

## ENGL 4371: Advanced Argumentation Fall 2014

**Instructor:** Professor Kevin Porter  
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**Office Hours:** TR 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., and by appointment  
**Section Information:** ENGL 4371-002  
**Place and Time of Class Meetings:** PH 302, TR 12:30 p.m.-1:50 p.m.

### Course Description

On February 15, 1789, U.S. Representative Robert Griswold (CT), without warning, used a heavy cane to repeatedly bash the head of his colleague, Mathew Lyon (VT), who had two weeks earlier spat in Griswold's face, yet had not been expelled from the House for misconduct. A little over a century later, on February 22, 1902, a fist-fight broke on the floor of the usually staid U.S. Senate chamber between the two members from South Carolina: John McLaurin and Ben Tillman, whom McLaurin accused of lying. On December 4, 1837, the Speaker of the Arkansas House of Representatives, John Wilson, fatally stabbed Representative Joseph J. Anthony with a Bowie knife after Anthony insulted Wilson and refused to stop talking in the chamber. (In case you are wondering: Wilson was later acquitted by a jury who felt that he had just cause for the attack, and he was even re-elected as to the Arkansas House of Representatives.) What do these events have to do with a course on argument? They have everything to do it, for they are precisely the kind of incidents that, according to traditional ways of thinking, rational argument is intended to discourage; further, they exemplify some of the consequences that may ensue when argument is no longer possible—i.e., when the metaphorical “open hand” of rhetoric loses out to an actual “closed fist” (or a cane, or a knife).

In this course, we will examine classical and contemporary theories of argumentation and apply them to specific academic and nonacademic texts. Assignments will focus on coming to terms with these argumentative theories and applying them to the analysis and production of the various forms that persuasive texts may take (e.g., academic essays, editorials, political speeches, fables, bumper stickers, etc.). But we will also step back and ask ourselves whether argument—or at least some set of argumentative practices—is itself an act of violence of a different sort, a kind of symbolic violence.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- employ proper grammar, punctuation, spelling in writing
- employ standard MLA guidelines for formatting assignments and citations
- write with clarity to communicate effectively
- write arguments in a variety of forms
- respond critically to course material, using synthesis and analysis
- develop active listening skills, including paraphrasing and synthesizing ideas expressed in class
- develop methods and strategies for analyzing and interpreting texts
- evaluate an oral, visual, or written argument for sound or faulty (fallacious) reasoning
- compare and contrast major themes, issues, or topics in more than one text
- respond critically to the writing of others in primary and secondary sources

### Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials

- Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print. [ISBN: 978-1603290241]
- Bowen, Jack. *If You Can Read This: The Philosophy of Bumper Stickers*. New York: Random House, 2010. Print. [ISBN: 978-0812981056]

### Major Assignments

The major assignments for 4371 are comprised of a dialogue, a position paper, a critical analysis, a set of fables, and various in-class tasks. *All assignments not completed during class must be submitted to me via email attachment no later than the specified deadline; if an assignment is due “on” a day that we meet, it must be submitted prior to the start of class, whether or not you attend. A late assignment has 10% automatically deducted from its final grade, with an additional 10% deducted per half-hour until it is received.*

## Grading Policy

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Assignment 1 (Fables)	10%	Assignment 4 (Critique)	20%
Assignment 2 (Dialogue)	40%	In-class work	10%
Assignment 3 (Position Paper)	20%		

*A grade of "Incomplete" will be assigned only under documented cases of extreme medical, family, or personal emergency; in all cases, the incomplete must be resolved by the start of the next 15-week semester or else the grade will be changed automatically to an "F."*

## Attendance Policy

At the University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I expect your regular attendance and active participation. Courses that involve in-class group work, such as 4371, do not function well when several students are frequently late or absent. At the start of each class, a sign-in sheet will be distributed; if you are not present by the time the sheet makes its way around the room, you will be counted as absent, *even if you subsequently show up and sign the sheet*. If you have some scheduling conflict that you know will prevent you from arriving on time to class, please discuss this with me as soon as possible.

Excluding the first day of class, we have twenty-seven scheduled meetings; however, because attending class is not always possible, I allow **three** absences without penalty. For each subsequent absence up to **thirteen**, 1% will be deducted from your final course grade; but **if you miss fourteen or more classes, you will automatically fail the course**.

## Schedule of Assignments

I reserve the right to modify, as necessary, the readings and other assignments listed on this syllabus. All readings and assignments marked \*\*\* are available for download from our MavSpace course folder. An electronic ticket to access the folder will be emailed to you.

### What Is "Argument" and Why Study It?

8/21		Introduction to the Course
8/26	***	Williams and Colomb, <i>The Craft of Argument</i> , Chapter 1
	***	van Eemeren et al., <i>Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory</i> , Chapter 1
	***	Lunsford and Ruskiewicz, <i>Everything's an Argument</i> , Chapter 1

### Classical Approaches to Argument

8/28	***	McInerney, <i>Being Logical</i> , Parts 1 and 2
9/2	***	McInerney, <i>Being Logical</i> , Part 3
9/4	***	McInerney, <i>Being Logical</i> , Parts 4 and 5
9/9	***	van Eemeren et al, <i>Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory</i> , Chapter 2
9/11	***	<i>Aesop's Fables</i> [selections] <b>Assignment 1 (Fables) distributed</b>

### Philosophical Argument

9/16	***	Johnstone, "Some Reflections on Argumentation"
	***	Johnstone, "Persuasion and Validity in Philosophy"
9/18	***	Ryle, "Philosophical Arguments"

9/23	***	Plato, <i>Apology</i>
9/25	***	Plato, <i>Crito</i>
9/30	***	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
10/2		Continued discussion of the <i>Phaedo</i> <b>Assignment 1 due</b> <b>Assignment 2 (Dialogue) distributed</b>

### Contemporary Approaches to Argument

10/7	*** *** ***	van Eemeren et al., <i>Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory</i> , Chapter 5 Hairston, "Carl Rogers's Alternative to Traditional Rhetoric" Hairston, "Using Carl Rogers' Communication Theories in the Composition Classroom"
10/9	***	Perelman, <i>The Realm of Rhetoric</i> , Chapters 1-4
10/14	***	Perelman, <i>The Realm of Rhetoric</i> , Chapters 5-7
10/16	***	Perelman, <i>The Realm of Rhetoric</i> , Chapters 8-10
10/21	***	Perelman, <i>The Realm of Rhetoric</i> , Chapters 11-14 <b>Assignment 3 (Position Paper) distributed</b>
10/23	***	Meiland, "Argument as Inquiry and Argument as Persuasion"
10/28	*** ***	Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method" Annas and Tenney, "Positioning Oneself"

### Application: Arguments in Everyday Life

10/30		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "Introduction" and "Reality" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/4		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "The Self" <b>Position Papers TBD</b> <b>Assignment 4 (Critique) distributed</b>
11/6		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "Values" and "Morality" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/11		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "God and Religion" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/13		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "Knowledge" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/18		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "Language" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/20		Bowen, <i>If You Can Read This</i> , "The Big Questions" <b>Position Papers TBD</b>
11/25		work period (class canceled)
11/27		Thanksgiving holiday (class canceled)

## The Limits of Argument

12/2      \*\*\*      Sophocles, *Antigone*  
              \*\*\*      Kastely, "From Formalism to Inquiry: A Model of Argument in *Antigone*"

**Note 1: Assignment 2 (Dialogue) and Assignment 4 (Critique) should be sent to me via email attachment by 1:00 p.m. on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>.**

## Miscellaneous Policies

**Classroom Decorum:** I treat students with utmost respect and courtesy; when teaching, conferencing, and grading, you and your work will have my full attention. In return, I ask the same from all of you: Please turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, books from other classes, etc. You may use a laptop to take notes during class, so long as you are mindful enough not to disturb the students around you.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code: *"I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code."*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. For information about activating and using MavMail, visit <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather,

tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Student Support Services Available:** The University of Texas at Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. These resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals to resources for any reason, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107 or visit [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources) for more information.

**Subject Librarian:** Rafia Mirza is one of the Reference and Instruction Librarian for English. She is available to answer questions about how to access and use the resources provided by the library; and she is also happy to meet with students for a one-on-one research consultations. She may be contacted at [rafia@uta.edu](mailto:rafia@uta.edu) or 817-272-7428.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, *Quick Hits* (5-10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit <https://uta.mywconline.com/> to register and make appointments. For hours, information about the writing workshops we offer, scheduling a classroom visit, and descriptions of the services we offer undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, please visit our website at [www.uta.edu/owl/](http://www.uta.edu/owl/).

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.