COMM 4
ARGUMENTATION & PERSUASION
Syllabus

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TEXT: Chapters and handouts distributed in class

OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide students with critical thinking skills.
2. To provide students with the means and methods for critically analyzing their own and others' beliefs, attitudes, and values.
3. To train students in competent oral presentation of ideas.
4. To make students more effective consumers of ideas and products.

ASSIGNMENTS:

I. Single Argument Speech (Group presentation)
   A. Form a group (3 members). Choose a claim that is controversial.
   B. Present your best argument using the TOULMIN MODEL. This means that you make a clear claim, support the claim with high-quality evidence and reasons; identify the warrant that links the grounds (evidence/reasons) to the claim, provide backing for the warrant, identify the most significant exceptions (rebuttal) to your claim, and assign a qualifier to your claim with justification. Divide the presentation among group members.
   C. Main Criteria for grade: how well the group incorporates the Toulmin Model into its argument—accuracy of assigning elements of Toulmin Model.
   D. Time Limit:  3 minutes (15 seconds leeway without penalty).
   E. Maximum Possible: 25 points (graded as a group).

II. Group Argumentative Tag Team Speech
   A. Form a group of 4 members (there may be one group of fewer or more than 4 members if the numbers are odd). Choose a controversial topic and formulate a proposition of POLICY.
   B. Each group member will give a 2 minute speech developing one of the four stock issues for a proposition of policy. Skip introductions; get right to the main point. Be concise and precise when presenting information.
C. Time limit: 8 minutes (2 minutes per group member; leeway 15 seconds per person)
D. Main Criteria for grade: quality of reasoning and evidence (free of fallacies, clearly presented arguments, best arguments chosen, all four stock issues addressed appropriately and accurately, abundant high-quality evidence used)
E. Maximum points: 30 points (group); 20 (individual) = 50 total points possible

III. Persuasive Strategies Demonstration (Group Presentation): EXTRA CREDIT

A. This is an EXTRA CREDIT OPTION. THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE WILL NOT BE PENALIZED. Groups of 3-4 will illustrate TWO persuasive strategies discussed in class
B. The two persuasive strategies will be in:
   1. 2 taped ads from television
   2. 2 taped ads from radio
   3. 1 original ad created by the group (audio or video): group may advertise a consumer product (toothpaste, mouthwash, automobile, etc.) a political candidate (real or invented), or a social issue (anti-smoking, energy conservation, etc.)
   4. 1 taped TV ad and 1 taped radio ad.
C. Main Criteria for grade: effectiveness of demonstration of persuasive strategies and explanations provided (accuracy, clarity, originality, creativity, appropriateness, entertainment)
D. Time limit: 5 minutes (30 seconds leeway)
E. Presentation = Maximum 10 points EXTRA CREDIT (all group members receive same grade).
F. PLEASE NOTE: Ads should be downloaded onto a DVD or thumb drive. Make sure IN ADVANCE that your DVD or thumb drive is compatible with equipment in the classroom. You won't get a second chance to present this project. There are several websites that provide step-by-step instructions regarding how to download onto DVDs.

IV. People’s Court Trials

A. Short debates between opposing 2-member teams will be conducted in class with some advanced preparation allowed.
B. A jury composed of 4 class members, plus instructor, will decide each case (different juries for different cases).
C. Jury will decide winners by taking a final vote. The jury will present a justification for the announced verdicts in each case in front of the class.
D. Time limit: 10 minutes maximum; at the discretion of the judge (your instructor)
E. Maximum: 75 POINTS per team. Failure to participate on a jury will result in 10 Point penalty.
F. 10 MAXIMUM EXTRA CREDIT POINTS—2 points for each “winning” vote from jurors. Thus, jury decision does not have to be unanimous.
G. Further details on format and grading criteria will be provided in class
V. MOCK TRIAL FINAL PROJECT

A. A Mock Trial involving the entire class will be the final project (3-hour Final Exam session).
B. Specific, copious details on this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class.
C. Maximum: 150 points

VI. Cooperative Exam

A. There will be TWO exams. Exam #1 covers material on argumentation and Exam #2 covers material on persuasion. The exams will be composed of multiple-choice (more than one answer may be correct), true-false questions (all false answers require a reason to justify the false answer), and some identification.
B. Form groups of 3-5 members. You will take the exam in your group. I encourage each group to study together for the exam as practice for the actual tests.
C. All members of each group will receive a copy of the exam but only a single copy will be answered by the entire group (answer sheet).
D. All members of the group will receive the score on the group test unless individuals earn an insufficient score on the individual accountability test that immediately follows the group test.
E. The individual accountability test is a shorter version of the exam (different questions) that is given to each individual after the group test has been completed.
F. Failure to score 80% or above on the individual test will result in the reduction of that individual group member's test score as follows:

- Between 70 and 79 = loss of 5 points from group score
- Between 60 and 69 = loss of 10 points from group score
- Between 50 and 59 = loss of 20 points from group score
- Below 50 = loss of 30 points from group score

Thus, if the group score is 90 and the individual's score is 65 on the accountability test, that individual will receive a final score of 80 (90 minus 10 point deduction). Any group member scoring a perfect 100 on the individual test will receive a bonus of 5 points.

G. Maximum: 100 points per exam (200 points maximum)

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

This course requires active participation each day of class so it is important for you to attend every class session, arrive on time, and come prepared. Your participation not only enhances your own learning, it benefits other students in the class, especially when the class is doing group
work. Your level of participation is reflected in your grade and since you can’t participate if you are not in class, absences will also be reflected in your grade.

I. Attendance---you are allowed one (1) week's worth of absences without penalty (2 absences). This allows for sickness, emergencies, and bad parking karma. It is Cabrillo College policy (see college catalog) that any student missing in excess of two (2) weeks worth of classes (5 absences or more) may be withdrawn from class and given a failing grade in the course.

Final allocation of attendance points will be as follows:

- 0-2 absences = 50
- 3 absences = 45
- 4 absences = 35
- 5 absences = 25
- 6 absences = 10
- 7 absences = ZERO
- 8 absences = DROPPED FROM CLASS WITH AN “F” for the course

Tardies (more than 5 minutes late according to classroom clock) or Early Exits will reduce your points further (will earn you additional absences) depending on the severity of the tardiness or early exit. PLEASE NOTE: If you aren't in class you can't participate and learn. I've allowed for "good excuses" by permitting one week's worth of absences without penalty.

SUMMARY OF POINTS:

- Single Argument Speech = 25
- Tag Team Speech = 50
- People’s Court = 75
- Mock Trial Final = 150
- Cooperative Exams = 200
- Participation/Attendance = 50

Grand Total Possible Points: 550 points

EXTRA CREDIT

Persuasive Strategies Group Demonstration = 10 Extra Credit Points Maximum
People’s Court Jury decisions: 10 points maximum

FINAL NOTE: There will be considerable discussion and debate in this class. I welcome the clash of ideas and disagreement. I do not welcome incivility and personal attacks. Be polite. Please disagree without being disagreeable. Also, please turn off all electronic equipment (cell phones, etc.). I'll start dancing to your ringtones if they go off during class--and you REALLY don't want to see that happen! NO TEXT MESSAGING DURING CLASS—NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!!!! No Net surfing unless it relates directly to a class activity.