



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	COMS
Course Number:	120
Descriptive Title:	Critical Thinking Through Argumentation and Debate
Division:	Behavioral and Social Sciences
Department:	Communication Studies (Speech Communications)
Course Disciplines:	Communication Studies (Speech Communications)
Catalog Description:	This course introduces students to critical thinking through the construction of arguments for debates and other speech presentations. Emphasis is placed on analyzing claims, developing arguments that support and refute propositions, argument brief writing and effective delivery. Identification of types of argument and fallacies of reasoning are explored. Controversial issues are discussed, researched, briefed, and debated.
Prerequisite:	English 1A
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	X
Effective Date:	Prior to July 1992
Transfer UC:	X
Effective Date:	Prior to July 1992
General Education: ECC	4B - Language and Rationality - Communication and Analytical Thinking
Term:	
Other:	Approved
CSU GE:	A1 - Oral Communication A3 - Critical Thinking
Term:	
Other:	Approved
IGETC:	1C - Oral Communication
Term:	
Other:	Approved

<p>Student Learning Outcomes:</p>	<p>SLO #1 Knowledge of Course Content Students will be able to understand and identify fundamental concepts of communication theories that govern argumentation and debate.</p> <p>SLO #2 Logic and Reasoning Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to identify fallacies and argue logically using sound reasoning and credible evidence that support and defend claims.</p> <p>SLO #3 Written and Verbal Skills Students should be able to exhibit competency in written communication, verbal and non-verbal delivery skills.</p>
<p>Course Objectives:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research, formulate, and defend arguments, using inductive and deductive logic. 2. Brief controversial topics, identifying assumptions upon which particular conclusions depend. 3. Identify methods for testing arguments. 4. Differentiate types of inductive arguments. 5. Identify and evaluate the use of logical fallacies in argument. 6. Analyze and evaluate debates, including one's own. 7. Analyze the relevance, reliability, and objectivity of sources. 8. Analyze source material, with attention to intended audience, purpose, and social context. 9. Distinguish knowledge from belief, fact from inference. 10. Demonstrate Parliamentary debate skills on propositions of fact, value and policy debates. 11. Analyze and refute opposition arguments. 12. Demonstrate the generation of complex ideas through concise and insightful writing.
<p>Major Topics:</p>	<p>I. History of argumentation (3 hours, lecture) A. Introduction to classical rhetoric. B. History of argumentation: Aristotle's Proofs. C. Contemporary definitions of argumentation.</p> <p>II. Toulmin Model; deductive vs Inductive argument (6 hours, lecture) A. Components of deductive and inductive arguments. B. Testing inductive arguments. C. Consideration of assumptions upon which particular conclusions depend.</p> <p>III. Overview of research methods (6 hours, lecture) A. Choosing source material with attention to intended audience, purpose, and in social context. B. How to analyze the relevance, reliability, and objectivity of sources. C. How to brief controversial topics, generating complex ideas.</p> <p>IV. Identifying Errors in Logic (6 hours, lecture) A. Definitions and types of logical fallacies. B. Identifying assumptions upon which particular conclusions depend. C. Distinguish knowledge from belief, fact from inference.</p> <p>V. Preparation and presentation of oral argument (6 hours, lecture) A. Delivery components. B. Explanation of advocacy and debate format, including case templates. C. Differentiating fact, value, and policy debates; stock issues.</p> <p>VI. Analyzing debates and making judgments (6 hours, lecture) A. How to flow debates. B. Critical analysis of sources, argument choice, and audience.</p> <p>VII. Lincoln-Douglas debates (6 hours, lecture) A. Flowing debates.</p>

	<p>B. Critically evaluating debates. C. Critical self-analysis, noting areas in need of improvement.</p> <p>VIII. The argument paper (6 hours, lecture)</p> <p>A. Writing convincing argument using extensive and credible warrants. B. Counter-argument analysis demonstrating understanding of prior lecture material.</p> <p>IX. Team debates (9 hours, lecture)</p> <p>A. Flowing debates. B. Critically evaluating debates. C. Reflect critically on one's own performance, thought processes, and improvement.</p>
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
Primary Method of Evaluation:	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	Work with a partner to prepare arguments for your side of a debate proposition and be prepared to counter arguments on the other side. You are expected to analyze stock issues to establish your burdens in the debate, research evidence that supports and defends your position, and be ready to attack the likely arguments on the opposition side. Written briefs, citing appropriate sources that establish fact and expert opinion and that consider to bias and context will be submitted on both sides of the topic. A total of 10 pages, analyzing at least 12 sources, are required.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Scan contemporary media for arguments containing fallacies. Write a four- to six-page paper describing the fallacies committed and the logical arguments against them. At least 5 different fallacies must be found and analyzed.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	After watching and flowing a classroom debate, critically analyze the arguments that were made and explain the following: A) Why some arguments are likely more persuasive to certain audiences based on specific assumptions. B) How the use of fact and knowledge versus belief and inference is more persuasive and reliable. C) why evidence recency is critical in making solid arguments.
Other Evaluation Methods:	<p>Written Homework Term or Other Papers Performance Exams Other Exams Quizzes Class Performance Multiple Choice True/False</p>
Instructional Methods:	<p>Demonstration Discussion Lecture Other (please specify)</p>
If other:	Critiques
Work Outside of Class:	<p>Study Answer Questions Skill Practice Required Reading Problem Solving Activities Written Work</p>

If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Crossman, Mark. <u>Burden of Proof: An Introduction to Argumentation and Guide to Parliamentary Debate</u> , 5th Edition, McGraw Hill, 2022. (Discipline Standard) Freely, Austin & Steinberg, David. <u>Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making</u> . Cengage, 2013. (Discipline Standard)
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	Prerequisite
Category:	sequential
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	English 1A with a minimum grade of C or equivalent or concurrent enrollment
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	This course involves reading college level textbooks, developing projects, and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills. ENGL 1A - Read and apply critical-thinking skills to numerous published articles and to college-level, book-length works for the purpose of writing and discussion. ENGL 1A - Compose coherent, multi-paragraph, thesis-driven essays with logical and appropriate supporting ideas, including in-text citations.
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	
Date:	

Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Jason Davidson
Date:	11/02/2016
Last Board Approval Date:	06/17/2024
Effective Term:	FALL 2025