

COMM 1B: ARGUMENTATION & PERSUASION

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249; not open to students with credit in COMM 1BH or SPCH 1B.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Analyze and distinguish fallacious reasoning from empirically supported claims in preparation for an extemporaneous speech.
- Construct and deliver reasoned responses to opposing arguments using critical thinking and respectful refutation in structured classroom debates.
- Research, evaluate, and effectively integrate credible evidence into the development of a persuasive speech.

Description

The study and practice of argumentation and persuasion. Review of modern and historical persuasive speech in a variety of contexts and cultures. Analysis of rhetorical theory and application of methods of effective persuasion. Knowledge of the structure and format of various types of argumentation. Participation in speech activities. Little or no experience in public speaking or argumentation/persuasion is required.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Understand and apply the theoretical foundations of argumentation and persuasion, including inductive and deductive reasoning, the five canons of rhetoric, and Aristotelian proofs of ethos, pathos, and logos.
- Gain ability to research, critically examine, and use supporting materials from primary and secondary sources for credibility, accuracy, and relevance in their presentations.
- Deliver a coherent, logical, persuasive, and sequenced argument, supported by documentation and evidence, while adhering to ethical communication practices.

- Critically evaluate written and oral argumentation, demonstrating an equity-centric rhetorical sensitivity toward diversity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility.
- Plan, organize, and execute speech/debate performance, including effective response to counterarguments.

Course Content

- Theoretical foundations of argumentation and persuasion
 - Inductive and deductive reasoning
 - Five canons of rhetoric
 - Ethos, pathos, logos
- Research methods and citation of sources
 - Library research to support argumentative positions
 - Analysis of contemporary and historical persuasive discourse
 - Use of online resources and databases
 - Oral and written citation methods
- Delivery of properly-structured oral argument
 - Effective use of documentation/evidence
 - Adherence to ethical communication practices
- Critical evaluation of written and oral argumentation
 - Peer evaluation of student speeches, including appreciation of diverse knowledge and abilities
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the importance and value of multiple perspectives, including culturally-based viewpoints
 - Self-evaluation
- Organization and planning of speech/debate performance
 - Effective introductions and conclusions
 - Argument structure and development, including effective response to counterarguments in refutation and rebuttal
 - Documentation and support of claims
 - Utilize verbal and non-verbal skills while successfully managing communication apprehension

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

- Classroom with access to audio/visual aids, especially monitor and VCR.
- When taught via Foothill Global Access: ongoing access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

- Written examinations on the theories of argumentation
- Evaluation of speeches based upon organization of material, clarity of expression, significance of evidence, effectiveness of transitions, and logical progression of ideas
- Evaluation of analytical and persuasive writing
- Presentation self-evaluation and peer critiques

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lectures

Discussions and cooperative learning exercises

Student oral presentations and demonstrations

Written critiques and analyses

Electronic discussions/chats

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Nickerson, Raymond S.. [Argumentation: The Art of Persuasion](#). 2020.

Zarefsky, David. [The Practice of Argumentation: Effective Reasoning in Communication \(Critical Reasoning and Argumentation\)](#). 2019.

Although some of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Martenev, Jim. [Arguing Using Critical Thinking](#). 2020. Available as OER: <https://asccc-oeri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Arguing-Using-Critical-Thinking-PDF.pdf>

Worthington, Amber K. [Persuasion Theory in Action](#). 2023. Available as OER: [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Argument_and_Debate/Persuasion_Theory_in_Action_\(Worthington\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Argument_and_Debate/Persuasion_Theory_in_Action_(Worthington))

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. In preparation for in-class debate, completion of evidence portfolio comprised of extensive topic research with full MLA citations; outline and detailed explanation of affirmative, negative, and rebuttal arguments
2. Self-evaluation paper, reflecting on progress, effectiveness, and needed improvements
3. Written peer speech critique with detailed analysis of content and delivery style, with appreciation for diverse viewpoints and presentation styles
4. Analytical and persuasive writing, including opportunities to reflect upon and/or critique the historical foundations of the discipline

Discipline(s)

Communication Studies