LABETTE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYLLABUS
FALL SEMESTER 2014

COURSE NUMBER: COMM 110
COURSE TITLE: CRITICAL THINKING AND ARGUMENTATION
SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS: 3
DEPARTMENT: Communication
DIVISION: General Education
INSTRUCTOR: Thomas A. Duran
Email: tomd@labette.edu
Phone: 620-232-5820 ext. 108 & 620-820-1171
PREREQUISITE: None
REVISION DATE: May 2014

TEXT AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS USED IN THE COURSE (if any):

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is an introduction to the basic theory of argument and persuasion. Students learn how to think in a clear and logical manner, analyze information critically, formulate persuasive arguments, and deliver those arguments effectively, both in oral and in written forms. Students learn how to make claims, provide evidence, explore underlying assumptions, and analyze counter-points.

COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of principles of argument and persuasion.
   • Describe the relationship between critical thinking and argumentation.
   • Identify the parts (claim, evidence, and reasoning) of an argument and how they work together.
   • Differentiate arguments from other forms of communication.
   • Apply ethical standards to argument practices.
   • Understand how evidence functions within the context of argument.
   • Understand the criteria for accepting or rejecting claims
   • Diagram argument structures using the general model of argument analysis.
   • Differentiate between compound claims and conditionals.
   • Understand the process for refuting an argument
   • Understand the different types of fallacies in arguments.
   • Demonstrate effective argument analysis.
2. Apply these principles to actual argumentative situations.

- Evaluate arguments to identify the conclusion and premises and to determine if they are valid, sound, invalid, or weak.
- Analyze how arguments build on each other to produce argument chains.
- Establish ethical relationships with the audiences of your argument.
- Formulate an effective proposition on an argumentative case.
- Apply the tests of reasoning to arguments to detect fallacies in others' arguments.
- Use the strategies of refutation to respond to an opposing argument.

The learning outcomes and competencies detailed in this syllabus meet, or exceed the learning outcomes and competencies specified by the Kansas Core Outcomes Project for this course, as sanctioned by the Kansas Board of Regents.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week One  
Intro to course, syllabus overview, reasoning exercise, lecture chapter 1 - class discussion on critical thinking standards and barriers to critical thinking, assign chapter 1 discussion questions

Week Two  
Continue lecture chapter 1 – class discussion on barriers to critical thinking - Quiz chapter 1 – chapter 1 exercise/activities – assign chapter 2 discussion questions

Week Three  
Lecture chapter 2, class discussion on premises and conclusions, evidence, and conditional statements

Week Four  
Continue Lecture chapter 2 - class discussion on support and evidence and what is not an argument, chapter 2 exercise/activities – Quiz chapter 2 – assign chapter 3 discussion questions

Week Five  
Lecture chapter 3 - class discussion on types of arguments, methods for determining deductive/inductive argument, chapter 3 exercises/activities

Week Six  
Continue Lecture chapter 3 - class discussion on patterns of deductive and inductive arguments, deductive/inductive activities

Week Seven  
Continue lecture chapter 3 – class discussion on hypothetical, categorical and disjunctive syllogisms – syllogism activities - Quiz chapter 3 - assign chapter 13 discussion questions

Week Eight  
Lecture chapter 13, class discussion on writing a successful argument – assign chapter 4 discussion questions, and assign premise development # 1

Week Nine  
Quiz chapter 13 – Premise Development # 1 due - Lecture chapter 4, class discussion on the need for precision and vague sentences, subjective and objective claims, Ch 4 exercises/activities

Week Ten  
Continue lecture chapter 4, class, discussion on ambiguity and definitions, Quiz chapter 4 – assign chapter 5 discussion questions - assign premise development # 2

Week Eleven  
Premise Development # 2 Due - Lecture chapter 5, class discussion on understanding fallacies, chapter 5 exercises/activities - assign chapter 6 discussion questions - assign premise development # 3

Week Twelve  
Quiz chapter 5 - Premise Development # 3 Due - Lecture chapter 6, class discussion on fallacies of insufficient evidence – chapter 6 exercises/activities – assign chapter 7 reading – assign essay # 1
| Week Thirteen | **Essay # 1 Due - Quiz chapter 6** -Lecture chapter 7, class discussion on argument analysis and diagramming, chapter 7 exercises/activities – **assign essay # 2** |
| Week Fourteen | **Thanksgiving Break** |
| Week Fifteen | **Essay # 2 Due** -Continue lecture chapter 7, class discussion finding missing premises and conclusions, finding missing premises/conclusions activities –assign chapter 8 discussion questions – **assign Essay # 3** |
| Week Sixteen | **Essay # 3 Due - Quiz chapter 7**- Lecture chapter 8, class discussion on evaluating arguments, accepting premises and refuting arguments - chapter 8 exercises/activities– **Quiz chapter 8**– Sample final exam |
| Week Seventeen | **FINAL EXAM** |

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**
This course is taught using a variety of instructional methods that include but are not limited to lecture, computer presentations, overhead projector, handouts, and possibly guest speakers.

90 - 100% = A - Student does an outstanding assignment or paper. Excellent content, well organized, excellent wording, and/or superior accomplishment on the criteria established for that assignment or paper.

80 - 89% = B - Assignment or paper approaching the qualities of an “A” assignment. A good assignment, not necessarily any major weaknesses, but not achieving a standard of excellence in any or enough areas to merit an “A”. A good job in meeting most established criteria for that assignment or paper.

70 - 79% = C - An acceptable assignment or paper. Reasonably clear purpose, adequate support, apparent organization, but may not be entirely clear; and/or some deficiencies in meeting many of the major criteria established for the assignment or paper.

60 - 69% = D - An unclear purpose and serious deficiencies in some and perhaps all areas of content, organization.

59% & below = F - The person does not submit the assignment at all or simply demonstrates that there has been no preparation for the assignment in content, goal attainment, or organization.

**METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

The instructor can at anytime modify, add, take away assignments based on the circumstances that may develop during the semester.

*Possible Points:*

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

|   | 1. 9 – “Chapter Discussion” Assignments | 19 pt. ea |
|   | 2. 20 – Chapter Activities | 10 pt. ea |
|   | 3. 3 – Argument writing assignments | 10 pt. ea |
|   | 4. 5 – Critical Thinking Activities | 10 pt. |
|   | 5. 1 – For or Against Argument Outline | 20 pt. |
|   | 6. 1 – For or Against Argument Essay | 30 pt. |
|   | 7. 1 - For or Against Main Argumentative Essay | 50 pt. |

**EXAMS**

|   | 1. 9 Quizzes: | 10 pt. Each |
|   | 2. 1 Final Exam | 40 pt. |
All written assignments are to be handed in on the date they are due. **Assignments not handed in on the due date will receive a zero for that assignment.** Assignments that are to be handed in to the instructor should be done neatly, with 12 pitch and Times New Roman font.

Your final grade is determined by the average of all your grades from papers, class activities, tests, and projects that may be assigned.

**Tests and Quizzes:** There will be a final exam and there will be quizzes over the assigned chapters in the text, over notes from class lectures, and class discussions.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student has to miss a class especially on the day he/she is scheduled to take a test, or hand in an assignment; **he/she must notify me before the missed class.** In case of emergencies, notify by telephone or leave a message for me with the college operator, or send a note with a fellow student. **Failure to do so means the student will receive a zero for that assignment or test and will lose the option of makeup work.** If a legitimate conflict did arise and the student did notify me, **he/she has one week** to finish the assignment or take the test. If a student misses a class, he/she is still responsible for the material covered and for assignments made during that time. The student should ask for notes from myself or a fellow student for the class missed. Since this is a communication class, I expect students to practice good communication skills and thus disruptive talking during class will not be tolerated. If you exceed 6 unexcused absences (for Monday, Wednesday, Friday Speech Sections) or 4 unexcused absences (for Tuesday/Thursday Speech Sections), you may be dropped from this course.

**All students will receive a grade for the course after the last day to withdraw for the semester regardless of the number of absences.**

**Additional Classroom Policies are available at:**
www.labette.edu/students/classroom_policies.pdf

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students who need special assistance should contact ADA Coordinator by calling the Business office at (620) 421-6700, ext.1230, or visit the Business Office on the main campus.

All communication concerning this course or college business will be sent to your LCC student e-mail address. It is your responsibility to check this account on a regular basis.