Outcomes and Work-Based Outcomes.

Skill-Based Outcomes: The State of California approves official course outlines for every course taught within its higher education system. At the local level, colleges create their own Student Learning Outcomes to reflect these outlines. In this course, these are called Skill-Based Outcomes.

SLO1A. Constructs arguments applying logical reasoning and critical thinking.

SLO1B. The argument's persuasive techniques were well-reasoned and ethical.

SLO2A. Developed and defended a thesis-driven argument.

SLO2B. The argument integrated credible research and supporting evidence.

SLO3A. Analyzed and evaluated the argument's logical fallacies.

SLO3B. Analyzed and evaluated the argument's biases.

SLO3C. Analyzed and evaluated the argument's rhetorical strategies.

SLO4A. Employed active listening (as demonstrated by critical response skills) to foster meaningful discourse.

SLO4B. Adapted arguments based on audience feedback and opposing viewpoints.

SLO5A. Communication is ethical.

SLO5B. Communication demonstrates cultural sensitivity.

Work-Based Outcomes Overview: In addition to course learning objectives specified in each course's official outline, there are often unwritten expectations of what students will do in a class. These include showing up and actively engaging in each class and completing assignments to help them develop the skills outlined, usually by a deadline. In my course, these are called Work-Based Outcomes.

1. Meeting Major Due Dates: This major assignment was submitted on time.
2. Meeting Minor Due Dates: This minor assignment was submitted on time.
3. Attendance: Comes to class regularly, is on time, and stays the entire class.
4. Participation: Clearly engaged (in some way) with the material during class and/or online.
5. Completion: Completes each aspect of the assignment.

Important Dates for the Fall Semester

Classes begin (16 weeks): August 25

Last day to add or drop classes without a "W": September 5

Labor Day Holiday: September 1

SDCCD Graduation Deadlines (check the graduation deadlines page)

Withdrawal deadline – no drops are accepted after this date: October 31

Veterans Day: November 11

Thanksgiving Break: classes not in session November 24 – 29

End of Fall Semester: December 20

For other helpful information, visit: https://www.sdccd.edu/students/index.aspx#guide

(Spring Semester begins February 2, 2026)

All assignment descriptions, course resources, including the class policies that we will create together, are available via our Canvas Shell. If you have any difficulty finding any of these materials, please email me or post your question in the "Have a Question? Ask it here!" discussion forum on Canvas.