

COMM 1440: HONORS CLASSICAL ARGUMENTATION

Fall 2026

Meeting Times:	Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:55 – 5:15
Location:	113 Language Building
Professor:	Dr. Andrew Davis
Office Location:	320E General Academic Building
Office Hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays 11am – 2pm (and by appointment)
Email:	Andrew.Davis@unt.edu

Course Overview & Objectives

Our lives are impacted by argumentation daily – from academic arguments we read for class to political arguments we watch in our communities; we cannot avoid argument. Developing the critical thinking skills needed to engage in argument, both as the audience to argument and as a creator of argument, is a vital area of study in the college curriculum. The purpose of this course is to understand the classical roots of argumentation theory, examine its modern uses, and develop practical strategies for analyzing and creating arguments. In this course, we will cover uses of argument in rational decision-making based on classical theories of reason, elements of argument, classical foundations of argument, contemporary application of argument principles, and applications of rhetorical empathy.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of foundational communication concepts.
- Become conversant in the classical theories of argumentation and modern viewpoints in argumentation.
- Use theories from rhetorical criticism to critique and create arguments.
- Apply understandings of empathy and ethics to argumentation.

This section of COMM 1440 will be a discussion and lecture-based course that will rely on applied activities to reach its objectives. Because our class meetings will primarily be discussions and small group activities, it is critical for students to read assigned texts before the class meeting. Your preparation gives you the foundational knowledge needed to fully participate in and benefit from the class discussion and the quality of our discussions completely depends upon this preparation.

Texts & Materials

All required and supplemental readings will be available through Canvas or provided in class.

You will need a notebook with lined paper and pens or pencils for this course.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Standards & Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) on assignments constitutes an act of academic dishonesty in this course. Students may not use any form of AI beyond a basic spelling and grammar check. If you have questions about this, please contact me before handing in an assignment. Any act of academic dishonesty (including use of AI) will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and may lead to further penalties. When in doubt, ask for help.

ADA Accommodations

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at [Office of Disability Access | University of North Texas](#).

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [Student Conduct and Community Standards | University of North Texas](#).

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Course Policies

Course Communication

I will use email to communicate with the course. Be sure to check it regularly.

It is your responsibility to contact me if you have any questions or need assistance with the course. The best option is to arrange a meeting at my office. You may also contact me via email or Canvas Inbox. I strongly encourage you to meet with me concerning assignments, as well as your progress in the course. I will not, however, answer questions about an assignment within the final 24 hours before the assignment is due. This is to encourage you to plan and organize efficiently so that you can submit the best work possible. Please contact me with any problems or questions *when they arise*.

Please include the course number and your name in the subject line of emails. I will not answer emails after 6 pm (weekdays) or on the weekend unless there is a situation that requires immediate attention.

Please contact me if you need help with anything concerning your success in this course. There are no stupid questions and there is no shame in asking for help. The sooner you reach out, the better our chances of dealing with a problem in a productive manner.

Public Sharing of Course Material

All course materials may be subject to intellectual property protections under applicable law and regulation, and are for the sole use of students enrolled in this class. Students do not have permission to copy or record materials except for personal use in the context of this class, and do not have permission to share any class materials in any manner on any platform without the prior express permission of the faculty member teaching this course.

This course will encourage open and robust discussions on issues and ideas without fear that any statements made will be used for inappropriate or retaliatory purposes. To ensure the comfort and protection of everyone in our classroom, recording of any kind is prohibited in this space (this includes audio recordings, live-streaming, photographs of course materials, etc.) unless a student has an approved accommodation from the ODA. In such cases, all students in the course will be notified whenever recording will be taking place.

Attendance

Your success in this course depends on regular attendance. In fact, participation is part of your grade. You should attend every class unless you have a documented university-excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy. If you cannot attend class due to an emergency, please let me know.

Assignments

Although we will talk about upcoming assignments in class, it is NOT my responsibility to constantly remind you when assignments are due. Keeping track of due dates is your responsibility.

Late work will not be accepted without prior approval. If you have an issue with an assignment, talk to me about it before the assignment is due. I will, not, however, answer questions in the last 24 hours before an assignment is due. If you need an extension, talk to me before then.

Useful Information

Cell phones should be turned off, off the table, and out of your hands during class.

The four practices that are essential to success in this class are: 1) take notes (on all readings, class discussions and screenings); 2) attend and participate in class meetings; 3) ask questions; and 4) follow directions for assignments.

While the use of computers in class is allowed, they are to be used only for class-related purposes. No web browsing. No social media or messaging. No goofing off. No exceptions. If anyone is found to be using a computer for anything other than course purposes, all computers will be banned for all students for the remainder of the semester.

I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand. This is for 3 reasons: 1) studies overwhelmingly show that students who use pen and paper understand more and retain more knowledge than students who use laptops; 2) the purpose of taking notes is not transcription, but to enhance understanding; and 3) the internet is a constant, distracting temptation that few of us are able to resist.

If you disagree with a grade, please email me a written, detailed explanation of why you think the grade should be re-evaluated. Do not attempt to challenge a grade during office hours or class. If I find your explanation convincing, I will re-grade the assignment. This means that the grade may go up or down or stay the same. Your challenge is no guarantee of a better grade. As a hint, “I think I deserve an A because I worked really hard on this” is not a convincing explanation. You must wait 24 hours after being given a grade to challenge it.

Chronic tardiness will negatively affect your grade, at my discretion.

Grading, Writing Guidelines & Assignments

Grading

An “A” means that you did excellent work. You did work that reflects the very best of UNT’s proud tradition of undergraduate education. If you received an A your work was deep, clear, insightful, creative, and needed very little (if any) revision.

A “B” means that you did very good work. This work reflects a solid engagement with the material and an admirable execution of the concepts of the course. “B” work is a little less clear, perhaps not as insightful or creative, but certainly competent. Some revision on key themes would move this into the “A” realm.

A “C” is average. C work is hurriedly produced, not thought-through or rehearsed enough to be above average. This work does not fail massively in any significant respect, but it does not distinguish itself in terms of analytical clarity or presentation.

A “D” means you are producing work below average, and an “F” means work is missing, incomplete, or poor.

Writing Guidelines

- 1) All papers must conform to APA or MLA style and citation guidelines. These guidelines can be found here: [Citation and Research Tools - Citations & Style Guide - Guides at University of North Texas](#)
- 2) Your essays will be double-spaced in 12-point font, with one-inch margins and no spaces between paragraphs.
- 3) DO NOT put a header on your essays (i.e., do not take up half a page with your name, my name, the course number, the date, the assignment, etc.). Put only your name at the top of the first page of your assignment.
- 4) Insert page numbers.
- 5) The assignment should be in .doc or .docx format only.
- 6) The title of your document should be “Your Last Name_Assignment Title.”
- 7) If I say that an assignment should be (for example) at least 3 pages long, that means 3 FULL pages, not 2 pages and a paragraph.
- 8) Proofread your work before you submit it.

Failure to meet these guidelines will result in an automatic D for an assignment. The same goes for excessive spelling and grammatical errors. Blatant disregard for these guidelines will result in an automatic F.

Assignments

Reading & Lecture Notes	15%
Participation	15%
In-Class Writings	30%
Classical Argument	20%
Toulmin Argument	20%

Details for all assignments and their due dates will be given in class and posted to Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course Overview & Foundations of Classical Argumentation in Greece & Rome

Tuesday, August 18

Course Overview: introductions, syllabus, expectations

Thursday, August 20

Readings: selections from *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* by Aristotle

Week 2: Foundations of Classical Argumentation in Greece & Rome (cont'd.)

Tuesday, August 25

Readings: selections from *On Rhetoric*

Thursday, August 27

Readings: selections from *On Rhetoric*

selections from *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured* by Susan
C. Jarratt

Week 3: Foundations of Classical Argumentation in Greece & Rome (cont'd.)

Tuesday, September 1

Reading: selections from *Rereading the Sophists*

Thursday, September 3

Reading: selections from *Rereading the Sophists*

Week 4: Foundations of Classical Argumentation in Greece & Rome (cont'd.)

Tuesday, September 8

Readings: selections from *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance* by Cheryl Glenn
selections from *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintillian* by Aubrey Gwynn

Thursday, September 10

In-class Writing Assignment

Week 5: Foundations of Classical Argumentation in China

Tuesday, September 15

In-class Writing Assignment (cont'd.)

Thursday, September 17

Readings: selections from *Rhetoric in Ancient China Fifth to Third Century B.C.E.: A Comparison with Classical Greek Rhetoric* by Xing Lu

Week 6: Foundations of Classical Argumentation in China (cont'd.)

Tuesday, September 22

Reading: selections from *Rhetoric in Ancient China*

Thursday, September 24

Reading: selections from *Rhetoric in Ancient China*

Last day to submit draft of Classical Argument for feedback

Week 7: Ethics in Argumentation

Tuesday, September 29

Readings: “Human Rational Capacity” by Richard L. Johannesen, Kathleen S. Valde & Karen E. Whedbee

“Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric” by Sonja K. Foss & Cindy L. Griffin

Thursday, October 1

Readings: selections from *Propaganda & Persuasion* by Garth S. Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell

“Why Silence & Listening Are Important Rhetorical Acts” by Cheryl Glenn & Krista Ratcliffe

Week 8: Ethics (cont'd.) & Logical Fallacies

Tuesday, October 6

Readings: selections from *Changing the Subject: A Theory of Rhetorical Empathy* by Lisa Blankenship

Thursday, October 8

Reading: *Master List of Logical Fallacies*

Final version of Classical Argument due to Canvas by 11:59pm on Friday, October 9

Week 9: Logical Fallacies (cont'd.)

Tuesday, October 13

Reading: *Master List of Logical Fallacies*

Thursday, October 15

In-class Writing Assignment

Week 10

Tuesday, October 20

In-class Writing Assignment (cont'd.)

Thursday, October 22

Library Research Practicum

Week 11: New Models

Tuesday, October 27

Reading: selections from *The Uses of Argument* by Stephen E. Toulmin

Thursday, October 29

Reading: selections from *The Uses of Argument*

Week 12: New Models (cont'd.)

Tuesday, November 3

Reading: selections from *The Uses of Argument*

Thursday, November 5

Reading: "A New Model of Argument" by Douglas N. Walton

Week 13

Tuesday, November 10

In-class Writing Assignment

Thursday, November 12

In-class Writing Assignment

Week 14

Tuesday, November 17

In-class Research Practicum

Last day to submit draft of Toulmin argument for feedback

Thursday, November 19

Library Research Practicum

Week 15

NO CLASS

Week 16

Tuesday, December 1

In-class Research Practicum

Thursday, December 3

In-class Research Practicum

Final Exam Period: Monday, December 7, 3:30 – 5:30pm

Final version of Toulmin Argument due at this time