WRTG 3020: Writing About Education and Society

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Consultation Hours:  
Tu 12:30-2 & Th 1:30-2

COURSE PURPOSE AND GOALS:  
In this course, we will investigate some of the many arguments that arise over the relationship between education and society, with a particular emphasis on the impact of applying business principles to the public education system. We will also consider what makes an argument credible and how to use language, logic and evidence in a manner that is ethically and socially responsible.

In the process of working on short daily assignments and three papers, we will explore questions such as: What happens to the nature of education, and of academic research, when they are funded by corporations and private interests instead of public tax dollars? Can public education serve its original purpose in a free market environment? And to what extent does the marketplace of ideas promote a truly informed citizenry, given that the profit motive does not always favor the truth?

As a result of taking this course, you will:
- deepen your understanding of your own values and assumptions regarding the relationship between education and society
- better understand perspectives that differ from your own
- improve your ability to communicate your perspective to readers who may not share it and to appeal to common ground rather than confrontation
- strengthen your ability to read critically and question the information and opinions you come across
- make use of a variety of resources for participating in public debate

MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS
What you can expect from me:
- to act in the role of coach, mentor or guide, rather than provider of knowledge, by creating an environment that encourages active participation in learning rather than passive reception of information
- to use my training and expertise in critical thinking and argumentative writing to guide you towards making stronger, more well reasoned arguments and using language ethically and responsibly, regardless of your perspective
- to acknowledge my own biases as they are relevant, but to remain committed to the principles of academic inquiry, which require that I keep an open mind to all ideas and give them a fair hearing, rather than dismissing those ideas that simply don't conform to my politics
- to challenge you to test your assumptions, probe your ideas more fully, defend your assertions, question your evidence and consider the implications of your line of reasoning, often in the role of "devil's advocate"
- to evaluate your work according to standards that are politically neutral, but that reflect a strong commitment to high quality thinking and writing

What I expect from you:
- to be an active participant in your own learning and to take the initiative to find out what you need to know, by cultivating the habit of intellectual curiosity
- to be an independent thinker and researcher as befits your level of education
- to abide by the principles of academic inquiry, and to approach new ideas with an open mind and an honest desire to find the best answer, rather than simply lining up behind
a particular ideology
• to practice the principles of ethical and social responsibility in your thinking and writing
by acknowledging when your ideas are motivated by a political agenda or belief system
and by not consciously using language or evidence to manipulate readers
• to accept criticism of your thinking and writing as being motivated by a sincere desire
to help you improve your skills, regardless of your perspective, and to not assume that
criticism reflects disagreement with your beliefs or dislike of you personally
• to discuss your questions and concerns about the course with me in person or by
email, in the spirit of open communication

Course Web Site: http://spot.colorado.edu/~agoodloe/education/

Please access the course web site as soon as possible and look through the links. To
locate assignments for each class day, click on the Calendar link. This course will also
make use of a WebCT site to give you access to a Bulletin Board system to use for
posting response papers and other materials. Please use your Identkey login and
password to access the WebCT site, and please contact ITS at 735-HELP if you have any
trouble using the site.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following texts can be found at the University Bookstore, or at lower prices online
(try CampusBooks.com).

John D. Ramage, John C. Bean and June Johnson. Writing Arguments, Concise Edition. 3rd

0395961009 (or most recent version)

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Understanding Arguments 20%
Unit 2: Evaluating Arguments 30%
Unit 3: Persuasive Appeal 30%
Participation/Homework 20%

COURSE POLICIES

General Info: Prerequisite: junior standing. Restricted to arts and sciences juniors and
seniors. Same as NRLN/UW RP 3020. Approved for arts and sciences core curriculum:
written communication. Enrollment strictly limited to 18 students per section.

Internet: You will be required to access the web site on a regular basis, and to use
email and a WebCT Bulletin Board to submit regular assignments, drafts and final
versions of your papers. I will use the email address found in your Campus Directory
listing, so please check this account regularly or arrange to have mail forwarded from it
to your regular account.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. This course requires that you arrive to class on
time, turn in assignments on time, and are prepared to participate in the day's
activities. You are granted three "sick leave/vacation" days over the course of the
semester, so use them wisely. Missing more than three classes may impact your final
course grade. If you must miss more than three but fewer than eight classes due to
documented medical or family emergencies, please let me know and provide necessary
documentation. Missing more than eight classes is grounds for course failure, regardless
of the reasons for the absences (see "Minimum Requirements" below). Note: it is your
responsibility to keep track of the number of your absences.
If you miss class, please contact a classmate to find out if you missed any important details, and also check the course calendar for assignments. Please do not ask me for a review of the class session, as it is extraordinarily difficult to summarize what happens during a draft workshop or discussion. If you know in advance that you will be absent on certain dates, you may let me know by email, in order to make workshop scheduling for those days easier. However, your absences will still count.

**Participation:** A workshop setting depends on the full participation of every class member in order to be useful and effective. You are expected to participate in class activities by providing written and oral feedback on peer writing, and by asking questions and contributing ideas during class discussion. You are also expected to remain in the classroom for the full hour and fifteen minutes that the class meets, unless an emergency arises. Please do not schedule appointments or meetings during class time.

While in class, please show respect to your classmates and to me by using language that would be appropriate in a professional setting, and by refraining from using insults or a hostile tone. Students whose language or behavior is disruptive to the class may be asked to leave the room and may be reported to the Dean. See "Classroom Behavior" below.

**Minimum Requirements:** The minimum requirements for passing this course are: (1) you must turn in all papers, both in draft form for the workshop and in final form when due; and (2) you must not miss more than eight classes for any reason. Failure to meet these criteria will result in a final grade of F. If the reasons for absence are due to family or medical emergencies, you may be eligible for a final grade of IW instead of F, as long as you are able to complete the course within a reasonable time period. You must specifically request this option.

**Revisions:** If you feel that you significantly misunderstood the assignment or could do a much better job on either Paper #1 or #2, you may submit a revision for a new grade. The revision will be due one week after the date that you received your grade on the original paper. Revised grades are usually no more than one grade unit higher than the original (i.e., from B- to B), and in some cases your revision may earn the same grade (for example, it might've gone from a low B to a high B). Your revision grade might also be lower than the original grade, but in that case I will keep the original grade on record for you.

Your revision must reflect substantial reorganization both in terms of your structure and your line of reasoning and support. Going through the paper and fixing small mistakes and typos or only correcting the issues I point out in the margins does not constitute a revision. We will discuss revision in more detail in class, as you will be going through the revision process in some depth as you work on each paper.

**Late Work:** Daily assignments are due by noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as indicated on the Course Calendar. Three late assignments (defined as being turned in after their due date but before the next assignment due date) will count as one missing assignment. Chronic lateness with assignments may result in a final grade of F for the relevant portions of the course.

Papers turned in after the due date announced on the Calendar but fewer than 48 hours after the due date will be accepted but the grade will be reduced by one full letter. Papers turned in more than 48 hours after the due date will not be accepted, except as evidence that you have completed the “minimum requirements” for the course (the grade will be recorded as F).
If you need an extension on any assignment, please contact me by email.

**Writing Lab:** The PWR (Program for Writing and Rhetoric) offers a Writing Lab for students who would like one-on-one assistance in developing and organizing their ideas. Please see the Writing Lab web site for more information: http://www.colorado.edu/PWR/lab.html

**Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. See policies at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html OR http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

**Disability Statement:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices

**Religious Observances:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you are allowed to miss three classes without penalty and should plan in advance for days you may need off for religious observation. See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

**Academic Honesty:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html OR http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

**Sexual Harassment:** The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or promises or create an environment that is hostile or offensive. Harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite gender and between any combination of members in the campus community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the OSH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe they have been sexually harassed can be obtained at: http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/