

## COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY, AND ENGAGEMENT (COM 212)

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### CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Criticism of persuasion and advocacy, rhetoric, social and political issues, and civic engagement.

### COURSE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING GOAL AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Learning Goal:** Students will understand the elements of advocacy and its relationship to rhetoric, civic and political engagement, and collective action in a democratic society.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn the skills to both create and critique advocacy rhetoric.
2. Students will learn information literacy skills and how to recognize manipulation, spin, and misinformation in persuasive messages.
3. Students will enhance their political knowledge, efficacy, and motivation.

### COURSE MATERIALS

Textbook:

Del Gandio, J. (2008). Rhetoric for radicals: A handbook for twenty-first century activists. New Society Publishers.

Milner Library provides an electronic version of this book:

[https://i-share-isu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI\\_ISU/kt5co6/alma9921863279705845](https://i-share-isu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_ISU/kt5co6/alma9921863279705845)

In addition to the textbook, there are numerous readings, including book chapters and scholarly articles, provided through Canvas.

### ASSIGNMENTS

**Defining Communication Advocacy Essay:** Students will write an essay defining communication advocacy and civic engagement from their own experience. Students then will write a second essay (the Future Civic Engagement and Action Essay below) at the end of the course that asks them to reflect and revise their previous essay and identify course concepts and experiences that affected how they would define the original concepts, and to think about future action and civic engagement.

**Social Issues Personal Inventory Essay:** Students will write an essay exploring their own political activism and the social/political issues that they passionate about. Students will complete the Activist Orientation Survey and use that as the launching point to talk about their own civic engagement.

**Reading Propositions:** Students will write a short essay for each reading and textbook chapter. Each proposition will require the student to identify a concept or idea from the reading they agreed/disagreed with, a

personal reflection of how the concept or idea relates to their own experience, and a class discussion question based on the reading.

**Local Issues and Action Research Report and Presentation:** Students will write a short essay about a local issue(s) that they are concerned about and why it is a concern, then identify local entities (local governments, educational institutions, nonprofit or charity organizations, etc.) that act on the issues/problem and briefly describe how the entity takes action. Students will then present on their issue and local entity in class.

**Social/Political Issues Background Research Report and Project Proposal:** Students will identify a social or political issues they want to advocate for and provide background research on the specific issue. The assignment will require them to identify and define the social problem and the harm, identify the inherent barriers (existing laws, attitudes, awareness, etc.) to social change associated with the issue, identify past policy actions related to the issue, and prepare a future research plan to better understand the issue.

**Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Project and Presentation:** Students will research and design a persuasive campaign to advocate for the social/political issue identified in their previous Social/Political Issues Background Research Report and Project Proposal assignment. They will need to identify the goals and constraints of the campaign; the target audience; and plan and draft persuasive messages for the campaign.

**Future Civic Engagement and Action Essay:** Students will write a final reflection essay where they will revise (using the course readings, assignments, and experiences) their concept definitions and their own civic engagement from the Defining Communication Advocacy Essay at the beginning of the course; and visualize their own future civic and political engagement including research/projects, service, classes and training, academic majors/minors, and career goals.

## EVALUATION

Defining Communication Advocacy Essay	50 pts
Social Issues Personal Inventory Essay	50 pts
Reading Propositions	75 pts
Local Issues and Action Research Report and Presentation	50 pts
Social/Political Issues Background Research Report and Project Proposal	100 pts
Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Project and Presentation	125 pts
Future Civic Engagement and Action Essay	50 pts
Total Points:	500 pts

The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:

90-100% = A; 80%-89% = B; 70%-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F

## ACTIVITIES

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and participate in activities associated with the readings. I will lecture over the material you have read and synthesize the material into discussions and activities, in which you will play a large role.

## COURSE POLICIES

**ATTENDANCE:** Regular attendance is expected. Being absent will deprive you of valuable class discussions and will also prevent you from fulfilling certain graded in-class activities which cannot be made up. Excessive absences will affect your grade in this class. You are always responsible for all material distributed in your absence.

**UNIVERSITY BEREAVEMENT POLICY:** Students who experience the death of an immediate family member or relative as defined in the University Student Bereavement Policy will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. Students are responsible for providing appropriate documentation to the Dean of Students office and for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements for completing missed work. More information is available in the Student Bereavement Policy at <https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27/>.

**ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:** All speeches and assignments, must be completed on the date assigned. If you do not turn in assignments the dates they are due you will receive a ZERO for that assignment unless an alternate due date has been previously approved or documentation has been provided for extreme circumstances. I do not accept any emailed assignment—all assignments need to be submitted in print or through Canvas. In some situations, I may allow you to email an assignment and later turn in a paper copy; however, this requires prior permission.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

**Professional Courtesy.** Professional courtesy includes respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. I expect you to demonstrate these behaviors at all times in this class. With that in mind, sleeping, reading materials irrelevant to class purposes, texting, or disrupting the class will not be tolerated and will result in the student being considered absent for that particular class period.

**Presentation Etiquette.** On presentation days, you have dual responsibilities as a speaker and an audience member. When you are presenting, you will dress appropriately. When you are an audience member, you will be attentive and ask challenging but constructive questions when the presentation is finished. Because most people are nervous when they present, you will be supportive both verbally and nonverbally. You will never enter or leave the room while a presentation is in progress.

**EMAIL ETIQUETTE:** I use email to deliver some course materials and assignments in addition to Canvas and the textbook websites. I also will answer questions and address problems through email. I encourage you to email with this issues and concerns; however, I need some basic information from you to properly and quickly answer your email: 1) A subject line that tells me what you are emailing me about (i.e. Assignment, Question about X assignment, etc.). 2) Your full name, most of the time the only information I get through the email system is your email address, not your full name. 3) Your class section or class time. If you can provide me with this information I can quickly address your concerns.

**TECHNOLOGY:** Technology is an ever-changing part of our daily lives and offers new opportunities in learning, but also it can be a cause of distraction in the classroom. All cell phones should be turned off or set to silent during class. Text messaging is prohibited during class! I allow the use of laptops and PDAs as long as they are used for academic purposes (i.e. taking notes, working on class assignments, etc.). If the use of technology becomes a distraction, I reserve the right to confiscate the devices for the remainder of class that day and/or prohibit the use of any device in class.

**CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:** Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on speech topics and/or the presentation of someone else's work warrants plagiarism. Students found to inadvertently commit acts of dishonesty will receive appropriate penalties specific to the assignment in question. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty will receive a failing grade in the course and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Community Rights and Responsibilities.

**ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES (SAAS):** Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone (309) 438-5853, Video Phone (309) 319-7682 or visit the website at [www.StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu](http://www.StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu).

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:** Life at college can get very complicated. According to recent research, nearly 40% of college students are at-risk for developing generalized anxiety disorder and are less likely to seek help for it compared to other mental health issues. Students also sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience depression, and struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at [www.Counseling.IllinoisState.edu](http://www.Counseling.IllinoisState.edu) or by calling (309) 438- 3655.

**Tentative Schedule**  
(All assignment and dates are subject to change)

**Schedule:**

**Readings and Assignments Due:**

**Week 1 (Jan 12-16)**

Defining Rhetoric and Activism

**Assign Defining Communication Advocacy Essay**

**Assign Reading Propositions Assignment**

Del Gandio, 2008 (Ch. 1); Zompetti, 2006; Jones, 2020

**-Week 1 Reading Propositions Due (F, 1/16)**

**Week 2 (Jan 19-23)**

**(M) No Class, MLK Jr. Holiday**

Rhetorical Agency and Positionality

**Assign Social Issues Personal Inventory Essay**

Palczewski et al., 2022, (Ch. 1); Vatz, 2020; Artz, 2020; Bazerman, 2020

**-Defining Communication Advocacy Essay Due**

**Week 3 (Jan 26-30)**

Rhetorical Tactics for Advocacy

**Assign Local Issues and Action**

**Research Report and Presentation**

**-Week 3 Reading Propositions Due (S, 1/25)**

Del Gandio, 2008 (Ch. 2); Alinsky, 1989; Rose, 2010 (Ch. 1)

**Week 4 (Feb 2-6)**

Ideology, Power, and Communication

**-Week 4 Reading Propositions Due (S, 2/1)**

Sillars & Gronbeck, 2001 (Ch. 12)  
**-Social Issues Personal Inventory Essay Due**

**Week 5 (Feb 9-13)**

Local Issues and Action Research Report Presentations

**-Local Issues and Action Research Report and Presentation Due**

**Week 6 ( Feb 16-20)**

Public Awareness Campaigns

**Assign Social/Political Issues Background Research Report and Project Proposal**

**Assign Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Project and Presentation**

**-Week 6 Reading Propositions Due (S, 2/15)**

Military REACH, 2015; Rose, 2010 (Ch. 4)

**Week 7 (Feb 23-27)**

Political Arguments

**Week 8 (Mar 2-6)**

Language and Meaning

**Week 9 (Mar 9-13)**

**No Class, Spring Break**

**Week 10 (Mar 16-20)**

Visual Rhetoric, Body, and Performance

**Week 11 (Mar 23-27)**

Advocacy and Praxis

**Week 12 (Mar 30-Apr 3)**

Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design  
Project Work Week

**Week 13 (Apr 6-10)**

Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design  
Project Work Week

**Week 14 (Apr 13-17)**

Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Project Work Week  
**Assign Future Civic Engagement and Action Essay**

**Week 15 (Apr 20-24)**

Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Presentations

**Week 16 (Apr 27-May 1)**

Social/Political Issues Persuasive Campaign Design Presentations

**-Week 7 Reading Propositions Due  
(S, 2/22)**

Stewart et al. 2012 (Ch. 8)

**-Week 8 Reading Propositions Due  
(S, 3/1)**

Del Gandio, 2008 (Ch. 3); Sillars &  
Gronbeck, 2001 (Ch. 7)

**-Week 10 Reading Propositions Due  
(S, 3/15)**

Del Gandio, 2008 (Ch. 4); Palczewski  
et al., 2022, (Ch. 4)

**-Social/Political Issues  
Background Research  
Report and Project  
Proposal Due**

**-Week 11 Reading Propositions  
Due (S, 3/22)**

Del Gandio, 2008 (Ch. 5); Moss,  
2020; Cloud, 2020

**-Social/Political Issues Persuasive  
Campaign Design Project and  
Presentations Due**

**Week 17 (May 4-8)**  
Finals Week

**-Future Civic Engagement and  
Action Essay Due**