

# English 20803.007: Writing as Argument

Spring 2019



**Instructor**  
Sara Kelm

**Email**  
[s.kelm@tcu.edu](mailto:s.kelm@tcu.edu)

**Office**  
Reed Hall 402

**Course Information**  
ENGL 20803.050  
MWF 1:00-1:50p  
WIN 170

**Final Exam**  
Monday, May 6  
11a-1:30p

**Office Hours**  
W 9-10a, 11a-12p  
F 11a-12p  
& by appointment

*All course policies, guidelines, and regulations are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.*

## Course Objectives

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When someone says the word “argument,” you probably have a particular idea of what kind of interaction that entails. In this class, however, we will be expanding the idea of “argument” to include anything that works to create change in an audience. This means we encounter arguments all the time: on social media, on TV, in movies, in our daily conversations. Just because arguments are ubiquitous, though, does not mean all arguments are well-constructed or ethical. In this class, you will learn how to analyze arguments according to their rhetorical situation and evaluate how valid, productive, and ethical those arguments are. You will also produce your own arguments based in your particular values, while also recognizing the validity and importance of the values others hold. You will have the opportunity to create arguments in various forms and modes for various audiences, and you will learn to express how and why you make the rhetorical choices you do.

This course, like all courses at TCU, has outcomes explaining what students should achieve in the course. The outcomes listed here are the goals we will work toward. So, at the end of ENGL 20803, you should be able to demonstrate:

- Facility with the language and analysis of argument
- The ability to write an argument for a specific rhetorical situation
- Competency in using sources, (primary, secondary, electronic) in argument construction
- The ability to critically engage with digital environments

## Course Materials

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### Texts

Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters, *Everything is an Argument* (7<sup>th</sup> edition)  
Caulfield, [Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers](#) (Online)  
Other readings posted on D2L

## Materials

- A notebook or paper for in-class writing assignments, plus a folder for handouts
- A two-pocket folder for turning in essay portfolios

## Course Projects and Requirements

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This class will have two major projects (each with multiple parts), two minor projects, and three VICs. Each project will go through multiple revisions and in-class workshops. At the start of each unit, you will receive a detailed assignment sheet and rubric.

*Your final course grade will be based on the following percentages:*

<b>Unit I: Analyzing Rhetoric</b> (Rhetorical Analysis)	<b>10%</b>
<b>Unit II: Defining Issues</b> (Issue Map/SOGC)	<b>25%</b>
<b>Unit III: Arguing Publically</b>	<b>35%</b>
Argument/SOGC (30%)	
Annotated Bibliography (5%)	
<b>Unit IV: Arguing Personally</b> (Creative Argument/SOGC)	<b>10%</b>
<b>Value/Issue Check-ins (VICs)</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Process Work/Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>

### Unit 1: Analyzing Rhetoric (10%)

In this minor project, you will write a **rhetorical analysis** of a recent article on a contemporary issue. Your goal will be to analyze *what* the writer argues, *how* the writer argues, *why* they argue that way, and *to whom* they argue. Lastly, you will make an assessment of the argument's effectiveness, given the rhetorical choices you identify.

### Unit 2: Defining Issues (25%)

In this unit, you will select an *timely*, *contended*, and *significant* issue based in your values, a topic you will work with for the rest of the semester. After your issue is approved, you will define the issue through a variety of perspectives on the topic. The final project for this unit will have two parts. You will create a **visual representation (map)** of the conversation on your topic, using at least four sources. This representation might be digital or mixed media, but somehow it must visually demonstrate all five positions and their relationships. Along with this visual representation, you will provide a **Statement of Goals and Choices (SOGC)** that describes the rhetorical choices you made.

### Unit 3: Arguing Publically (35%)

Now that you have defined the issue, you will take a position on the issue for a particular audience. Your position needs to be based on research that you do, but the **argument** itself may take many forms, depending on your audience. You could do an op ed for a newspaper, a TED talk, an infographic, a podcast, a visual argument, or some sort of ethnography/narrative. You will also include an extensive **SOGC**, as well as an **annotated bibliography** of 7-10 reputable sources which you cite in your argument. We will work on the annotated bibliography throughout the semester. You may receive extra credit if you circulate your argument to its intended audience.

#### **Unit 4: Arguing Personally (10%)**

In this final project, you will adapt your unit 3 argument for an audience of your choice. How this project differs from the previous units is that you yourself will be communicating what you have learned with an audience that is important to you. You may select whatever genre/format/medium you like to communicate this argument, but your personal voice and values need to be evident. You may want to write a song, write a short story, or record a conversation you have with your audience. Along with this model, you will complete a **SOGC**. During the final time, you will make an informal presentation to the rest of the class about your issue, your value, and your argument. **MAKE SURE YOUR END-OF-SEMESTER PLANS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OUR FINAL EXAM TIME**, as you need to be present for this final.

#### **Value/Issue Check-ins (VICs) (10%)**

Three times during the semester, you will complete a 500-800 word reflection about where you are in learning about your issue, connecting what you're learning to your values and the world around you. The VICs are a place to work through some of the controversies and contradictions as you encounter new ideas and try to reconcile them with what you already know. While the VICs are fairly informal, you will refer to sources you are reading on your topic.

#### **Process Work/Participation (10%)**

Process work includes reading assignments, in-class writings, out-of-class writings, group work, reading quizzes, etc. This work, while often informal, will be some of the most important work we do for the course. Not doing these assignments adequately—or not doing them at all—will hamper your participation grade and/or your project grade.

*Participation:* Simply being physically present every Monday/Wednesday/Friday is not enough; you must engage with the material and your classmates in multiple ways. Your weekly participation grade will be based on both a self-evaluation and an evaluation by me. Too many absences will negatively impact your participation grade. *At the end of the course, you will have the option to appeal your participation grade.*

*Reading quizzes:* There will be regular quizzes on assigned reading, with the goal of keeping you accountable for the reading and rewarding you for taking notes. Potential reading quizzes will be recorded on the class calendar. You are allowed to use handwritten notes on the quizzes.

*Workshops:* For each writing assignment, you will submit drafts in order to receive feedback from classmates and by me. Each workshop draft should include an author's note explaining to readers: 1) what you were trying to accomplish in this draft; 2) what you think is going well; and 3) what you are having trouble with or would like advice on. Failure to submit *full* drafts when due may affect your project grade. In workshops, you are expected to read your peers' drafts carefully and provide a thoughtful, substantive response both verbally and in writing.

*Conferences:* Twice over the course of the semester, you and I will meet to discuss your work in the course and your plans for upcoming projects. Class will be cancelled, but attendance is required at your 15 minute conference; if you need to reschedule, contact me ahead of time. Additionally, you are always welcome to meet with me during office hours. If we have set up a meeting or conference and you do not attend, I reserve the right to award you an unexcused absence.

## Evaluation and Grading

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Your projects will be graded on the following scale:

A	93 – 100%	Excellent
A-	90 – 92.9%	
B+	87 – 89.9%	
B	83 – 86.9%	Good
B-	80 – 82.9%	
C+	77 – 79.9%	
C	73 – 76.9%	Satisfactory
C-	70 – 72.9%	
D+	67 – 69.9%	
D	63 – 66.9%	Unsatisfactory
D-	60 – 62.9%	
F	59.9% or below	Unacceptable/Incomplete

For each major project of the semester, you'll complete multiple drafts and then turn in a portfolio that contains all drafts of the project, SOGCs, and informal work toward the project (in-class writing, research notes and articles, etc.). In preparation for constructing your portfolios, please save the process work/writing that you do for this class. Make sure you save each draft version on your computer as well. The final draft must be submitted both online through D2L and in hard copy at the beginning of class on the day the project is due. **A project is not considered turned in until it is submitted both digitally and in hard copy** (see the late work policy on the next page)

**Grades:** Simply fulfilling the minimum requirements of the course warrants an average grade (*i.e.*, C). Coming to class every day and completing assignments is not something that earns extra credit or an outstanding grade; it is a basic expectation for coursework. A higher than average grade will be based on: 1) the quality and development of your work; 2) consistently demonstrating critical and creative thinking in your writing/projects; 3) your ability to guide writing/a project through the stages of revision; and 4) a willingness to take risks by exploring new subjects, genres, and techniques.

**Revision:** You may choose to *substantively* revise **one** of the following: the rhetorical analysis, the issue map and/or the SOGC, **or** the argument for a specific audience, the annotated bibliography, and/or the SOGC. Revising the essay doesn't guarantee the grade will be improved. If you want to revise, you must first submit a detailed revision plan and schedule a conference with me at least one week before the revision deadline. Revisions need to be submitted by the LAST DAY OF CLASS (5/1). If you submitted your original portfolio late, the late penalty will still apply to the revised essay. *I reserve the right to require revisions in cases where work is unsatisfactory.*

You are **always** welcome to talk to me about a grade received on an assignment. However, **you must wait 24 hours** before coming to talk to me during office hours.

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## Attendance Policy

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Improvement in writing is a complex process that requires much practice and feedback from readers. Regular attendance is necessary to your success in this course.

**Excused Absences:** It is a Composition Program policy that in writing workshop courses, only official university absences are excused (and you are responsible for bringing me notification of university absences *before* the event). Students representing TCU in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work *in advance*. **You are responsible for the material you miss because of an absence.** Check D2L to review PowerPoints and assignments, and be prepared for the next class period.

**Unexcused Absences:** Three weeks of unexcused absences (9 classes total) constitute grounds for failure of the course. Absences due to sleeping in and long weekends are NOT excused—they count toward the three weeks absence limit. Other ways of accumulating unexcused absences are (1) sleeping in class; (2) working on assignments not related to ENGL 20803 while in class or using an electronic device without permission; or (3) failing to attend the entire class meeting by arriving more than ten minutes late or leaving class early. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, I urge you to save your unexcused absences for times when you are too sick to come to class (and *please* don't force yourself to come to class when you are ill). Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control should contact me right away. Students may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with the Director of Composition.

**Tardies:** Please do not be late; we only have 50 minutes together at a time. Three tardies will equal one absence. Too many tardies/absences will affect your participation grade.

**Late Work:** All work is due at the beginning of class. The assignment is not turned in until all documents (both electronic and paper) are handed in. Daily work may be turned in one class after the work's due date for half credit. **Projects that are turned in after class on the day it is due will receive (at most) 90%. Each day after that, they will lose 5% each day.** In extenuating circumstances or in the case of excused absences, the student should make arrangements with me as soon as those circumstances are known. Arrangements must be made *in advance of the due date*, save in the case of an emergency (generally one that involves police, emergency departments, and/or sirens). Technology issues do not fall under the "emergency" category (see below).

**Technology and Late Work:** This class requires the use of technology, so you will need to have reliable access to a computer and the internet, both which are available in several places (including the library) on campus. Please let me know if you have a specific challenge in this regard. Problems with technology (i.e.: computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to turning in assignments. Expect electronics to break when you need them most. Back up your work regularly on GoogleDrive, Box, or a USB drive. Also, please note that most assignments will be submitted online through D2L, and some of those deadlines will be due before the next day's class. Check the calendar for more information.

## Classroom Policies

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**Office Hours:** While I plan to be on campus during my office hours each week, I occasionally use that time to run errands around campus. Thus, it would be wise to send an email and let me know if you are planning to stop by during my office hours so I can be sure to be available.

**Sustenance:** Please eat lunch before or after class. If you must bring food into class, make sure it is not disruptive, i.e. not loud, odorous, or requiring all of your attention to consume. In general, plan to only bring in water, coffee/tea, and energy bars. Also, be sure to clean up after yourself.

**Technology:** Using devices for anything other than designated class work means you are not engaging in the activities of our class. When appropriate, you may take notes or complete in-class work on your computer, but please keep all other screens (and windows) closed. If using the computer distracts you or those near you from focusing on class work, I reserve the right to ask you to put away your electronic device for the day. All phones should be turned to silent or airplane mode during class unless permission has been granted by the instructor (*please* talk to me if you have a specific situation). Any student seen using their cell phone, computer, or other technology during class for something other than classwork and without my express permission may be counted absent without warning.

**Readings:** Whenever there are assigned readings, please bring a copy of the reading to class, whether the reading is from the textbook, a link, or a PDF posted to D2L. If you do not have the reading required for discussion during class time, you may lose credit for participation for the day.

**E-mail:** The majority of my communication will come through e-mail. I expect you to **check your TCU e-mail daily**, and you can expect me to do the same. E-mails to me and your colleagues should be professional and polite, with a subject, a greeting, and a closing. I reserve the right to not respond to e-mails that do not follow this professional format. I do not often respond to emails between the hours of 7 PM and 8 AM, so to ensure a timely response from me, email me during business hours.

**D2L:** All materials for this course (assignments, required course readings, in-class activities, student drafts for peer response, and grades) will be uploaded to D2L, accessible through <http://d2l.tcu.edu>.

## TCU Resources

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- [Center for Digital Expression](#) | Scharbauer 2003 | [cdex@tcu.edu](mailto:cdex@tcu.edu) | 817-257-5194 | Available to assist students with audio, video, multimedia, and web design projects.
- [William L. Adams Center for Writing](#) | Reed 419 | 817-257-7221 | An instructional service with the mission of helping improve writing of students, staff, and faculty from all academic disciplines.
- [TCU Computer Help](#) | 817-257-5855 | IT provides support for TCU computing accounts and services.
- [Mary Couts Burnett Library](#) | [reference@tcu.edu](mailto:reference@tcu.edu) | 817-257-7117 | The Library provides resources and services for the research and information needs of the TCU community.
- [TCU: Student Affairs | Counseling & Mental Health Center](#) | 817-257-7863 | Promoting psychological health, well-being, and resources for TCU students to cope with challenges.

## Classroom Community (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement)

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Every student in this class will be respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. You are invited to bring your entire identity into this class, while recognizing that others will do the same. Students will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socioeconomic status, or national identity. Make no assumptions about the identities and beliefs of your colleagues. Be aware of the words you use and how you use them. Racist, homophobic, classist, ableist, xenophobic, and/or other discriminatory language (especially in regards to religion and culture) will not be tolerated.

Diversity is necessary to create an intellectual environment that fosters inquiry. Our classroom is a place for the free exchange of ideas in an environment of mutual respect. Each of us is responsible for sharing ideas and listening to the ideas of others in a constructive manner that supports the goals of the class. Students whose behavior distracts or disrespects others will be asked to leave, be counted absent, and be required to meet with me before our next class period. Similarly, all members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in online communication. Participating in the virtual realm should be done with personal integrity and respect for others. If I deem any digital exchange to be inappropriate or offensive, I will forward the message to the Chair of the department and appropriate action will be taken, not excluding expulsion from the course.

## TCU Disability Statement (verbatim from TCU Undergraduate Catalog)

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Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Contact the [Center for Academic Services](#) at (817) 257-7486 for more information.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator.* Guidelines for documentation may be found at [http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability\\_documentation.asp](http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp). Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

## Safe Zones Statement

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My goal is for each student to feel comfortable and able to connect with course content and online discussions. I have completed the TCU Safe Zone training offered by the office of Inclusiveness and Intercultural Services. Please know that I welcome, affirm, and celebrate persons in the LGBTQIA communities of Texas Christian University. I will not allow homophobic comments in threaded discussions and will strive to use inclusive language. For more information please consult: <https://sds.tcu.edu/allies/>

## Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information

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TCU prohibits discrimination and harassment based on age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, predisposing genetic information, covered veteran status, and any other basis protected by law, except as permitted by law. TCU also prohibits unlawful sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, sexual assault, incest, statutory rape, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, bullying, stalking, and retaliation. We understand that discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced any of these issues to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. [Review TCU's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Conduct or to file a complaint: https://titleix.tcu.edu/title-ix/](#). [Learn about the Campus Community Response Team or Report a Bias Incident: https://titleix.tcu.edu/campus-community-response-team/](#)

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I will seek to keep any information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility under TCU policy and federal law and I am required to share any information I receive regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, and related conduct with TCU's Title IX Coordinator. Students can receive confidential support and academic advocacy by contacting TCU's Confidential Advocate in the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education office at (817) 257-5225 or the [Counseling & Mental Health Center](#) at <https://counseling.tcu.edu/> or by calling (817) 257-7863. [Alleged violations can be reported to the Title IX Office](#) at <https://titleix.tcu.edu/student-toolkit/> or by calling (817) 257-8228. Should you wish to make a confidential report, the Title IX Office will seek to maintain your privacy to the greatest extent possible, but cannot guarantee confidentiality. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the Fort Worth Police Department at 911 for an emergency and (817) 335-4222 for non-emergency or TCU Police at (817) 257-7777. If you find yourself in a position where you are in need of these services, please know I will support and advocate for you however I can.

## Academic Misconduct (see TCU Undergraduate Catalog)

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Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- *Cheating*: 1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; 2) Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; 3) Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; 4) Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; 5) Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself;
- *Plagiarism*: The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit therefore.
- *Collusion*: The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.
- *Fabrication and falsification*: Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise. Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- *Multiple submission*: The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization.