**CMST 2063: ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE**

Dr. Ashley N. Mack

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**Meeting day and time:** TTH 10:30am-11:50am

**Office hours:**  T 9am-10:20am / TH 12pm-2pm

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2063 enables you to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated argument, disagreement, and dialogue in democratic society.

Throughout this course, you will learn to become a more effective critical thinker and consumer of information and arguments. This will be accomplished by achieving the following:

* Understanding, identifying and evaluating the various types of arguments, reasoning processes, and logical fallacies
* Knowing what evidence is, how to use it to prove a claim, and how to evaluate the adequacy of your and opposing evidence
* Learning to organize arguments into a persuasive case
* Developing skills in refutation and cross examination
* Being able to use these skills in a variety of formats

**COMMUNICATION-INTENSIVE COURSE**

This is a certified Communication-Intensive (C-I) course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU’s Communication across the Curriculum program, including:

* instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal [mode 1] and [mode 2];
* teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques;
* use of feedback loops for learning;
* 40% of the course grade rooted in communication-based work; and
* practice of ethical and professional work standards.

Students interested in pursuing the LSU Distinguished Communicators certification may use this C-I course for credit. For more information about this student recognition program, visit [**www.cxc.lsu.edu**](http://www.cxc.lsu.edu/).

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

The success of this course depends on the interactions generated between the instructor and the students (me and you). I do expect you to participate actively in class, share your ideas and opinions, comment on and assess those of your fellow classmates. However, I do demand that everyone treat each other with respect. Ridicule or disrespect of any sort will not be tolerated. While I use a wide variety of mediated examples to illuminate points and bring life to discussion in class, I do not use powerpoint presentations and will not post “lecture outlines” on Moodle. My hope is that we will all become more engaged members of the classroom discussions because of this commitment to an engaged and discussion-oriented environment.

**COURSE WEBSITE**

This course makes use of the Moodle website. You should be able to access Moodle through your PAWS account. After you log into PAWS, you will find the link to Moodle under the “Student Services” category. I will post readings, course assignments, documents, as well as any announcements. Make sure to check the website regularly.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

* One two-pocket folder for handing in assignments
* Additional readings/materials will be posted online.
* Access to and competency with online search engines and university libraries is essential for success in this course.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Grade Scale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Point Range Needed** |
| A+ | 980-1000 |
| A | 920-979 |
| A- | 900-919 |
| B+ | 880-899 |
| B | 820-879 |
| B- | 800-819 |
| C+ | 780-799 |
| C | 720-779 |
| C- | 700-719 |
| D+ | 680-699 |
| D | 620-679 |
| D- | 600-619 |
| F | 0-599 |

**Assignment Weights**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ASSIGNMENT | Points |
| Group Debate  | 100 points |
| Refutation Speech | 200 points |
| Policy Debate | 200 points  |
| Argument Analysis Paper | 200 points |
| Pop Quizzes (5 given, drop 1) | 50 points each x 4 = 200 points total |
| Engagement | Various activities/assignments/engagement = 100 points total |
| TOTAL | 1000 |

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Group Debate** (100 points) This assignment is based on a day-long experiential learning trip made to Angola Penitentiary on Thursday, February 1st. If you cannot or do not wish to attend the field trip and participate in this assignment, you can choose to do the alternative interview assignment. Regardless of whether you attend the trip and complete the accompanying assignment or complete the interview assignment, **YOU MUST ATTEND CLASS ON FEBRUARY 6th in order to participate in the group debate on mass incarceration and criminal justice.** Assignment consists of three parts: experiential learning assignment, research brief, and the group debate itself.

**Refutation Speech** (200 points) Refute a single argument of policy or fact in a 3-minute speech to the class. Each speech will be followed by a 3-minute cross examination period where classmates are required to thoroughly examine and interrogate the speaker. 150 points will go towards each student’s individual speech and ability to answer questions, and 50 points will be determined by the students active and inquisitive participation in the cross examination periods of other students.

**Policy Debate** (200) Each member of the class will partner with another member of the class and debate a specific policy resolution. Must follow specific debate format and requirements, including submitting a brief prior to the debate.

**Argument Analysis Paper** (200 points) 5-6 page essay analyzing an argument. Follow instructions on assignment sheet.

**Pop quizzes** *(*4 @ 50 points each = 200 points total*)* On 6 randomly selected days throughout the semester there will be a pop quiz at the beginning of class based on the readings due for that day in class, discussion/presentations from the day before. These quizzes cannot be made up for any reason. Your lowest grade will be dropped.

**Engagement** (100 points) This class is based on your thorough participation and critical engagement with text and exercise materials. I expect you to come to class having completed the readings for that day. Students are expected to attend all lectures and to complete all required reading. The engagement grade is composed of student contributions to class discussions and various engagement assignments given throughout the semester. In addition, you will be graded on in-class assignments and discussions for which you will lose credit if you are not present.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance**

I do not take attendance each day. However, I do take note of who participates each day and write comments about your active participation. Additionally, there are consequences if you miss class that you should consider while you make your decision about your attendance to this course:

* You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.
* You are responsible for participating in activities and discussion, and missing class will impact your engagement grade in this course.
* I do not lecture on the readings, so the information given in class is not something you can just get from the readings.
* If you miss a class, please get notes from a classmate rather than asking me for notes.
* You will not be able to make up exams or engagement activities.

Attendance on presentation/debate days, even when you are not speaking, is required. Failure to attend presentation days will result in a ten-point deduction from your own grade for each day missed.

**Late Work**

Sometimes life just happens and you are unable to turn in an assignment on time (maybe you are stressed out, overwhelmed by other assignments in other classes, got drunk the night before and slept through your alarm, etc…). I will accept late work (with the exception of speeches or debates with an assigned date) but with a penalty. Work will be accepted within the following week for the **maximum grade of a C** (see below for extenuating circumstances). After 7 days, late work will no longer be accepted for credit. (Life happens, but not without consequences.) **Remember, you cannot make up speeches or debates if you miss your scheduled performance date.**

***Extenuating circumstances:*** I reserve the right to accept late work without penalty when a student has provided **proper documentation** of a university sanctioned emergency or conflict that has inhibited them from turning in an assignment on time. University sanctioned emergencies or conflicts include:

* family death/emergency
* debilitating or contagious sickness
* religious observance
* serious weather conditions
* varsity athletic competition
* sanctioned curricular requirements with documentation
* court-imposed legal obligations

For more information on university policy on student absences, see <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>

**Quality of Written Work**

Take pride in the quality of your work in this class. Written work must be spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofread: The quality of your writing will affect your grade.All written work must be typed in 12-point serif font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with a clear heading up at the top. Your name must be included. A bibliography of works cited in an accepted citation style (MLA, APA, or Chicago Style) must accompany all work.

**Presentation Day Etiquette**

On the day of your presentation, you should arrive in appropriate attire (i.e. business casual, or at least not in pajamas). Your role as an audience member is equally important to a successful presentation. As I indicate above, attendance on presentation days is mandatory for everyone. You are also responsible for being a supportive audience member. This means that working on homework, typing on a lap top, text messaging, walking in late while someone is speaking, sleeping, or simply looking like anything other than engaged in your classmates’ work will be considered rude and inappropriate. This may, if done repeatedly, affect your own grade on the assignment.

**Grade Discussions and Appeals**

If you would like to speak with me about an exam, assignment, final grade, or any other graded material you must come to my office and speak with me face-to-face or schedule a video conference appointment during my office hours. If you cannot come to my office hours, I will gladly schedule an appointment that works with your schedule.

If you wish to appeal a grade on an assignment or seek a change in your grade, you must submit a written letter requesting to appeal your grade within 7 days of receiving the grade/feedback, and you must follow the procedure I outline below*. I will not casually discuss the specifics of grades over e-mail due to FERPA (a federal law designed to protect your privacy).*

***Grade Appeal Procedure:***

* Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your grade and feedback before setting up an appointment with me and submitting your written grade appeal. This grace period ensures that you have time to carefully read and consider the feedback.
* After reading my feedback, submit a written appeal through e-mail that identifies the specific issue in question (i.e. exam question, etc.) and explains the specific and well-supported reasons you believe the grade should be changed. Some thoughts on these appeals:
	+ Please refer to any class materials that support your rationale for a change.
	+ Focus less on explaining that you deserve a certain grade (i.e. “I came to every class and deserve an A”), and more on proving that you accomplished specific objectives on this specific assignment that you were not given the appropriate credit for (i.e. “You state in my feedback that I did not appropriately meet X grading criteria. However, according to lecture and the assignment description, we were expected to do Y, see pages 5-7 of my assignment where you can see I meet this criteria by doing Z.”).
	+ Make sure to cite specific instances from your assignment to provide support for your claims.
	+ Please attach to the email a graded copy of the assignment in question (i.e. exam, etc.) and any additional evidence to support your claims.
* The written appeal should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the appointment you have scheduled with me. During this meeting, we will review your appeal.
* After meeting with you, I may wish to contemplate the matter. In any case, I will decide within two school days whether to change or uphold the grade.
* I will provide you with a written justification of my decision through Moodle (see comments on the graded item in question).
* Remember, you can only submit a grade appeal within one week (7 days) of the grade’s issue. Grade appeals will not be considered after that “statute of limitations” has expired.
* If we cannot come to an agreement, you are welcome to follow the formal grade appeal procedure as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

**Technology and Electronics in the Classroom**

You are more than welcome to use technology in this classroom (Laptops, iPads, etc) as long as it does not serve as a distraction to you and other students. However, if your cell phone rings during class I reserve the right to answer it or take it for the remainder of class. If you use a laptop to take notes, that is fine, but it should not be out during discussions or engagement activities. Also, if I catch you on facebook, twitter, instagram, or something unrelated to class—I will give one warning and if it happens again the rest of the class will lose the privilege to take notes electronically.

**Waiting Policy**

Class members should wait 15 minutes for me in the event I am late (which I do not at all foresee). After that period of time, you should consider class cancelled and check your e-mail for any information regarding the cancellation.

**Netiquette**

Think about how you communicate to your instructors and colleagues in person and via e-mail.When sending E-Mails:

* + - Address me professionally in e-mails (ex: “Hello, Dr. Mack”)
		- In an e-mail, please sign your name (I might think LSUcutiepie@gmail.com is spam and delete it).
		- Check your grammar.
		- Remember tone is harder to make out in e-mail. Assume a polite and professional tone, and my response will be the same.
		- Make sure to include any necessary background information needed for me to “make sense” of what you are e-mailing about. Also, make sure to be clear (just like in an essay) of what you want out of the e-mail.
		- Do not text me from your phone in all caps, or in broken English. Always use proper punctuation, complete spellings, etc...
		- Courtesy in this class gives most people 24 hours to respond to e-mail. I will not assume you will get an e-mail in less time; don’t assume I will either. Weekends may take longer.

If you fail to follow these guidelines, I will not answer your e-mail.

**Academic Misconduct**

Scholarly procedure dictates that all information or material used from someone else’s work (whether used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary) must be properly cited and documented in written work. In this course, all major written work is submitted to TurnItIn which uses an advanced algorithm to detect significant matches. Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students. You can find the official LSU policies on plagiarism here: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/services/copyright/tutorials/plagiarism> .

<https://www.lsu.edu/lsuonline/docs/Academic-Integrity-Orientation-Moodle-Module.pdf>

**Your work would be considered as plagiarism in part or entirely if it involves any of the following:**

* Submitting work that was written by someone other than you (an online source, a friend, etc.).
* Submitting work in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references. Simply rewording a sentence does not make work your own.
* Submitting work in which you “cut and paste” or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.
* Submitting work that you have written together with a friend as if it was solely your own intellectual property.
* Submitting work that you wrote verbatim for another class.

Plagiarism can be both intentional and unintentional. Intentional plagiarism is when an individual claims sole authorship of a work that is primarily or entirely written and conceived by someone else. Unintentional plagiarism is plagiarism that results from the unintentional disregard for proper scholarly procedures. Examples of Unintentional Plagiarism may be:

* Failure to cite a source that is not common knowledge.
* Failure to "quote" or block quote author's exact words, even if documented.
* Failure to put a paraphrase in your own words, even if documented.
* Failure to put a summary in your own words, even if documented.
* Failure to be loyal to a source.

**Students with Disabilities**

Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with Disability Services in 115 Johnston Hall. Their phone number is 225-578-5919 and website is [www.lsu.edu/disability](http://www.lsu.edu/disability). To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Disability Services forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

**Majoring in Communication Studies**

Business leaders and other professionals recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, and the arts.

*A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.*

More information is available at [www.lsu.edu/cmst](https://email.lsu.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.lsu.edu/cmst) or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel (kfilli@lsu.edu), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

***Please Note:*** You are responsible for all readings. Please complete the reading assignment *before* the listed class. The syllabus is provisional and is subject to revision as necessary. Additional readings may be assigned from time to time, and/or assigned readings may be omitted.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignments Info** |
| TH 1/11 | Course Introduction: The Role of Argumentation and Debate in Society |  |
| T 1/16 | Structuring Arguments |  |
| TH 1/18 | Types of Argument (Fact, Definition, Evaluation/Value, Causal, Policy) |  |
| T 1/23 | Supporting Arguments |  |
| TH 1/25 | Fallacies, Errors, and Other Missteps |  |
| T 1/30 | Audience and Cognitive Dissonance |  |
| TH 2/1 | **Angola Trip** | \*Field trip to Angola |
| T 2/6 | **Group Debate** | \*Must attend class\*Experiential Learning Assignments due in class\*Research Briefs due in class |
| TH 2/8 | Refuting Arguments/Cross-Examination | \*Assign refutation speech |
| T 2/13 | No Class – Mardi Gras Holiday |  |
| TH 2/15 | Workshop |  |
| T 2/20 | **Refutation Speeches** |  |
| TH 2/22 | **Refutation Speeches** |  |
| T 2/27 | **Refutation Speeches** |  |
| TH 3/1 | **Refutation Speeches** |  |
| T 3/6 | Introduction to Policy Debate (Format, Resolutions, Briefs, Cross-Examination) | \*Assign Policy Debates |
| TH 3/8 | Workshop (Resolutions) |  |
| T 3/13 | Workshop (Briefs) |  |
| TH 3/15 | Workshop (Cross-Examination & Format) |  |
| T 3/20 | **Debates** | \*\*Debate briefs due in class |
| TH 3/22 | **Debates** |  |
| T 3/27 | Spring Break – No Class |  |
| TH 3/29 | Spring Break – No Class |  |
| T 4/3 | **Debates** |  |
| TH 4/5 | **Debates** |  |
| T 4/10 | **Debates** |  |
| TH 4/12 | **Debates** |  |
| T 4/17 | **Debates** |  |
| TH 4/19 | Analyzing Arguments | \*Assign Analysis Essay |
| T 4/24 | Workshop |  |
| TH 4/26 | Dialogue & Debate in Democracy | \***Final Paper Due Through Moodle on 5/3** |