Critical Thinking

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MHCC - WR122

ANDREW GUREVICH

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Contents

The Writing Process

In this module, we will begin our discussion of the methods of academic writing by looking at how the writing process works, with particular attention paid to the various elements of the college essay format. Return here as you need for tips on all aspects of the college essay writing process.

Overview

Writing the college essay is a matter of answering a series of questions, of following a sequence of steps towards creating a coherent written document that explores a topic for greater insight and understanding. Initially, we will explore the basic elements of the writing process:

- Thesis driven
- Primary pattern of development
- Coherent, unified paragraphs
- Strong, clear introductions and conclusions
- Proper use of relevant, authoritative sources
- Properly formatted (MLA format)

NOTE: Please refer back to this page throughout the term for help with crafting the specific elements of your assignments. Major handouts will also be housed in the "Supplemental Course Documents" section (on the left-side navigation bar) and posted throughout upcoming learning modules when we are addressing a specific element of the essay writing process. But here you can find most, if not all, of the technical material you will need to write competent, engaging college-level essays.

Thesis-Driven Essays

- A strong thesis does not just state your topic but your perspective or feeling on the topic as well. And it does so in a single, focused sentence.
- A strong, clear thesis tells the reader clearly what the essay is all about about and engages them in the big idea of the entire essay.
- Consult the "Thesis Statements" handout or follow this link to the OWL thesis statements discussion.

BEST: A thesis is strongest when the writer uses both the specific topic, and their educated opinion on it, together for writing a detailed and clear main point.

- Thesis statements are usually found at the end of the introduction.
- Thesis statements are almost always a single sentence long, two tops.
- Thesis statements often reveal the primary pattern of development of the essay.
- Watch this video on writing a "Killer" Thesis Statement
- Watch this video on writing an effective Academic Thesis Statement.

Primary Pattern Of Development

- Many college essays follow a primary pattern of development for laying out their ideas and expressing their primary thesis.
- A pattern of development is the way the essay is organized, from one paragraph to the next, in order to present it's main point and support for it.

- Some essays use a combination of patterns to communicate their ideas but usually a primary pattern is established to present the overall structure of the essay.

BEST: Patterns of development work best when they are used consistently and in conjunction with the structure and theme of the primary thesis statement.

- Patterns include:
    - Narration & Description
    - Exemplification
    - Cause & Effect
    - Comparison & Contrast
- There are several more variations of patterns of development but these are the most common and the ones we will be exploring this term.
- The chapters in your textbook explore these patterns of development and present them in clear, easy to follow steps for invention, drafting and revising your essay.
- Consult this handout on the basic understanding and uses of the primary patterns of development.
- Consult this handout on the patterns of development discussed as the modes of essay writing.

Coherent, Unified Paragraphs

- Strong essays are built with strong, coherent and unified paragraphs.
- Body paragraphs need to be arranged according to your primary pattern of development.

BEST: When the writer uses paragraphs to present a single,

coherent and well-developed thought in support of their overall thesis.

- A body paragraph is a developed single thought that is laid out according to a certain, logical structure.
- A strong, clear topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph (which will likely be a sub-point that is helping you to develop and explore your thesis).
- A strong, clear body paragraph will include several (two-four) sentences of development and support of your topic sentence: including quotes, summaries and paraphrases of relevant sources and your substantive responses to the source material.
- A strong paragraph will have a closing sentence of summary and transition into the next paragraph.
- Consult this handout on how to construct coherent, engaging and unified paragraphs: Constructing Paragraphs or click on this link to the OWL Website.
- Watch this video on Writing Effective Paragraphs.

Strong, Clear Introductions and Conclusions

- Consult the "Beginnings & Endings" handout.
- The introduction should grab your reader's attention, focus it on your general topic and move towards your specific, engaging thesis.
- The conclusion should provide a restatement of your main idea (thesis), provide a sense of finality or closure, and possibly challenge the reader with a "so what?" moment.

BEST: When the writer uses both to grab and focus the reader's attention on the main point of their essay.

- Both should clearly state the main point of the essay (thesis).

- Both should grab and focus the reader's attention on the greater topic and larger significance of the thesis.
- Both should provide a sense of momentum for the reader to move through the essay with clarity, confidence and full awareness of the essay's main point.
- Watch this video on writing effective introductions and conclusions.
- Here's another video on Effective Introductions and Conclusions.

Proper Use of Relevant, Authoritative Sources

- The "essay" format itself is intended to get the writer to explore an topic by beginning with an idea and then going out into the world and finding relevant, authoritative sources to help develop, test and explore that idea.
- Authoritative sources do more than just back up the ideas we have. They challenge us to dive deep into the topic we are exploring to get their full complexity and broad application.
- Consult the "Evaluating Sources" handout.
- Consult this handout on how to effectively blend sources into your essay.

BEST: When the writer uses both together for writing a detailed account of some memorable experience.

- A strong essay will include enough relevant, authoritative and reliable sources to help develop and explore the topic and thesis.
- A strong essay will comment effectively on sources by integrating them into the larger topic, making them "talk to one another" and commenting on them in ways that stays true to their original intent and blends them into the writer's main

point and primary pattern of development.
- A strong essay will include a variety of sources from various academic, professional and popular institutions to provide a wide array of perspectives on the topic and thesis under discussion.

Consult theLibrary Databases and our WR 122 Library Guide for help in finding and using relevant, authoritative sources.

Watch this video on Searching the Databases.

Watch this video on Evaluating Sources.

Properly Formatted (MLA)

- Essays in Humanities classes are formatted according to Modern Language Association (MLA) format.
- Formatting can be a frustrating and time-consuming process so we will work on it in sections throughout the term. Stay calm and focused and learn how to use the tools that will assist you in proper MLA formatting.

BEST: When an essay is properly crafted and formatted, the reader is able to clearly and easily follow the ideas and trace outside information to its original sources.

MLA involves three primary components when getting your essay into proper format:

1. Formatting of the first page of your essay
2. Proper use of "in-text" citations (citing sources you use in the body of the text of your essay)
3. Properly formatted "Works Cited" or "Works Consulted" page.

- Consult the MLA Style Guides nn the MHCC Library Website.
- Note that on the MLA Style Guides site there is a section called "Citation Builders" which will help put sources into proper

format for you. Note also that in most newer versions of Microsoft Word there is an MLA template you can select to automatically put your document in MLA format. Lastly, sources taken from the MHCC Library databases will already be listed at the bottom of the article in MLA format. Simple copy and paste the citation from the database entry to your Works Cited page (making sure to the entry is: in proper alphabetical position, double-spaced and in proper "hanging" format").

- Consult this handout on how to put your essay in MLA format.
- Consult thistemplate on how to construct your first essay.
- Watch the following video on how to use MLA Format (8th Edition).
- Watch the following video on how to use MLA Format for MAC (8th Edition).
- Watch the following video on how to create the MLA Works Cited Page (8th Edition).

Please return to this page throughout the term for assistance with any of these elements of writing the successful college essay.

Week 1 - Syllabus and Schedule

"Thinking isn't agreeing or disagreeing. That's voting." – Robert Frost

Begin this course by viewing this **Syllabus** and **Schedule** learning module.

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Week 2 - Creative and Critical Thinking

In this lesson, we will begin our discussion of the foundational elements of the critical and creative thinking processes and how they work together to help us shape our opinions and views of the world.

Responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century – with its complex environmental, social and economic pressures – requires people to be creative, innovative, enterprising and adaptable, with the motivation, confidence and skills to use critical and creative thinking purposefully.

This capability combines two types of thinking: critical thinking and creative thinking. Though the two are not interchangeable, they are strongly linked, bringing complementary dimensions to thinking and learning.

Critical thinking is at the core of most intellectual activity that involves students learning to recognize or develop an argument, use evidence in support of that argument, draw reasoned conclusions, and use information to solve problems. Examples of critical thinking skills are interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, explaining, sequencing, reasoning, comparing, questioning, inferring, hypothesizing, appraising, testing and generalizing.

- **View** the TED Talk: How to Think, Not What to ThinkOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dluwVks444&feature=youtu.be

Creative thinking involves students learning to generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, and seeing or making new links that generate a positive outcome. This includes combining parts to form something original, sifting and refining ideas to

discover possibilities, constructing theories and objects, and acting on intuition. The products of creative endeavor can involve complex representations and images, investigations and performances, digital and computer-generated output, or occur as virtual reality.

- **View** the video: Why is Critical Thinking Important?Opens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpHynfps_Vc&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: What is Critical Thinking?Opens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnJ1bqXUnIM&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Critical ThinkingOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03W0BFnx9ZY&feature=youtu.be

Concept formation is the mental activity that helps us compare, contrast and classify ideas, objects, and events. Concept learning can be concrete or abstract and is closely allied with metacognition. What has been learnt can be applied to future examples. It underpins the organizing elements.

Dispositions such as inquisitiveness, reasonableness, intellectual flexibility, open- and fair-mindedness, a readiness to try new ways of doing things and consider alternatives, and persistence promote and are enhanced by critical and creative thinking.

This week, we are examining some of the latest research on our critical and creative thinking capacities and how the brain uses these techniques to make sense of the world. We will eventually apply what we are learning to your first essay on critical and creative thinking.

TED Talks for Essay #1

Watch these and take notes to use as the basis for your first essay

on critical and creative thinking. You will not be limited to these sources but you must base your essay in the insights you gain from them.

- **View** the TED Talk: How Schools Kill CreativityOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the TED Talk: My Stroke of InsightOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the TED Talk: The Divided BrainOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFs9WO2B8uI&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the TED Talk: The Empathic CivilizationOpens in a new window, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnfFRc7g&feature=youtu.be

NOTE: Please make sure to watch all of these videos and take notes. Refer back to them in the coming weeks as these videos will serve as the basis of the research you will do for your first essay. You may wish to include material you have learned from the other videos and material we have covered so far.

Please see the Essay #1 Assignment Sheet (opens in a new window) for more information.

Week 3 - The Purpose of Argument (How to Be Wrong)

Why do we argue with one another? What is the intention? How do we know when we have "won" or "lost" an argument? What happens then? In this unit, we explore the functions and purposes of argument to reveal the deeper reasons we engage in this complex, frequently stressful activity and what we can gain by having an enhanced perspective on it.

Argument is not in itself an end or a purpose of communication. It is rather a means of discourse, a way of developing what we have to say. We can identify four primary aims or purposes that argument helps us accomplish:

- Inquiry
- Conviction
- Persuasion
- Negotiation
- **View** the Powerpoint: The Four Aims of Argument

Arguing to Inquire: *Forming our opinions or questioning those we already have.*

The ancient Greeks used the word dialectic to identify an argument as inquiry; a more common term might be dialogue or conversation. Arguing to inquire helps us accomplish the following:

- to form opinions
- to question opinions
- to reason our way through conflicts or contradictions

It requires an attitude of patient questioning under non-threatening circumstances, usually done alone or among trusted friends and associates. The primary purpose is a search for the truth. The primary audience is often the writer and fellow inquirers concerned with the same issues.

- *Examples*: Classroom discussions; journal writing; exploratory essays; letters; late-night bull sessions in a dorm.

Arguing to Convince: *Gaining assent from others through case-making.*

While some inquiry may be never-ending, the goal of most inquiry is to reach a conclusion, a conviction. We seek an earned opinion, achieved through careful thought, research, and discussion. And then we usually want others to share this conviction, to secure the assent of an audience by means of reason rather than by force.

- Arguing to inquire centers on asking questions: we want to expose and examine what we think.
- Arguing to convince requires us to make a case, to get others to agree with what we think. While inquiry is a cooperative use of argument, convincing is competitive. We put our case against the case of others in an effort to win the assent of readers.
- *Examples*: a lawyer's brief; newspaper editorials; case studies; most academic writing

Arguing to Persuade: *Moving others to action through rational, emotional, personal, and stylistic appeals.*

While arguing to convince seeks to earn the assent of readers or listeners, arguing to persuade attempts to influence their behavior, to move them to act upon the conviction. Persuasion aims to close

the gap between assent and action. To convince focuses on the logic of an argument; to persuade will often rely on the personal appeal of the writer (what Aristotle called ethos) and involve an appeal to an audience's emotions (pathos). In addition to these personal and emotional appeals, persuasion exploits the resources of language more fully than convincing does.

- In general, the more academic the audience or the more purely intellectual the issue, the more likely that the writing task involves an argument to convince rather than to persuade. In most philosophy or science assignments, for example, the writer would usually focus on conviction rather than persuasion, confining the argument primarily to thesis, reasons, and evidence. But when you are working with public issues, with matters of policy or questions of right and wrong, persuasion's fuller range of appeal is usually appropriate.
- Persuasion begins with difference and, when it works, ends with identity. We expect that before reading our argument, readers will differ from us in beliefs, attitudes, and/or desires. A successful persuasive argument brings readers and writer together, creating a sense of connection between parties.
- *Examples*: Political speeches, sermons, advertising

Arguing to Negotiate: *Exploring differences of opinion in the hope of reaching agreement and/or cooperation.*

If efforts to convince and/or persuade the audience have failed, the participants must often turn to negotiation, resolving the conflict in order to maintain a satisfactory working relationship.

- Each side must listen closely to understand the other side's case and the emotional commitments and values that support that case. The aim of negotiation is to build consensus, usually by making and asking for concessions. Dialogue plays a key

role, bringing us full circle back to argument as inquiry. Negotiation often depends on collaborative problem-solving.
- *Examples*: Diplomatic negotiations, labor relations, documents in organizational decision-making; essays seeking resolution of conflict between competing parties; also frequent in private life when dealing with disagreements among friends and family members.

The Importance of Being Wrong

In this module, you are reading articles and watching videos that explore the science and logic of why we argue and why being wrong is not something we should try to avoid at all costs or view as "losing." Collaboration and clarification of ideas are the highest pursuits of argumentative communication and when we are proven wrong, we are given the opportunity to learn, to grow and to enhance our understanding of the complex and vibrant world we inhabit.

- **View** the video: For Argument's Sake, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTN9Nx8VYtk&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: On Being Wrong, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QleRgTBMX88&feature=youtu.be

Both of these talks (above) address the dangers of being too close to our own ideas. They offer examples and insights that show what can go wrong when we would rather "feel" right than "be" right. They also address the opportunities that open up to us when we allow ourselves to be detached enough from our ideas to create the space for growth, doubt, investigation and eventually increased understanding and awareness. When we believe we are right about everything all of the time, we miss the opportunities to learn from

one another and from each new perspective we encounter. The following articles address the scientific basis for what embracing being “wrong” can actually offer our individual and collective ways of knowing.

Week 4 - Logos (Evidence, Support)

This week we begin to study the methods of academic argument analysis, starting with the foundational element of the three-fold Greek approach: **Logos** (Logic, Support, Data)

For most of us, arguments are things we try to avoid. When we do engage them, often our emotions and opinions get the better of us and the discussion quickly becomes a competition, with everyone clamoring to be the "winner." But in academic argument, we must learn to set our opinions and emotions aside and develop ways to use critical thinking skills to evaluate arguments according to objective, authoritative principles of critique and analysis.

Remember, not all arguments require the same kind of support but all arguments do require some kind of support. The proper ways in which we determine if an argument is well supported start with asking questions about what kind of argument is being made, what is the size or relative importance of the overall claim, and what other evidence is present (or absent) that would help further substantiate the claim? Different kinds of arguments will require different kinds of support. Keep this in mind as you do the readings for this week, and going forward.

In this unit, we will begin to study the historic methods of argument analysis. Starting with the three-fold Greek model of Logos (logic, support) , Pathos (emotion, values) and Ethos (character, credibility). This week we will focus on Logos and Ethos. We will address Pathos next week.

- **Here** is a handout about all three. (Logos, Pathos & Ethos)
- **View** the Powerpoint: Logos, Pathos & Ethos
- **View** the short video: How to Craft an

Argument, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIEBkuq0JHw&feature=youtu.be

Logos

The word ***Logos*** means "logic" or "support" or "evidence."

- When someone asks, "What is your argument based on?" They are asking for logical support.
- When you offer evidence, expert testimony, statistics, facts and other rational "support" for your argument, you are using **Logos.**
- Proper use of **Logos** in an argument will offer support that is: sufficient, relevant and representative of the best available evidence on the subject.
- But rational support of an argument is much more complex than it may seem at first (as we will see when we examine all of the **logical fallacies**, for instance).
- **View** the handout: Logos
- **View** the following video: What is Reason (Logos)?, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuXkp3R-RTU
- **View** the following video: Four Ways to Persuade with Reason (Logos). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM4BRBiy5Zw

Week 5 - Ethos (Character, Credibility)

Ethos (sometimes called an appeal to ethics), then, is used as a means of convincing an audience via the authority or credibility of the persuader, be it a notable or experienced figure in the field or even a popular celebrity. We determine Ethos by looking at the tone, style and credibility of the speaker, the sources and the publication. We determine it by establishing the authority and credibility of the argument and the arguer. It is an essential element of Aristotle's model of rhetorical appeals. The word **Ethos** means "character" or "credibility" or "qualifications."

- When someone asks, "What right do you have to speak on this issue?" or "What are your qualifications to speak on this matter?" They are asking for character and credibility, or **Ethos**.
- When you offer credentials, experience, appeals to shared beliefs and values or other appeals to emotion as "support" in an argument, you are using **Ethos**.
- Proper use of **Ethos** in an argument will offer appeals to emotions, values and beliefs that: are shared with the readers/ audience, do NOT hide or obscure the fact that the argument has little to no logical support, and do not unfairly promote hatred or fear without sufficient cause.
- **View** the handout: Ethos (Opens in new window)
- **View** the following video: What is Character (Ethos)? (Opens in new window), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ano2hBbiaiI
- **View** the following video: Five Ways to Persuade with Character (Ethos) (Opens in new window), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4c75dYQoFo

Week 6 - Pathos (Emotions, Values)

Pathos is an important tool of persuasion in arguments. **Pathos** is a method of convincing people with an argument drawn out through an emotional response. Analyzing examples of pathos, one would come to the conclusion that it differs from other "ingredients of persuasion," namely "ethos" and "logos," in that it requires us to try to quantify subjective, emotional and values-based assumptions in our quest to understand and evaluate academic arguments. The use of pathos is called a "pathetic appeal." Note that this is very different from our usual understanding of the word "pathetic." "Pathos" is used to describe the rhetor's attempt to appeal to "an audience's sense of identity, their self-interest, and their emotions." If the rhetor can create a common sense of identity with their audience, then the rhetor is using a pathetic appeal. "Pathos" most often refers to an attempt to engage an audience's emotions. Think about the different emotions people are capable of feeling: they include love, pity, sorrow, affection, anger, fear, greed, lust, and hatred. If a rhetor tries to make an audience feel emotions in response to what is being said or written, then they are using pathos.

Common Examples of Pathos

For a better understanding of the subject, let us examine a few pathos examples from daily conversations:

- "If we don't leave this place soon, we'll be yelling for help. There's no one to help us here, let's get out of here and live." – This statement evokes emotions of fear.
- The "Made in America" label on various products sold in

America tries to enhance sales by appealing to customers' sense of patriotism.
- Ads encouraging charitable donations show small children living in pathetic conditions, to evoke pity in people.
- Referring to a country as "the motherland" stirs up patriotic feelings in individuals living in that country or state.
- A soft, instrumental symphony may arouse people emotionally.

Resources for studying and using Pathos in Arguments

- **View** the video: What is Pathos?, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6JQkXwgMVk&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Four Ways to Persuade with Emotion (Pathos), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5k5Fkn8eAw&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the handout: Pathos
- **View** the handout: Using Logos, Pathos & Ethos

Using Pathos Correctly

Whether we are making arguments or analyzing them, it is important that we use Pathos carefully. Often, our emotions can get in the way or clear and critical thinking on an issue. Pathos can and should be used to clarify how a well-supported position relates to our values and beliefs but should never be used to manipulate, confuse or inflate an issue beyond what the evidence is capable of supporting.

The Science of Emotions

The following three TED Talks each address the science and growing body of research that explores the biological origins of our emotional states and what we can learn about ourselves from carefully studying our feelings. While not addressing the techniques of argument analysis and critical thinking directly, we can learn a great deal from these talks about the way Pathos is used to influence our choices, our perceptions, our thoughts, values and beliefs by understanding how emotions work and how, possibly, to better control them.

- **View** the video: Why What We Feel Matters More Than What We Think, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsDVCQnqcy4&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Why You Feel What You Feel, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-rRgpPbR5w&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: The Science of Emotions, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65e2qScV_K8&feature=youtu.be

These TED Talks give us a great deal of information on the science of emotions and how we can use that data to better understand and work with our feelings. Some things to consider in summary:

- Humans are very complex emotional creatures who use their feelings as much as, or even more than, their thoughts to make decisions in the world.
- Even though scientists have graphed close to 35,000 distinct emotions, most people only feel around 10-12 of them with any regularity.
- Of those top 12, the overwhelming majority of people make most of their decisions based on just three: love, hatred and fear.

- We make, on average, around 33,000 individual choices a day. If the data is correct, most of those decisions are governed, at least in part, by our reactions to our internal states of love, hatred and/or fear.
- So if we are not aware of (and at least somewhat in control of) how we process these emotions, anyone who wishes to manipulate us (politicians, advertisers, abusive partners, incompetent writing professors, etc.) can misuse **Pathos** in manipulative ways to trigger states of love, hatred or fear in us to make us more susceptible to accepting or rejecting a given argument without fully considering the merits of its evidence.

Week 7 - Rhetorical Fallacies

A **rhetorical fallacy** is a flaw in reasoning. Rhetorical fallacies are like tricks or illusions of thought, and they're often very sneakily used by politicians and the media to fool people. They are not always easy to spot and frequently we commit them accidentally. Spotting them in our own arguments and in the arguments of others is a superpower that can help you strengthen your analytical tool kit.

Rhetorical fallacies, or fallacies of argument, don't allow for the open, two-way exchange of ideas upon which meaningful conversations depend. Instead, they distract the reader with various appeals instead of using sound reasoning. They can be divided into three categories:

1. **Emotional fallacies** unfairly appeal to the audience's emotions.
2. **Ethical fallacies** unreasonably advance the writer's own authority or character.
3. **Logical fallacies** depend upon faulty logic.

Keep in mind that rhetorical fallacies often overlap. Regardless, we need to develop our skills in recognizing rhetorical fallacies in our work and the work of others and correcting them with clear, fair and well-supported reasons. This unit is intended to help you explore and develop these very skills. Don't worry so much about trying to memorize the individual names of all of the various rhetorical fallacies. Spend your time and energy, rather, learning to identify when someone (yourself included) is using them in an argument and how best to correct them and keep the discussion on track.

- **View** the video: Logical Fallicies (Logos) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6brsxUsnhBo
- **View** the video: Logical Fallacies (Ethos) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-u3j4aHDBg
- **View** the video: Logical Fallacies

(Pathos) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0QYRSy6c-o

- **View** the video: Top Ten Logical Fallacies https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IawIjqOJBU8&feature=youtu.be></
- **View** the video: Five Fallacies in Ads https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNWCDh1XRN0&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the handout: Logical Fallacies #1
- **View** the handout: Logical Fallacies #2
- **View** the handout: Logical Fallacies #3
- **View** the outside link: Your Logical Fallacy Is? https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com
- **View** the outside link: 15 Logical Fallacies You Should Avoid https://thebestschools.org/magazine/15-logical-fallacies-know/

Our use of logical support in arguments is subject to several possible corruptions along the way to a sound argument. Sometimes an arguer will commit these fallacies on purpose with the intent of fooling or manipulating the audience. But more often, we make these mistake accidentally, with the best of intentions. Regardless, if we are to evaluate and make sound arguments, we need to be able to spot the presence of logical fallacies, in our own arguments and in the arguments of others. The presence of a logical fallacy does not mean the entire argument is invalid, just that the particular reasoning is flawed or lacking in this one place. Finding and correcting logical fallacies can actually lead to making an argument stronger and easier to accept. We have not abandoned the use of **Logos, Pathos** and **Ethos** in our evaluation of arguments, but rather now added the concept of **rhetorical fallacies** to the mix. As we go forward in the class, try to continue to use all of the tools we are exploring in your analysis of the arguments we write and read.

Week 8 - Toulmin Analysis (Claims and Data)

This unit explores the method of argument analysis developed by the British logician Stephen Toulmin. The method analyzes arguments by exploring their underlying assumptions. This week we will address:

Claim (The main point)
Data (The evidence)

- **View** the short video Toulmin Analysis: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-YPPQztuOY&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the Powerpoint Presentation: Toulmin Model
- **Review** the document: ToulminExplained
- **Review** the document: Toulmin Analysis Questions

Stephen Toulmin

Stephen Toulmin was a British philosopher, author, and educator. Influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein, Toulmin devoted his works to the analysis of moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he sought to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. His works were later found useful in the field of rhetoric for analyzing rhetorical arguments. The Toulmin Model of Argumentation, a diagram containing six interrelated components used for analyzing arguments, was considered his most influential work, particularly in the field of rhetoric and communication, and in computer science.

The Toulmin Model

Claim: the position or claim being argued for; the conclusion of the argument.

Data/Grounds: reasons or supporting evidence that bolster the claim.

Warrant: the principle, provision or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim.

Backing: support, justification, reasons to back up the warrant.

Rebuttal/Reservation: exceptions to the claim; description and rebuttal of counter-examples and counter-arguments.

Qualification: specification of limits to claim, warrant and backing. The degree of conditionality asserted.

For this week, we will mostly be addressing claims and data.

- When looking for the **claim**, ask yourself the question: "What is the main idea of central claim of this argument?"
- When looking for the **data/grounds**, ask yourself the question, "What are the reasons given to support the claim?"
- When looking for the **warrant**, ask yourself the question, "Why does the arguer believe this data proves this claim?"

Claims

There are FOUR types of claims:

1. Claims of **Fact**
2. Claims of **Value**
3. Claims of **Policy**
4. Claims of **Definition**

This week, we will be exploring the use of the Toulmin Model of

Argumentation both in the analysis and creation of arguments. You will apply what you learn to your final essay (due the final week of class).

Week 9 - Toulmin Analysis (Warrants)

This unit explores the method of argument analysis developed by the British logician Stephen Toulmin. The method analyzes arguments by exploring their underlying assumptions This week we will address:
Warrant (The unspoken, underlying assumption that connects the claim to the data).

Warrants/General Strategies of Argument

Warrants are chains of reasoning that connect the claim and evidence/reason. A warrant is the principle, provision or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim. Warrants operate at a higher level of generality than a claim or reason, and they are not normally explicit.

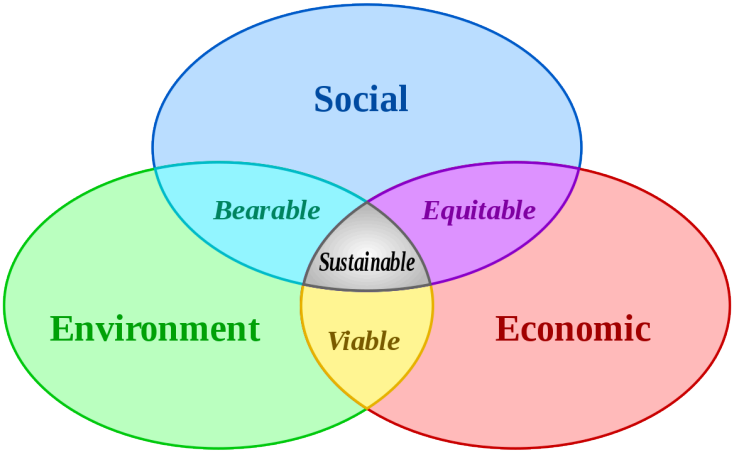
- **Example:** "Needle exchange programs should be abolished [claim] because they only cause more people to use drugs [reason/data]." The unstated warrant is: "when you make risky behavior safer you encourage more people to engage in it."
- **Example:** "We should outlaw same-sex marriage [claim] becausethe Bible says it is morally wrong [reason/data]." The unstated warrant is: "we should base laws on what the Bible says."

If the audience/readers share the warrant (the unstated assumption that connects the data to the claim) they will likely find the argument valid. If they do not, they will likely not. There are THREE types of warrants:

- **Substantive Warrants** (based in Logos)
- **Authoritative Warrants** (based in Ethos)
- **Motivational Warrants** (based in Pathos)
- **View** the Video: Understanding WarrantsOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BMnv2ojkLo&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the Video: Assumptions & WarrantsOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OizrGNY-P0Y&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the Handout: Toulmin WorksheetOpens in a new window (use it to help diagram and analyze the elements of the argument presented in the article you have chosen for your final essay assignment.)

Week 10 - Visual Arguments, Media and Advertising

In the modern era, not all arguments come to us in the form of words: written or spoken. Increasingly, images play an important role in the development and understanding of arguments. This unit explores how visual arguments are constructed and employed to sustain and bolster other forms of argument. This week, we will be exploring the use of visuals (images, charts, graphs, etc.) in the presentation of arguments. Like any other piece of support, images and other visuals are compelling when used correctly. They also can be used in ways that contribute to all of the flaws, fallacies and faulty reasoning we have been exploring all term.



The Venn diagram above is a great example of how an image can be used effectively to communicate a complicated idea rather quickly and efficiently. Here, we can see that “sustainability” is defined as the intersection of environmental, economic and social concerns, for instance. Proper use of visuals can help us connect

with an audience's emotions and values, build credibility and share data and logical information in memorable and engaging ways.

- **View** the film: The Codes of Gender
- **View** the film: Generation Like https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqamKb7gTWY
- **View** the video: Visual Arguments Essay https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rudEk92goc
- **Use** the outside link: Visual Arguments https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCYf3J88EzA
- **Review** the handout: Ideographs

Week 11 - Rhetorical Analysis

Expanding our research inventory to include all aspects of the rhetorical analysis process. **Rhetorical analysis/criticism** analyzes the symbolic artifacts of discourse – the words, phrases, images, gestures, performances, texts, films, etc. that people use to communicate. Rhetorical analysis shows how the artifacts work, how well they work, and how the artifacts, as discourse, inform and instruct, entertain and arouse, and convince and persuade the audience; as such, discourse includes the possibility of morally improving the reader, the viewer, and the listener. Rhetorical criticism studies and analyzes the purpose of the words, sights, and sounds that are the symbolic artifacts used for communications among people.

What is called "rhetorical criticism" in the Speech Communication discipline is often called "rhetorical analysis" in English. Through this analytical process, an analyst defines, classifies, analyzes, interprets and evaluates a rhetorical artifact. Through this process a critic explores, by means of various approaches, the manifest and latent meaning of a piece of rhetoric thereby offering further insight into the field of rhetorical studies generally and into an artifact or rhetor specifically. Such an analysis, for example may reveal the particular motivations or ideologies of a rhetor, how he or she interprets the aspects of a rhetorical situation, or how cultural ideologies are manifested in an artifact. It could also demonstrate how the constraints of a particular situation shape the rhetoric that responds to it. Certain approaches also examine how rhetorical elements compare with the traditional elements of a narrative or drama

A rhetorical analysis considers all elements of the rhetorical situation–the audience, purpose, medium, and context–within which a communication was generated and delivered in order to make an argument about that communication. A strong rhetorical

analysis will not only describe and analyze the text, but will also evaluate it; that evaluation represents your argument. The rhetorical situation identifies the relationship among the elements of any communication–audience, author (rhetor), purpose, medium, context, and content. The time, place, public conversations surrounding the text during its original generation and delivery should also be considered; the text may also be analyzed within a different context such as how an historical text would be received by its audience today.

- **Description:** What does this text look like? Where did you find the text? Who sponsored it? What are the rhetorical appeals? (i.e. calm music in the background of a commercial establishes pathos) When was it written?
- **Analysis:** Why does the author incorporate these rhetorical appeals? (For example, why does the author incorporate calm music? What is the point of the pathos?) How would the reception of this text change if it were written today, as opposed to twenty years ago? What is left out of this text and why? Should there be more logos in the ad? Why?
- **Evaluation:** Is the text effective? Is the text ethical? What might you change about this text to make it more persuasive?
- **View** the video: Rhetorical Analysis Budweiser commercialOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrTzRtf61qU&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Rhetorical Analysis Coke commercialOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58ayNIcgp3U&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Rhetorical Analysis P & G commercialOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQV-WwY3VJM&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Rhetorical Analysis Taylor SwiftOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bgL8y3xHYo&feature=youtu.be

- **View** the video: Nike's Colin Kaepernick adOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-grjIUWKoBA&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Gillette Toxic Masculinity adOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgwI4JkWcsA&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the video: Kendall Jenner Pepsi adOpens in a new window https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwvAgDCOdU4&feature=youtu.be
- **View** the handout: Rhetorical AnalysisOpens in a new window

Critical Thinking Essay

(Consult syllabus/schedule for due date)

In the first few weeks, we will watch several *TED Talks* about the nature of the brain, the complex relationship between critical and creative thinking, and how emerging research in hemispheric science sheds some light on how we think about the world. We will also read several articles on the same (or similar) topics. After watching these talks, we will also review some of the basic material on how arguments are evaluated in academic contexts (by exploring the Greek model of Logos, Pathos & Ethos). Then in your essay, please address the following:

1. What is the importance of developing a proper understanding of the nature of critical and creative thinking and how the two must be used in relationship to one another? With quotes and references to the *TED Talks*, class readings, and your own research and experience, please discuss what we are learning about the nature of critical and creative thinking and how we must use the two in conjunction to help us generate ideas for collaborative design and problem solving.(HINT: This should be the lens through which you generate your primary thesis statement which will, in turn, direct the ways you develop and discuss the rest of the elements you have been asked to explore. In other words, use this as the frame by which you choose what you will focus on with regard to the nature of the brain, critical thinking and argument.)
2. If appropriate to your thesis, discuss how the emerging research in brain hemispheric science influences our understanding of the critical and creative thinking processes.
3. If appropriate to your thesis, discuss how evidence-based approaches to argument (Logos) are central to properly developing, analyzing and understanding the arguments we

encounter in the world.

4. If appropriate to your thesis, what is the importance of cultivating "intellectual humility" and avoiding the panic often associated with "being wrong" in the process of becoming strong critical and creative thinkers?

Remember, an essay is an "attempt" to interact meaningfully with concepts that require careful, thoughtful reflection and exploration. Think of this assignment as a conversation between yourself and the speakers about the substantive issues the *TED Talks* address.

Assignment Details:

- 3-5 sources consulted in the essay and listed on a Works Cited page.
- 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12.pt font. MLA format.
- Present your main idea in a clear thesis statement in the Introduction.
- Support your claim or focus with evidence and examples from the *TED Talks* and some more external research.
- Present one major point (in a topic sentence) per paragraph and explain it fully, with detailed support and examples, before you move on to your next point/paragraph.
- Wrap up your essay with a conclusion that revisits your overall topic and thesis.
- Remember to include an "in-text" citation following each source you quote, summarize or paraphrase.
- We have several pages posted here in The Writing Process page that deal with proper MLA documentation. Please refer to them.
- Consult the MHCC databases for relevant articles related to your research.
- Submit your essay by the due date on the schedule in the

appropriate place in the week's lesson module.
- Follow the submission instructions there for uploading your essay.

Things to Consider:

1. You may write an essay that is more personal but based in the relevant research. Or you may write an essay that is more clinical and objective in scope that looks at the issue from a societal and/or cultural perspective. Either way, pick something that is interesting to you and to your own life, career path, goals, etc. and make it relevant to the material we have been covering so far.
2. Remember, also, that a thesis statement may begin (in a draft form) as a question but by the time you turn your essay in, it has to be stated as an assertion.
3. Develop your thesis through a primary pattern of development: (personal narrative, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) These can be explored in "The Writing Process" section of our BlackBoard page.

Sample Topics:

These are listed in rough form. You may pick from these or develop your own:

- Intellectual humility, grounding critical thinking in sound reasoning and authoritative, relevant support, and being curious and asking the right questions.
- Importance of being wrong, withholding judgment until enough evidence is gathered, and considering multiple

perspectives.

- Being "critical" of something is not the same as attacking or dismissing it. Critical and Creative Thinking. What each is and how they work together.
- Left and Right Hemispheres. What the new research shows and how this influences our understanding of the critical and creative thinking processes.
- Memory and the pitfalls and opportunities it presents when engaged in critical and creative thinking processes.

Sample Outline:

Topic choice (converted to a workable thesis statement):

Strong **critical** and **creative** thinking skills include the abilities to: recognize the importance of being wrong, withhold judgment until enough evidence is gathered, and consider multiple perspectives.

1. **General Introduction** and a developed **Thesis** based on the above topics.
2. Importance of being wrong. Support paragraphs that use proper references to the TED Talks, your own experience and external research.
3. Withholding judgment until enough evidence is gathered. Support paragraphs that use proper references to the TED Talks, your own experience and external research.
4. Considering multiple perspectives. Support paragraphs that use proper references to the TED Talks, your own experience and external research.
5. **Conclusion** that revisits main **Thesis** and provides a sense of closure.

Annotated Bibliographies: What? Why? How?

Your final essay for the class will be a Toulmin Analysis/Research Essay (I'll teach you how to do this!) of an article you will choose about the effects of social media on society (from the "Social Media Arti- cles for Final Essay" tab on the left side navigation bar). Although the article you choose will be the primary source of your analysis, you will also need to do a good deal of external research to help you develop an objective, academic and analytical approach to your critique. Two weeks before your final essay is due, you will turn in an annotated bibliography of at least ten sources related to your research topic. These should not be the only ten sources you examine but rather most useful or influential ones. Your grade will be based on the variety and relevance of the sources and on the insight and clarity of your annotations.

Definition

A ***bibliography*** is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic in- formation (i.e., the author, title, publisher; etc.).

An ***annotation*** is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an annotated bibliography in- cludes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.

For your assignment, your annotations must do

all of the following:

Summarize: What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say?

Assess : After summarizing a source, it is helpful to evaluate it. How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable, relevant and author- itative? How can you tell? Is it this source inappropriately biased or relatively objective? What is the goal of this source?

Reflect: Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits specifically into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Purpose

To learn about your topic: Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you're forced to read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information.

To help you formulate a thesis: Every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis. So a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting , and

current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and respond- ing to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view.

To develop enough authoritative, relevant and reliable support for your topic: Most top- ics that you will be writing about in college classes are very complex and multi-faceted. Usu- ally just finding a single source or two on a topic will not be sufficient to really understand all of the angles and nuances of the topic under consideration. A well researched and well written annotated bibliography will help you to be thorough and exhaustive in your research and guard against oversimplification and other forms of research-related blind spots.

Format

The bibliographic information: The bibliographic information of the source (the title, au- thor, publisher, date, etc.) is written in MLA format.

The annotations: The annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages. The length will depend on the purpose and the particular complexity of each source.

- **View:** Example of an Annotated Bibliography

Annotated

Bibliography Checklist

Before your final essay is due, you will turn in an Annotated Bibliography of at least TEN sources related to your topic. *These should not be the only sources you have examined but rather most useful ones.* Your grade will be based on the variety and relevance of the sources as well as on the insight and clarity of your annotations.

- Consult the handout on Annotated Bibliographies for information on the purpose, scope and content of the assignment.

- Your annotations should be listed alphabetically, by the last name of the primary author of the selection and in proper MLA format.

- At least TWO of your sources should be books (if possible).

- At least THREE of your sources must be academic, scholarly or peer-reviewed journals.

- At least TWO of your annotations must be longer and more thorough (at least a page each).

- Be as specific as possible with your summaries, analyses and reflections on the relevancy of each source. Don't just tell me it is a good source or that it is very useful. I am assuming this since it is one of the ones you have selected to annotate. Tell me exactly *why* it is a good source and exactly *how* it is useful to your topic.

- Be sure to use the citation builder websites to help you build

your entries in proper MLA format. They can be found on the Library website and on the our WR 122 Library Guide in the "Citation Style Guides" section.

- Sources found in the MHCC library databases are already in MLA format. Scroll down to the end of the article and the entry will be posted in full MLA format. Just copy and past it into your Bibliography. (Make sure to make it double-spaced and in "hanging" format as well.)

- ***See Syllabus/Schedule for Due Date***

Final Toulmin Analysis Essay

Focus

Strong thesis, sentence structure, paragraph cohesion & conceptual flow, integration of relevant & authoritative sources, focused intro & conclusion. Use of Toulmin Analysis as the basis for your evaluation.

In class we will discuss and evaluate the method of argument analysis developed by the British philosopher Stephen Toulmin. Afterwards, you will select one of the essays from the assigned section of our Blackboard page and write a Toulmin analysis of the argument(s) presented in the essay.

5-7 *Pages, Double-spaced, MLA format.*

1. Select an essay from the assigned section of our Blackboard page.
2. In your introduction, explore the overall topic, the main thesis of the article you are analyzing and your thesis on whether or not you find the argument effective and convincing. What, in Toulmin terms, makes the argument strong or weak?
3. Try to find the central ***claim*** of the article you are analyzing. How do you know it is the claim? Is it stated or implied? Is it a claim of *fact*, *value* or *policy*? Does the author provide a ***qualifier*** and/or a ***rebuttal*** for their claim? If not, does the absence of these elements weaken the claim or not?
4. Look at the ***data/evidence*** the author provides for their claim. Is the evidence clear? Is it fair? Is it relevant, reliable and representative? Do you get a sense that the author has selectively chosen evidence and ignored other evidence in order to strengthen their claim? Can you demonstrate this? Does the evidence support the particular type of claim the author has made (fact, value or policy)? Build upon the

research you did in your Annotated Bibliography to help you to help you determine how relevant, authoritative and reliable the data is which the author of your chosen ar- ticle provides in support of its claim.

5. Use examples from relevant sources (in the form of quotation, summary, and paraphrase) and your own discussion to create this thesis-driven essay. Try to move beyond just retelling your experience or opinion. You need to look at the underlying claims ABOUT the topic as well as what the most reliable and authoritative sources you can find have to say about it.
6. Can you identify the ***warrant*** (the unstated assumption that connects the claim and the data) of the essay you are reading? Does the warrant do a sufficient job of connecting the data to the warrant? Why or why not? Is it a ***substantive*** (logos-based), ***authoritative*** (ethos-based) or ***motivational*** (pathos-based) warrant? Does this type of warrant best suit the type of claim the author is making and the type of evidence they provide to support this claim?
7. Does the author provide ***backing*** (evidence) for their warrant? If not, would the presence of evidence for their warrant strengthen the argument in any way? Why or why not?
8. Is there anything in the essay that needs an extended definition? How might this affect the overall argument with regard to the Toulmin-labeled relationships between the ideas?
9. What is your assessment of the overall effectiveness of the argument? Is it persuasive? Why or why not? What, in Toulmin terms, could be changed to make it more persuasive?

Goals

- Be able to analyze a larger cultural issue and respond to it.
- Be able to clearly present your interpretation of the issue,

without personal bias or with clear, relevant and authoritative support for the bias using the Toulmin model of argument analysis.
- Be able to use summary, paraphrase, and quotation of relevant sources in your analysis.
- Be able to clearly express your own thoughts about the topic under discussion.

- Be able to create graceful transitions, introduction, and conclusion to tie together the various parts of your essay.
- Present your argument or position in a clear thesis statement in the introduction.
- Support your claim or focus with evidence and examples from relevant, reliable and representative sources. The body of your essay will explore the major points related to your thesis.
- Present one major point (presented in a topic sentence) per paragraph and explain it fully, with detailed support and examples, before you move on to your next point/paragraph.
- Wrap up your essay with a conclusion that revisits your overall topic and theme.

Research

- Take advantage of the WR 122 Library Guide (on our Blackboard page) for help with finding relevant sources, getting your essay into MLA format and all other aspects of the research and writing process.
- Consult the MHCC databases for relevant articles related to your research.
- You may also use popular search engines, interviews and other reliable, authoritative means of support to develop your thesis.

Format & Length

- 5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12.pt font. (Times New Roman, Arial or Helvetica)
- MLA format. (Please consult your textbook and our Library page for help with MLA. I have also provided an essay template on our Blackboard page (in the "Writing Process" module) for you. Newer versions of Microsoft Word come with an MLA template as well. You have access to Microsoft Office as a student.
- Consult the Class Syllabus and Overview for instructions on how to download it. Remember, MLA primarily means how you structure the first page headings, proper in-text citations and a properly formatted "Works Cited" page).
- A minimum of 4 reliable, relevant external sources cited in the essay and on a properly formatted Works Cited page.
- Give your paper an original title that is NOT simply "Final Essay" or "Social Media Essay."
- Grab the reader's attention, provide a BRIEF summary of the major themes and your overall thesis (main point) in the introduction of your essay.
- Present one major point (presented in a topic sentence) per paragraph and explain it fully, with detailed support and examples, before you move on to your next point/paragraph.
- Wrap up your essay with a conclusion that revisits your overall topic, theme and thesis.
- **View** Toulmin Worksheet #1
- **View** Toulmin Worksheet #2

Due Date & Other Details

- Your essay is due at our final class meeting. See calendar and course schedule for more details.

- Take a draft of your essay to the Writing Center (link on our Blackboard Page) for feedback & extra credit. Include a signed document in your submission.
- Please type your paper, double-spaced, in a readable font (about 12-point). Be sure to have someone look over your paper, after you have polished the final draft, to catch any mechanical errors. Final drafts turned in should be entirely free of such errors.
- Make sure you are using the elements of argument construction and analysis we have learned this term to strengthen the presentation of your ideas. For instance, make sure you have established proper authority with your sources, have sufficient and reliable data, make appropriate appeals to pathos, and have a proper warrant that connects your evidence to your thesis.
- Make sure to consider and include substantive responses to the major arguments on both (or all) sides of the argument in question. Especially those in opposition to your thesis.

Note: Tutors are available every day in the Learning Resource Center (upstairs in the library). Try to make an appointment well in advance. They also have online tutoring. See our Blackboard page for more details.

Toulmin Analysis Questions

Toulmin Analysis Model – for reading and analyzing an argument

The Toulmin model can also be used when you read an argument essay so that you can better analyze the author's writing. Here are questions you can ask as you are reading:

- **Claim**: The author wants me to believe:
- **Support/subclaims**: I should believe this because:
- **Warrants**: Why is this claim important to the author? (assumptions and/or values the author holds):
- **Backing for Warrants**: What evidence does the author give to remind me of warrants and make me want to accept them?
- **Rebuttal**: Are other positions shown? Are they refuted or discussed?
- **Qualifier**: Is there anything which suggests the claim might be limited (sometimes, probably, possibly, if)?