

SPCH-S228: Argumentation and Debate
Spring 2015
Dr. Christopher R. Darr
Indiana University Kokomo

Texts:

Hollihan, T. A., and Baaske, K. T. (2005). Arguments and arguing: the products and process of human decision making (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Ehninger, D. (1959). Decision by debate: a re-examination. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 45, 282-287.

Purpose and Objectives:

The major goal of this class is to improve the argumentative skills of students so that they can engage in arguments effectively, productively, and ethically in a variety of settings. More specifically, this class is designed to improve students' abilities to:

1. Recognize and evaluate various forms of arguments, claims, and evidence.
2. Build solid arguments (including the research and planning stages of argument).
3. Engage in productive, ethical argument and debate with others.
4. Engaging in critical thinking, which requires analysis, the use of solid reasoning and evidence, refutation, the avoidance of logical fallacies, and the ability to critique opposing arguments.

Assignments, Activities and Grading:

1. **In-class activities and homework:**

Class time will be spent engaging in practice debates and other speaking exercises, preparing for the graded and non-graded debates by sharing research (which will be assigned as homework), and formulating debate strategies. Homework assignments and group activities will be graded on a pass-fail basis (if you do the work, you will receive credit). **40 points**

2. **Speech and Debate.** The major graded work in the class will take the form of one speech and four debates as summarized below (more detailed explanations of each assignment will be forthcoming):

- a. *Argumentative Speech:* This speech will be approximately 6-7 minutes plus Q&A. You will formulate a position on a controversial issue and argue passionately in favor of it. The main focus of this speech is to develop research skills and the ability to present an argument for or against some position in an effective manner. **60 points**
- b. *Lincoln-Douglas Debate:* This is a one-on-one debate in which you will debate another student about some significant issue provided by your instructor. Here you will be exposed to cross-examination and will develop your ability to refute the arguments and evidence of others. **80 points**
- c. *Parliamentary Debate:* Parliamentary Debate is distinguished by its improvisational nature and is based on British Parliamentary procedure (meaning that debaters use flowery, complimentary language and humor to insult one another). One team takes the position of the "government" while the other plays the "opposition." The focus of this assignment will be thorough background research prior to the debate and improvisation during the debate. Since the experience of debating in Parliamentary debate is substantially different for the government and opposition teams, each student will debate twice: once as "GOV" and once as "OPP." **140 points**
- d. *Group Debate/Public Forum:* The final debate will take place in a public setting. Two teams will debate a topic of concern to the IU Kokomo campus community and the debate will be open to the public. This assignment will build on previous debates, and will require you to work with a larger group in order to achieve your goals. This debate will take place during our last class period of the semester. **100 points**

3. **Quizzes:** There will be 8 quizzes throughout the semester. These will be closed book and may take various forms, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and essay. Quizzes will be over the day's assigned reading and will take place at the beginning of the class. **80 points**

Summary and Grading Scale: Final grades will be determined by the total number of points you have earned during the semester as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
<i>In-class activities/homework</i>	40
<i>Speeches/Debates</i>	
Argumentative Speech	60
Lincoln-Douglas Debate	80
Parliamentary Debate	140
Group Debate/Public Forum	100
<i>Quizzes</i>	80
<i>Total points possible</i>	500

Grading Scale

A+	485 points or higher (97% and above)
A	465 (93%)
A-	450 (90%)
B+	435 (87%)
B	415 (83%)
B-	400 (80%)
C+	385 (77%)
C	365 (73%)
C-	350 (70%)
D+	335 (67%)
D	315 (63%)
D-	300 (60%)
F	0-299 (below 60%)

Tentative Schedule

Spring 2015

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity, Reading, Assignment Due</u>
Week 1	Introduction to the class Ch 1: Argumentation as a Human Symbolic Activity Ch. 2: The Foundations of Argument
Week 2	Douglas Ehninger, "Decision by Debate." Ch. 5: Argumentation and Critical Thinking Ch. 6: Types of Arguments <u>Assign Argumentative Speech</u>
Week 3	Ch. 7: The Grounds for Argument Ch. 8: Building Arguments
Week 4	Argumentative Speeches
Week 5	Ch. 9: Refuting Arguments <u>Assign Lincoln-Douglas Debate</u>
Week 6	Lincoln-Douglas Preparation for Practice Debate

	Lincoln-Douglas Practice Debate Ch. 10: Academic Debate: Overview
Week 7	Lincoln-Douglas Debates
Week 8	Lincoln-Douglas Debates, cont. Ch. 11: Academic Debate: Additional Insights
Week 9	Ch. 4: The Language of Argument <u>Assign Parliamentary Debates</u>
Week 10	Ch. 3: Audiences and Fields of Argument Parliamentary Debates: Preparation and Practice Debate
Week 11	Parliamentary Debates, Part 1
Week 12	Parliamentary Debates, Part 2
Week 13	<u>Assign Group Debate/Public Forum</u> Work in class on Group Debate
Week 14	Work in class on Group Debate
Week 15	Group Debate/Public Forum