

# COMM-128: CRITICAL THINKING: ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE

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**Effective Term**  
Fall 2025

**CC Approval**  
11/1/2024

**AS Approval**  
11/14/2024

**BOT Approval**  
11/21/2024

**COCI Approval**  
05/15/2025

**SECTION A - Course Data Elements**

**CB04 Credit Status**  
Credit - Degree Applicable

**Discipline**

| Minimum Qualifications   | And/Or |
|--|--------|
| Communication Studies (Speech Communication) (Master's Degree) |        |

**Subject Code**  
COMM - Communication Studies

**Course Number**  
128

**Department**  
Communication Studies (COMM)

**Division**  
Language and Developmental Studies (LADS)

**Full Course Title**  
Critical Thinking: Argumentation and Debate

**Short Title**  
Argumentation and Debate

**CB03 TOP Code**  
1506.00 - Speech Communication

**CB08 Basic Skills Status**  
NBS - Not Basic Skills

**CB09 SAM Code**  
E - Non-Occupational

**Rationale**

Course updates to align with CALGETC -1C

**SECTION B - Course Description**

**Catalog Course Description**

This course focuses on argumentation theory including research, methods of analysis, use and test of evidence, refutation, and the logical responsibilities of advocacy, and the rhetorical theories and communication techniques in a multicultural democratic society. It emphasizes the preparation and presentation of cases for and against propositions of Fact, Value, and Policy through debate and public address.

**SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment**

**Open Entry/Open Exit**

No

**Repeatability**

Not Repeatable

**Grading Options**

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

**Allow Audit**

Yes

**Requisites**

**Prerequisite(s)**

Completion of ENGL-C1000 with a minimum grade of C.

**Advisory Prerequisite(s)**

Completion of COMM-C1000 with a minimum grade of C.

**Requisite Justification**

**Requisite Description**

Course Not in a Sequence

**Subject**

ENGL

**Course #**

C1000

**Level of Scrutiny**

Requisite Established by Statute/Regulation

**Explanation**

CALGETC

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**SECTION D - Course Standards**

**Is this course variable unit?**

No

**Units**

3.00

**Lecture Hours**

54.00

**Outside of Class Hours**

108

**Total Contact Hours**

54

**Total Student Hours**

162

**Distance Education Approval**

Is this course offered through Distance Education?

Yes

**Online Delivery Methods**

| DE Modalities   | Permanent or Emergency Only? |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Entirely Online | Permanent                    |
| Hybrid          | Permanent                    |

**SECTION E - Course Content**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

| Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to: |   |
|---|---|
| 1.  | Use critical thinking skills to research, evaluate, and debate using multiple forms of argumentation. |
| 2.  | Distinguish between valid and invalid forms of support.   |
| 3.  | Proficiently demonstrate use of various debate skills.  |

**Course Objectives**

| Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to: |   |
|---|---|
| 1.  | Evaluate and develop arguments using inductive and deductive reasoning.   |
| 2.  | Employ sound reasoning and construct compelling arguments to evaluate knowledge from belief and fact from judgment in oral and written persuasive discourse.  |
| 3.  | Learn how to analyze, advocate, and criticize ideas, through effective research strategies and the process of discussion, and debate.   |
| 4.  | Identify common logical errors and fallacies of reasoning and language.   |
| 5.  | Identify propositions of Fact, Value, and Policy, and assumption upon which particular conclusions depend.  |
| 6.  | Develop and apply rhetorical theories to employ research skills, analyze, outline, compose, and present traditional and contemporary argumentation, debate, and advocacy methods.                         |
| 7.  | Demonstrate the ability to evaluate reliable and relevant evidence in support of arguments.   |
| 8.  | Apply the principles of argumentation, debate, and advocacy with attention to their intended audience, purpose, and social context.   |
| 9.  | Demonstrate rhetorical sensitivity to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging and adhere to ethical communication practices which include truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason. |
| 10.   | Employ effective listening practices.   |

**Course Content**

1. Critical thinking – arguments
  - a. Methods of critical inquiry, reasoning.
  - b. Advocacy and argumentation techniques
  - c. The role of value propositions and the need to address value conflicts; ethics in argumentation.
  - d. The role of Fact propositions. Distinguishing facts from inferences, and possibility from probability.
  - e. The role of policy propositions and distinguishing between inductive, and deductive arguments.
2. Deductive arguments:
  - a. Syllogisms
  - b. Validity and truth
  - c. Logical fallacies

3. Inductive arguments:
  - a. Statistical generalizations
  - b. Scientific method
  - c. Arguments from authority
  - d. Causation
4. Critical analysis of oral and written arguments
  - a. Analyzing required components to meet prima facie burdens.
  - b. Analyzing the quality of evidence used to support claims.
  - c. Analyzing source credibility
  - d. Analyzing traditional forms of argumentation, and logic.
    - i. Support assumptions
    - ii. Premises and conclusions
    - iii. Deduction and Induction
    - iv. Informal fallacies
  - e. Considering the implication of rhetorical appeals to emotion (pathos).
  - f. Denotation and connotation
  - g. Vagueness and ambiguity
  - h. Metaphor
  - i. Style
5. Research skills
6. Critical writing
  - a. Writing briefs for propositions of fact, value, and policy applying evidence to support claims.
  - b. Analyzing and critiquing debates.
7. Presentation skills

## Methods of Instruction

### Methods of Instruction

| Types                         | Examples of learning activities  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Lecture                       | The instructor will develop and present course material through lectures, supplemental articles, and videos.   |
| Discussion                    | Instructor-led class discussion identifying fallacies of logic.  |
| Observation and Demonstration | <p>Observation: Provide the speaker with constructive criticism concerning performance, the audience's engagement, and the speech's effectiveness.</p> <p>Demonstration: A minimum of three faculty-supervised, faculty-evaluated, debate presentations in front of a live audience (one to many), including proposition of Fact, Policy, and Value.</p> |

### Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards  
 Chat Rooms  
 Discussion Boards  
 E-mail Communication  
 Telephone Conversations  
 Video or Teleconferencing

### Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms  
 Discussions  
 Group Work

### Course design is accessible

Yes

## Methods of Evaluation

### Methods of Evaluation

| Types               | Examples of classroom assessments   |
|---------------------|---|
| Oral Presentations  | A minimum of three faculty-supervised, faculty-evaluated, oral presentations in front of a live audience (one to many), including an Informative speech of at least five minutes and a Persuasive speech of at least six minutes in length; speech outlines and works cited/references; critiques of speeches. Additional methods of evaluation are at the discretion of local faculty. |
| Exams/Tests         | Tests will reflect the unit readings and lectures. Example: Multiple choice exam covering deductive and inductive reasoning, analyzing credibility of sources and quality of evidence.  |
| Quizzes             | Quizzes will reflect the unit readings and lectures.. Example: Quiz on the difference between value, fact or policy propositions.   |
| Essays/Papers       | -Flow Sheets from debates<br>-Value Affirmative case essay (1000 words).<br>-response to Value Affirmative case essay (1000 words).<br>-Policy Affirmative case essay (1000 words).<br>-response to Policy Affirmative case essay (1000 words).<br>-Self Evaluation of debate performance (1000 words)  |
| Class Participation | Critique of public debate, in class activities, group work.   |
| Homework            | Reading assignments from assigned textbook.   |

## Assignments

### Reading Assignments

Read articles relevant to constructing an Affirmative case  
 Read articles relevant to constructing a Negative argument  
 Read assigned chapters from the textbook

### Writing Assignments

-Write a Value Affirmative case essay (1000 words).  
 -Write a response to a Value affirmative case essay (1000 words).  
 -Write a Policy Affirmative case essay (1000 words).  
 -Write a response to the Policy Affirmative case essay (1000 words).  
 -Write a Self Evaluation of debate performance (1000 words)  
 Writing critical peer evaluations and self-reflection papers (1000-2000 words).

### Other Assignments

-Viewing and analysis of selected TV news programs, opinion, and documentary programs.  
 -View and evaluate public debates

## SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

### Material Type

Textbook

### Author

Zarefsky, David

### Title

The Practice of Argumentation: Effective Reasoning in Communication (Critical Reasoning and Argumentation)

### Publisher

Cambridge University Press

### Year

2019

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**Material Type**

Textbook

**Author**

Pugh, R. H.

**Title**

The Debate Handbook: Winning With Parliamentary Debate

**Publisher**

Independently published

**Year**

2020

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**Material Type**

Textbook

**Author**

Nancy Wood & James S. Miller

**Title**

Perspectives on Argument

**Edition/Version**

10th

**Publisher**

Pearson

**Year**

2023

**ISBN #**

13:9780138274870

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**Course Codes (Admin Only)****ASSIST Update**

Yes

**CB00 State ID**

CCC000552268

**CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status**

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

**CB11 Course Classification Status**

Y - Credit Course

**CB13 Special Class Status**

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

**CB23 Funding Agency Category**

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

**CB24 Program Course Status**

Program Applicable

**Allow Pass/No Pass**

Yes

**Only Pass/No Pass**

No