

COMM 9 – Argumentation: Analysis of Oral & Written Communication

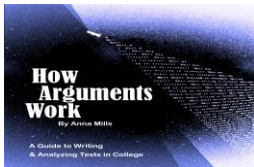
Instructor: Brandon Gainer
Location & Times: L45 - 4:00-6:15 PM; Wednesday
Office Hours: 4:00-5:00 PM; Monday (Online)
 6:30-7:30 PM; Wednesday (On site)
Prerequisites: ENG 1A/1AH
 Fulfills IGETC Area 1B & CSU GE Area A3



Instructor Contact Info

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Course Materials



[Mills, A. How Arguments Work: A Guide to Writing & Analyzing Texts in College](#)

[Marteney, J.; Arguing Using Critical Thinking](#)

These books are free resources available online.

Course Overview

Welcome to COMM 9! This course studies argumentation and critical thinking in the context of reading, discussion, & writing. We will be studying argumentation as a means of testing the validity of viewpoints through inquiry and reasoning. Ultimately, we aim to establish both reasonable and defensible arguments while addressing and resolving differences.

This is not a course in oral communication (COMM 1) or a debate course (COMM 8). While we incorporate aspects from both classes and will examine verbal arguments, we do focus primarily on writing. Thus, while I hope that you do gain some practice in your speaking skills, my hope is that you leave this class a much stronger and focused writer than you were when you entered.

COMM 9 Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the logic of arguments.
2. Write a progression of well-organized critical essays that demonstrate increasingly complex writing and critical thought.
3. Deconstruct, examine, and confidently debate contemporary, socially relevant issues through development and presentation of arguments.
4. Find, evaluate and cite sources in writing and presentations using appropriate documentation format.

Succeeding in COMM 9

- ✓ Give yourself ample time to complete assignments: Writing an essay at the last minute typically causes careless errors!
- ✓ Make use of campus tutoring services (WRC or Online tutoring).
- ✓ Don't ignore the modules in Canvas; the content there provides helpful framing, examples and templates for assignments
- ✓ Don't obsess over writing things "perfectly" – there are many approaches to creating a strong argument and essay.
- ✓ Show up to class! Sometimes, an in class discussion or comment can spark an idea you would not have had otherwise.

Course Policies:

Course Modality, Participation, & Attendance

As a hybrid course, half of our instructional time is online. This means that certain components of our class (instructional videos and content; quizzes; exercises;) are conducted through Canvas. Our time in class will be focused more on learning engagements, peer collaborations and activities that function better in person. Given that we only meet once a week, missing a single class is significant thus exceeding **2** absences on site may result in being dropped from the course. Missing the first class meeting without reasonable notice ahead of time may also result in being dropped.

Even though this is not a fully online class you'll still need some familiarity and knowledge of Canvas. I'll do my best to resolve issues I have control over (e.g. broken links; content page issues), but discomfort or unfamiliarity with technology, as well as repeated technical difficulties will not be accepted as a justification for late or incomplete work. If you experience issues with Canvas, then make use of their technical support by utilizing the "Help" button found in the global navigation.

Time Commitment: According to our college's web page on [credits and load limitations](#) the formula is that each unit of a class equals one hour is with an additional 2 hours of outside preparation for every unit. So for a 5 unit class, that's 15 hours total (hence why "12 units" is considered "full time"). I'll make sure that the tasks you're doing in this class are not merely "busy work". I also acknowledge that you have commitments outside of class and will work towards helping you succeed. Regardless, please plan your time appropriately.

Contacting the Instructor: My campus email or messaging me through Canvas are the quickest ways to reach me. When sending an e-mail, the following will ensure smooth communication between both of us:

- Please put your **name, the course** and its **time** in the subject line (e.g. "[name] – COMM 9). Since I receive many e-mails per day, this will make it easier to respond more quickly to you.
- After 6:00 PM on weekdays, I generally do not answer e-mails. I do not respond on the weekends.
- If my office hours don't work for you, still reach out: We might be able to find another time that works.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments, unless specified otherwise, will be submitted through Canvas

- For assignments requiring a file submission, if I cannot open the file, it does not count as being submitted. So avoid .pages format, but .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf should be fine.
- Unless explicitly requested, there's no need to email me or bring a hard copy of an assignment.
- I usually default to the course calendar in the syllabus; if I make a mistake and there's an inconsistency between it and the Canvas calendar, then typically, I'll pick the later date.

Late Work: Assignments may be submitted up to 24 hours after the due date posted on Canvas. These assignments generally receive less feedback and are subject to a deduction of up to **50%** from the final score. Beyond 24 hours, the assignment receives a 0. You may always submit an assignment ahead of time.

Academic Honesty: Instances of academic misconduct will result in disciplinary action, which at a minimum includes receiving a 0 on the assignment. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: **plagiarism, submitting work from a previous course, submitting work written by an outside party or program, or misrepresenting facts to receive a changed grade**, etc. Further information on the college's academic integrity policy can be found here: [De Anza Academic Honesty Policies](#).

Accommodations: If you are eligible for accommodations by Disability Support Services (DSPS), please follow up to ensure that your accommodations have been authorized for the current quarter. If you are not registered with DSPS and need accommodations, please go to the DSPS office in the Registration & Student Services Building (RSS) - Room 141 for information on eligibility and how to receive support services. You can also go online to their website for additional information: [Disability Support Services and Programs](#), for additional information.

Assignments

Guidelines for each assignment will be posted on Canvas. Below is a general description of each assignment category that you'll be assessed on throughout the term, as well as how it's weighted. If any assignment guidelines are unclear then don't hesitate to ask for clarification! If you need an in-depth explanation, then scheduling an appointment to talk live will work best. While I'm glad to answer essay related questions, I will not **proofread, edit, or substantially review** drafts of major essays before submission.

Essays [45%]: This class is required to have students write a minimum of 6000 words in order for it to articulate for transfer. Your progress here is measured through a series of research essays and activities. You'll have the freedom to choose your topic so long as you can connect it to a socially relevant topic and audience. You will be allowed to revise select essays upon meeting certain criteria specified on Canvas.

Presentations [15%]: There are two major presentations in this class: I will have certain expectations regarding extemporaneous delivery, clear citation of sources and organization, but I am not assessing these with the same scrutiny found in a section of COMM 1 or COMM 10.

Discussions [10%]: These are based on readings, content posted on Canvas, or an extension of our in-class activities. The discussions may also sometimes pre-empt an on site class activity or discussion. I primarily grade these on **completion** (did you address the criteria) and **coherence** (is it relatively free of typos and grammatical errors). Discussions will usually have 2 due dates: One for your initial post (which shows in Canvas) and one for your responses. Your lowest score in this category (excluding the icebreaker) will be dropped.

On-Site Activities [15%]: Most weeks, we'll have activities that will take place during class tied to the reading, lesson or theme for that week. They're generally credit/no credit, but you do need to be present for the part of the class they occur: No make-ups or late submissions are accepted for these. You can miss **one** of these without penalty.

Quizzes [10%]: These are generally intended as knowledge checks or to reinforce key topics which will help you craft a more effective argument for your major essays. Your lowest quiz (excluding the syllabus quiz) will be dropped. **The 24 hour late rule does not apply to quizzes – meaning they close on the due date.**

Applied Exercises [10%]: These are skill-building activities designed to help you improve on the major assessments typically handled online. These are noted on the course calendar as "Exercise #1, #2, etc."

Grading Scale

A+ [100%]	A [99%-94%]	A- [93.9%-90%]	B+ [89.9%-87%]	B [86.9%-84%]
B- [83%-80%]	C+ [79%-77%]	C [76%-70%]	D+ [69%-67%]	D [66%-64%]
D- [63%-60%]	F [59% and below]			

Extra Credit: Extra credit will **not** be offered in this class. The leniency built into the course with revision opportunities and dropped assignments far exceed any extra credit I could offer, giving you plenty of chances to succeed in this class. Therefore, I will not respond to any requests to adjust a grade. Repeated requests to "bump" a grade throughout, or at the end of the term will be considered a violation of the De Anza Code of Conduct (Board Policy 5510) and treated as such.

Generative AI Use: When in doubt, ask! There will be certain assignments where you'll be asked to work with it (e.g. Claude, ChatGPT) with the specific instances will be outlined on Canvas during the course. Still, I ask that you avoid using it to generate entire works (e.g. an entire essay; an entire discussion post): We want to read and engage with your ideas. GenAI can produce content that is false or copyrighted: Ultimately, you bear the responsibility for any inaccurate, unethical, or questionable information produced by these tools.

Tentative Course Calendar

Any changes to topics, readings, and/or due dates will be posted on Canvas

Date	Topics & Readings	Assignment(s) due
UNIT I: Introduction to Critical Thinking & Argumentation		
Week 1 4/9/2025	Course Orientation Critical Thinking & Argumentation: Why They matter? (Mills Ch.1; Marteney 8.9 & 8.10; Ch.12) <u>Essay #1 Overview</u>	4/9: Quiz #1; Student Intake form; Icebreaker; 4/12: Discussion #1
UNIT II: Argumentation Basics		
Week 2 4/16/2025	Argumentation Models & Structures (Mills Ch.2) <u>Essay #2 Overview</u>	4/16: Essay #1 4/19: Quiz #2
Week 3 4/23/2025	Research & Source Documentation (Mills Ch.6 & 7;) APA Overview & Basics	4/26: Quiz #3; Exercise #2
Week 4 4/30/2025	Refuting & Presenting Arguments (Mills, Ch.2.6, 2.7) Presentation #1	4/28: Presentation Outline 5/3: Discussion #2
UNIT III: Analyzing & Evaluating Arguments		
Week 5 5/7/2025	Analyzing, Evaluating & Supporting Claims (Mills Ch. 4, 9, & 10) <u>Essay #3 Overview</u>	5/7: Essay #2 (4 PM) 5/10: Quiz #4; Exercise #3
Week 6 5/14/2025	Understanding Warrants (Mills Ch.4.4; 4.5) Logic & Reasoning (Mills 7.5 Marteney, Ch.7)	5/14: Discussion #3 5/17: Discussion Responses; Quiz #5
Week 7 5/21/2025	Faulty Arguments: Logical Fallacies (Mills 4.9; Marteney 7.4)	5/21: Discussion #4 5/24: Exercise #4; Discussion responses
UNIT IV: Writing for Persuasion – Bringing it All Together		
Week 8 5/28/2025	Policy Argumentation <u>Project Overview & Group Formation</u>	5/28: Essay #3 5/31: Exercise #5; Quiz #6
Week 9 6/4/2025	Debating the Issues (Marteney Ch. 9) Language & Persuasion (Mills Ch.8)	6/4: Discussion #5
Week 10 6/11/2025	Refining & Presenting your Argument Writing your Rebuttal (Mills, Ch.5; Marteney Ch. 3) Policy Project Workweek	6/14: Exercise #6
Week 11 6/18/2025	Presentation #2 <u>Essay #5 Overview</u>	6/18: Essay #4; Presentation 2; Exercise #7 6/21: Discussion #4
Week 12 6/25/2025	Final Exam Period – 4:00-6:00 PM Closing Arguments	Essay #5 (by 4:00 PM); Final Discussion (by 6:00 PM)