

ENGL 212, Sec. 26: Topics in Critical Writing
How to Think about Weird Things:
Argumentation and Persuasion
Saginaw Valley State University
Winter 2012

Instructor	Dr. Kim Lacey
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In-Person Office Hours	Monday, Wednesday: 2:00-3:30 pm Tuesday, Thursday: 12:30-1:30 pm Also available by appointment
Online Office Hours	I prefer that you make an appointment for an online office hour meeting, but if you see me online, please feel free to chat with me. Skype: kim.lacey5 Google Chat: krlacey Zimbra Chat (through SVSU's e-mail): krlacey Twitter: @kimlacey

Course Meeting Days	Location
Tu/Th 2:30-3:50	Science East 135

Course Goals: This semester, we will investigate several different techniques that lead to effective persuasion and argumentation. We will look at various examples in print, on film, online. At the end of the term, we will place ourselves in persuasive situations to more completely understand how the techniques we discussed are actually utilized, effectively or not. As a member of this course, you are encouraged to keep an eye out for persuasive situations you see on tv, read about in various locations, or witness on campus or your off-campus lives.

Required Course Texts: All texts are available at the SVSU bookstore in Curtiss Hall and online

How to Think about Weird Things: Critical Thinking for a New Age (6th edition), Theodore Schick, Jr. and Lewis Vaughn. McGraw Hill: 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0073535777

A Rulebook for Arguments (4th edition), Anthony Weston. Hackett: 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0-87220-954-1

The Power of Persuasion: How We're Bought and Sold, Robert Levine. Wiley: 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0471763178

Course Technology:

E-mail: I regularly send e-mails from VSpace. Please check your e-mail daily.

VSpace: All grades will be posted on VSpace.

CourseKit (coursekit.com): We will be setting up accounts on the second day of class. Our course code is: RLLPQT

Twitter: Please sign up for Twitter if you do not have an account. Suggested Twitter feed: @AdviceToWriters (we will add others as the semester continues)

Twitter Paper (paper.li): We will be using Twitter Paper for our second assignment (we will be setting this up in class)

Course Description: Emphasizes processes of critical reading and writing, as applied to several modes of communication. Frequent writing assignments for different audiences, with attention to disciplinary conventions and rhetorical strategies for argument in academic discourse. Workshop approaches. Includes work in developing research questions and using library and electronic resources. Refines abilities to analyze both student and professional texts. Specific content for reading may be organized by theme.

Prerequisite: All reading and writing Basic Skills requirements must be completed before enrolling in this course.

Course Objectives: As defined by the English Department, ENGL 212 will refine students' abilities to:

1. Employ rhetorical strategies that communicate an academic voice. Students should:
 - a. Move from writer-based to reader-based prose.
 - b. Use specific and concrete methods to support positions in a manner convincing to targeted audiences.
 - c. Understand and choose effective strategies for argumentation and persuasion.
 - d. Use cited materials responsibly and effectively.
 - e. Review, critique, and revise their own and others' texts.
2. Read critically and analyze texts that challenge their thinking and that are written for diverse audiences, purposes, and disciplines.
3. Conduct academic research. Students should:
 - a. Develop focused questions for research. Use a variety of research modes, including print and on-line tools.
 - b. Critically evaluate source materials. Select, cite, and document primary and secondary sources appropriately for purpose and audience.
4. Engage in interactive and/or collaborative reading and writing activities.
5. Use electronic technology to aid research and writing processes, which may include:
 - a. Word processing Internet, e.g. e-mail, WWW Electronic databases and search tools available in libraries.
6. Understand and apply different documentation formats as for various disciplines, e.g. MLA, APA.
7. Extend and refine editing skills

8. Additionally, as English 212 is also a General Education Category 10 course, special consideration will be given to developing your critical thinking skills, your logical reasoning skills, and your communication abilities, such that you develop an ability to read literary works with appreciation and understanding, and develop greater efficiency in writing effective academic texts that use research.

Course Assignments

Major Assignments

Detailed descriptions can be located on CourseKit and will also be discussed in class.

Title	Length Requirements	Points
Fallacy Summaries with Examples (Essay)	200 words per fallacy (1000 words total)	200 points
Twitter Paper (using paper.li): Construction (Small group project)	Read for one week	100 points
Twitter Paper: Analysis	2-3 pages	200 points
Rhetorical Film Analysis (Essay)	3-5 pages	250 points
Experiencing Persuasion Analysis (Essay)	4-6 pages	300 points
Experiencing Persuasion Analysis (Presentation)	10 minutes	100 points

Essay Guidelines: I will only accept Word Documents (".doc" or ".docx") or PDFs. Please, no ".wpd" or ".wps" All essays must use the APA format for all in-text citations and reference pages. All essays must be double-spaced, use 12 point Times New Roman or Calibri font, with no larger than 1" margins. If you do not format your essay correctly, you will receive a 5% deduction for that essay.

Other Requirements

Weekly Reading and Discussion Response (Due every Wednesday by 9 pm)	150-200 word summary and response posted on CourseKit. I will post one question each week to our CourseKit Stream. You are responsible for responding to this question. Please leave your response as a comment. Responses will be evaluated on a scale of 0-3. 0=not completed, 1=weak, 2=okay, 3=good	45 points
Active Attendance	Active attendance includes	75 points

	being prepared for 'pop' in-class writing assignments, having the assigned reading completed, and being prepared to participate in class and small group discussions.	
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Total Points: 1270

Grading Scale

↑93%: A	1270-1181
↑90%: A-	1181-1143
↑87%: B+	1142-1105
↑83%: B	1104-1054
↑80%: B-	1053-1016
↑77%: C+	1015-978
↑70%: C	977-889
↑60%: D	888-762
↓60%: F	761-0

Course Policies

Attendance: It is in your best interest to attend class regularly. Please take note of the “active attendance” section of the course assignments. Attendance means much more than simply showing up to class. Attendance in ENGL 212 means active participation, sharing insightful ideas, completing homework, and willingness to ask questions. Attendance will be taken during each class meeting. **If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will be marked absent.** Please find a classmate and exchange e-mail addresses. In case you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what you missed. My office hours will not be used as a “make-up” class period.

Attendance bonus: At the end of the semester if you have near perfect attendance (no more than one absence) you will receive 10 points of extra credit.

Technology Policy: I encourage you to use whatever note taking system you prefer. If, however, you choose to use a personal computing device, you are asked that it be used for class work only. Phones must be turned to silent during class time. If you are expecting an important phone call during class, please sit near the door so you can leave the room without disrupting others.

Late Work: Late work is unacceptable. Please ensure that your work is submitted on time. I will send a confirmation e-mail once I receive your essay. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail, I did not receive your essay.

Disability / Non-Discrimination Clause: Students with disabilities which may restrict their full participation in course activities are encouraged to meet with the instructor or contact the SVSU Office of Disability Services, Curtis Hall, Room C-112, Phone: 989-964-4168.

SVSU does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical impairment, disability, or veteran status in the provision of education, employment, and other services.

Academic Integrity Policy: According to the *SVSU Student Handbook*, "Academic integrity is undermined whenever one is dishonest in the pursuit of knowledge. Dishonesty takes many forms, including cheating, plagiarism, and other activities for undermining the educational process.

"Cheating occurs whenever one attempts to gain an advantage through a violation of rules regarding the relevant behavior. It should be assumed that collaboration is cheating unless explicitly authorized" (16).

"Plagiarism involves intentionally or unintentionally presenting another person's expressions – ideas, opinions, illustrations, data, style – as one's own expression" (16).

Forms of plagiarism include directly transcribing (copying) without quotation and attribution, summarizing without attribution, paraphrasing or patchwork paraphrasing without attribution, patching electronic materials (including pictures, graphs, and/or charts) without attribution.

In ENGL 212 deliberate plagiarism or cheating in any form will result in the grade of zero (0) for the entire assignment.

"Undermining the Educational Process' occurs whenever one attempts to prevent another's learning or subverts the recognized means by which learning occurs" (16).

The goal of SVSU faculty is to help each student achieve success through learning the concepts and skills for which the course was designed. In a university classroom, the learning that takes place is determined by the quality of the interactions of all members of the class.

Specifically the *SVSU Student Handbook* states, "No student shall engage in conduct that disrupts or interferes with the educational activities in classrooms . . . computer laboratories . . . or any other place where education and teaching activities take place. This includes, but is not limited to, such behaviors as talking at inappropriate times, drawing unwarranted attention to him or herself, engaging in loud and distracting behaviors, displaying defiance or disrespect to peers or threatening any University employee or student. No student shall engage in conduct that is disruptive or interferes with the rights of others on University property . . . nor shall a student obstruct, disrupt, interfere, or attempt to interfere with another student's right to learn or complete academic requirements" (34).

In ENGL 212, any student who engages in any of these behaviors that undermine the educational process will be asked to leave the class immediately, and lose any possible credit for that class period. To return to the class, the student will be required to schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss his or her plans for modifying their behavior in question.

Important Note: In any case of cheating, plagiarism, or engaging in behavior that undermines the educational process in addition to the consequences outlined above, the instructor may choose to report the behavior to the Office of Student Conduct, following the protocols outlined on pages 32-37 in the *SVSU Student Handbook*.

Writing Center Information: One of the many advantages of this University is the Writing Center. You are strongly encouraged to meet with a tutor to discuss your writing. Sessions at the Writing Center are available on a first come, first serve basis. Please stop by the Writing Center anytime you need additional help.

Writing Center Hours M-R 8:30a-7p
F 10a-2p
Location Zahnow 308 (3rd floor of the library)
Phone 989-964-6061
Website www.svsu.edu/writingcenter

Course Calendar

It is possible that this schedule will change. If it does, I will notify you in class, on CourseKit, and in writing via e-mail.

WT = How to Think about Weird Things

RB = A Rulebook for Arguments

PoP = Power of Persuasion

Tu 1/10	In-class discussion: Introduction to course
Th 1/12	Read before class: WT 1-13; RB #1-4 In-class discussion: Logical Fallacy assignment; Flight v. Invisibility
Tu 1/17	Read before class: Browse logical fallacy definitions In-class discussion: Videos of logical fallacies
Th 1/19	Read before class: WT 33-61; RB #5-8 In-class discussion: Arguments
Tu 1/24	Read before class: X In-class discussion: Logical fallacy improv
Th 1/26	Read before class: WT 220-227; RB #9-12 In-class discussion: Introduce Twitter Paper assignment; form small groups **Logical Fallacy Summaries Due to CourseKit by 9 pm**
Tu 1/31	Read before class: WT 14-32 In-class discussion: Possible and impossible
Th 2/2	Read before class: RB #13-16 In-class discussion: Set up paper.li; circulate to class
Tu 2/7	Read before class: WT 227-286 (only read the section of your group's topic) In-class discussion: Small group discussion leads—be prepared to talk about your topic and your observations so far
Th 2/9	Read before class: WT 96-125

	In-class discussion: Looking for truth in personal experience
Tu 2/14	Read before class: WT 126-157 In-class discussion: Can we trust personal experience?
Th 2/16	Read before class: RB #17-20 In-class discussion: Watch half of <i>Brain Games</i>
Tu 2/21	Read before class: PoP 1-28 In-class discussion: Finish <i>Brain Games</i>
Th 2/23	Read before class: PoP 29-64; RB #25-28 In-class discussion: How much persuasion is all around us?
	paper.li analysis due to CourseKit by 9 pm
Tu 2/28	Read before class: X In-class discussion: Introduce Rhetorical Film Analysis paper; Watch half of <i>Thank You for Smoking</i>
Th 3/1	Read before class: RB #29-32 In-class discussion: Finish watching <i>Thank You for Smoking</i>
Tu 3/6	Read before class: PoP 65-90 In-class discussion: Persuasive tactics and concepts; Introduce Experiencing Persuasion assignment
Th 3/8	Read before class: PoP 91-112; RB #33-36 In-class discussion: Contrast and interpretation
Tu 3/13	No class: University closed (spring break)
Th 3/15	No class: University closed (spring break)
Tu 3/20	Read before class: PoP 137-158 In-class discussion: Mental shortcuts
	Rhetorical Film Analysis due to CourseKit by 9 pm
Th 3/22	Read before class: PoP 159-186; RB #37-40 In-class discussion: Escalating commitments
Tu 3/27	Read before class: PoP 187-208 In-class discussion: Winning hearts and minds
Th 3/29	Read before class: PoP 209-226; RB #41-44 In-class discussion: Dark side of persuasion; <i>Cults</i> documentary (segments)
Tu 4/3	No class: Use time for Experiencing Persuasion fieldwork
Th 4/5	No class: Use time for Experiencing Persuasion fieldwork
Tu 4/10	Read before class: PoP 227-244 In-class discussion: Preparing for persuasion
Th 4/12	Read before class: RB #45-appendix 2 In-class discussion: TBD
Tu 4/17	Experiencing Persuasion Presentations (Group A)
Th 4/19	Experiencing Persuasion Presentations (Group B)
Tu 4/24	No class: Finals week
	Experiencing Persuasion paper due on CourseKit by 9 pm

