

# Advanced Composition and Critical Thinking

English Writing 302 (Engwr 302) at American River College

Course #	Meeting Times	Location
10626 Spring 2014	F 6:00-9:05PM	Davies Hall 220

Instructor: Shannon Mendez  
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Voicemail: 916-286-3691 x 12557  
Office Hours: Davies Hall 401 by appointment

## Course Description

This course develops analytical skills through writing and discussion. It examines methods by which people are persuaded to think, believe, and act. It also includes analyses of arguments or expressions of opinions for their validity and soundness. Assigned readings include a variety of essays and a book-length text. Finally, it focuses on critically assessing, developing, and effectively expressing and supporting opinions. Essays written for the course (6,000 words minimum) draw from the texts to present carefully reasoned arguments. At least one essay includes citations from secondary sources, documented according to current MLA format.

## Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- analyze, compare, and evaluate divergent perspectives
- reason inductively from examples, patterns, and structures to form generalizations
- reason deductively by drawing conclusions about arguments
- compose a thesis-driven argument of interpretation or evaluation and support it with textual evidence, using a sufficient variety and number of appropriate examples
- evaluate complex systems of values, contexts, and assumptions in texts

### Course Goal:

Draw conclusions based on evidence

## Prerequisite

In order to take this class, you will need to have completed ENGWR 300 (College Composition) with a grade of "C" or better. You will need to provide a Prerequisite Verification form or a copy of your Assessment Placement results the first week of class in order to remain in the course.

## Course Materials

You will need the following materials for this course.

### Technology

- Frequent access to a computer so you can use Desire2Learn (D2L) to view course content, submit your assignments, and track your grades. Go to <http://d2l.losrios.edu> .

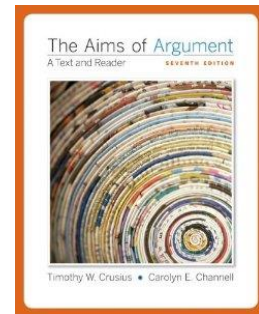
### Word Processing Program

- Word processing program that will create .doc, .docx, or .pdf files.

### Textbook

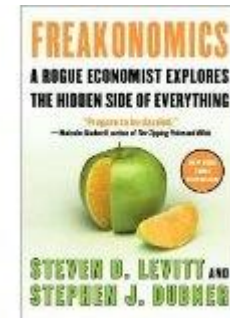
- The following textbook by the end of the first week:

*The Aims of Argument: Text and Reader* (7th ed)  
by Timothy Crusius and Carolyn Channell  
ISBN-13: 978-0077343798



- The following book around the middle of the semester:

*Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner  
ISBN-13: 9780060731335



- A "thought-provoking" nonfiction book near the end of the semester. You will be able to choose a book from a list of options.



## Course Organization

The following information provides an overview of what you will do for this class.

### Time Expectations

You should plan for 9 hours of coursework each week. (The formula for most college courses is 2 hours of outside assignments per lecture hour). Outside assignments for this course typically include research, reading, and writing. Lecture hours typically include lectures, discussions, and exercises (individual and collaborative).

### Coursework

The course is organized into weekly modules. Each module contains resources and activities about one or more topics.

#### Resources

Resources for learning include readings and lectures.

Readings may be the course textbook, other assigned non-fiction books, or articles. They provide the comprehensive information and details that you need to learn about the topic. You should complete the readings before we meet in class each week.

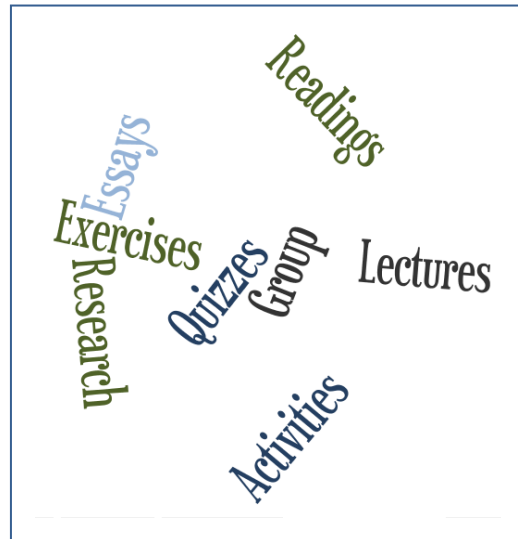
Lectures highlight key concepts about the topics.

#### Activities

Activities include practice and assessments.

Practice includes discussions, collaborative projects, and other exercises. They help you practice and apply the concepts of the topic.

Assessments allow you to demonstrate how you have met the learning objectives. Assessments may include quizzes, brief writing responses, and essays.



## Course Ground Rules

This class is a community. The vision is for this class to be an encouraging environment that provides everyone with the opportunity to learn, practice, and achieve the Learning Outcomes and Objectives. Let's work together to make this semester great for everyone!

### Attendance and Punctuality

To earn college credit, you must attend the course sessions and be on time. Missing classes and being late may negatively impact your grade.

### Late Work

You must submit all assignments by the due date to receive full credit. Each assignment will have a grading rubric. An assignment submission will receive a penalty each day it is late.

Keep the confirmation email from D2L when you submit a paper; you may need to provide proof of submission if a disagreement arises.

## **Distributive Behavior and Communication**

If your communication or behavior is intended for ill will or distracts anyone from learning or teaching, you may lose Participation points and be referred to the college Student Discipline Officer. Examples of obvious and not-so-obvious disruptive behavior: aggression, defiance, interrupting, excessive lateness, sleeping, offensiveness, snarky comments, nonverbal disrespect, whininess.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is representing another's work as your own and is a serious college offense, which may result in expulsion. Any time you cut and paste, you must cite the source. Any time you communicate an idea that was not yours, you must cite the source. Nobody should ever fix your paper. You can receive suggestions and instruction, but you must always have control of your paper--you make the edits.

I use TurnItIn.com for plagiarism detection. When you submit your papers, a system will search for and highlight anything that comes from other sources. Therefore, make sure that you properly cite any other words, phrases, and sentences that are written by somebody else (even if the paper was written by you for another class). Depending on the plagiarism severity, your paper may receive a zero or be sent to the college Student Discipline Officer.

## **Special Needs**

If you have a health problem, a learning disability, or a physical need of some kind, let me know at the beginning of the course. Contact the Disabled Students' Programs and Services at (916) 484-8545 to discuss your needs and obtain documentation.

## **Technology in the Classroom**

You can use technology to help you in class.

Using your technology device for activities unrelated to our class is disruptive and may negatively impact your grade.

## **Communication Policy**

Email is the best way to contact me. I check email several times a day, less often on weekends. I typically respond to email within 24 hours, possibly longer on weekends. If you don't hear back from me within 24 hours during the weekdays, assume I did not receive your email and resend it.

When you send an email, identify yourself with your name and the course you are in. Also be sure to use complete sentences and proper grammar. Remember that your reader is an English instructor who appreciates these things.

### **Course Values:**

- Work ethic
- Responsibility
- Consistent attendance
- Punctuality
- Preparedness
- Effort
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Common courtesy
- Encouragement
- Appreciation of multicultural diversity

## Coursework and Grading

The coursework involves reading, researching, and communicating through discussion and writing.

### Points

You will earn points for the following categories of assignments.

Item	Description	Points
Participation	Adequate and cordial contribution to class discussions and behavior.	100
Exercises	Grammar practice, quizzes, writing responses, and other activities.	450
Essays	Three academic essays, 4-6 pages in length.	450
		Total: 1000

Your final course grade is based on the following points:

Points	Final Grade
900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D
0-599	F

I do not offer extra credit or give Incompletes as a final grade.

### Schedule

So that you can plan ahead, the following outline provides the dates for the readings, topics, and essays.

Week 1: Monday, Jan 20 - Friday, Jan 24

Topic: Getting Started

Week 2: Monday, Jan 27 - Friday, Jan 31

Readings: Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Aims of Argument*

Topics: Critical Thinking, Critical Reading

Week 3: Monday, Feb 3 - Friday, Feb 7

Readings: Chapters 3-5 of *The Aims of Argument*

Topics: Argument Analysis, Critique

Week 4: Monday, Feb 10 - Friday, Feb 14

**February 14:** Lincoln's Birthday Holiday

Week 5: Monday, Feb 17 - Friday, Feb 21

Readings: Chapter 6, 7, and 8 of *The Aims of Argument*

Topics: Research, Inquiry, Synthesis

Week 6: Monday, Feb 24 - Friday, Feb 28

Readings: Chapter 9 and Appendix B of *The Aims of Argument*

Topics: Convincement, Fallacies

Week 7: Monday, Mar 3 - Friday, Mar 7

Readings: Appendix A of *The Aims of Argument*.

Topic: Grammar Refresher

Essay: Convincing Argument

Week 8: Monday, Mar 10 - Friday, Mar 14

Readings: Chapter 10 of *The Aims of Argument*

Topic: Persuasion

Week 9: Monday, Mar 17 - Friday, Mar 21

Readings: *Student's Guide to Freakonomics* pages 2-9; Introduction - chapter 2 of *Freakonomics*

Topic: Freakonomics Part 1

Week 10: Monday, Mar 24 - Friday, Mar 28

Readings: *Student's Guide to Freakonomics* pages 10-21, chapters 3-5 of *Freakonomics*

Topic: Freakonomics Part 2

Week 11: Monday, Mar 31 - Friday, Apr 4

Readings: *Student's Guide to Freakonomics* 22-24, chapters 6 - the Bonus Matter of *Freakonomics*

Topics: Freakonomics Part 3, Rhetorical Devices

Essay: Persuasive Argument

Week 12: Monday, Apr 7 - Friday, Apr 11

Readings: Chapter 11 of *The Aims of Argument*

Topics: Mediation, Conflict Resolution

**Spring Recess:** Monday, Apr 14 - Friday, Apr 18

Week 13: Monday, Apr 21 - Friday, Apr 25

Readings: First half of book choice

Topics: Writing Style, Non-Fiction Book Analysis Part 1

Essay: Mediatory Argument

Week 14: Monday, Apr 28 - Friday, May 2

Readings: Second half of book choice

Topic: Non-Fiction Book Analysis Part 2

Week 15: Monday, May 5 - Friday, May 9

Topic: Review

Week 16: Monday, May 12 - Friday, May 16

Final