



## English 204 Arguments for America

Fall 2014

Monday & Wednesday 2:30-3:45pm

Humanities 1221

Professor Christa J Olson  
Office: 6187 D Helen C. White  
email: [cjolson6@wisc.edu](mailto:cjolson6@wisc.edu)

Office Hours:  
10:30-11:30am & 1:00-2:pm Mondays  
& by appointment

Arguments about who and what a nation is circulate in stories and speeches, in paintings and photographs. For United States of America, the first nation founded—some say—on an idea, this assertion is especially true. To explore it, this course will take you on a selective tour of five hundred years of arguments for and about America. It will focus on common American ideas and trace how those ideas have been adopted, appropriated, and contested over time. We will read canonical texts by famous people alongside less familiar texts produced by lesser-known people. We will also analyze photographs, paintings, and songs that invest the idea of America with meaning and attempt to harness that meaning for their own ends. Your work for the class will include reading, short writing assignments, opportunities for primary source research, and a final exam.

### Required Materials

Most readings for the class can be found in the online course packet, available on our Learn@UW page. You must bring the readings for each day to class with you either as a printed copy or electronically.

### Grading Scale

A	94-100%
AB	88-93%
B	82-87%
BC	77-81%
C	70-76%
D	60-69%

### Assignments

#### *Context Guides (15%)*

Two or three times during the semester, you and two classmates will be responsible for providing the rest of the class with historical and cultural context for our reading. By 7pm the night before class, your group will post on Learn@UW a 'top 10' list of contextual information (background on the author, information about contemporary events, insight into political circumstances, etc.). In class that day, your group will have 10-15 minutes to supplement its list with additional

information and further explanation. I will provide suggested source material for this background research and will provide a few example lists and presentations early in the semester. Top 10 lists will be worth 10 points each and in-class presentations will be worth another 10 points.

### *Short Essays (30%)*

Two times during the semester you will submit a 3-4 page typed rhetorical analysis of an assigned text of your choice. Your analysis should discuss how the chosen text serves as an argument for America and apply at least one of the rhetorical concepts we've discussed. Short Essays are due on Sunday, October 5 and Sunday, November 16 at 11:59pm (submitted on Learn@UW). I will grade Short Essays on a 10-point scale.

### *Final Exam (25%)*

This exam will ask you to build from the topics and readings that we covered over the course of the semester, applying your learning to analysis of new example texts. You will receive those texts ahead of time and will have access to them during the exam. The exam will be mostly essay-based, but will also include short answer questions and definitions. It will be worth 100 points and all questions will allow partial credit.

### *Inquiry Project (30%)*

No semester-long class can possibly address all of the topics and texts that fall under the heading "Arguments for America." This assignment gives you a chance to explore one that we haven't treated in class or that you want to understand in more depth. Your task will be to learn as much as possible about the topic or text that you've chosen and then present what you've learned in a thorough and accessible way, framing it for an audience of students like yourselves. This project requires you to use **many** sources (at least 15) in your quest to become an expert on your topic and to synthesize and process those sources for your audience. It is up to you how you present that information (essay, website, annotated bibliography, interactive timeline, etc.), but you will need to submit a project proposal to me and receive approval for both your topic and presentation plan. Your project will also include a brief introductory essay. Project proposals are due on Learn@UW on Friday, October 17 @ 11:59pm. Final Inquiry Projects are due Wednesday, December 3 at 10:00am. Proposals will be worth 10 points and the projects themselves are worth 100 points. See the assignment sheet for more details.

### **Attendance & Participation**

I assume that you will make class attendance a priority. We will use class time to practice the skills you'll need for papers and exams, and your active, prepared participation is essential. Should you need to miss class, please be in touch with me as soon as possible. Except in extraordinary circumstances, missed in-class work cannot be made up and if you miss more than five days of class, you should expect a negative effect on your final grade.

### **Late Assignments**

I will accept late assignments without grade penalty if you communicate with me *in writing* (email is fine) prior to the deadline for the assignment. Written notification should include your name, the assignment name, and a new proposed due date. You do not have to tell me why your assignment is late. If you cannot turn the assignment in on the new proposed due date, it is your responsibility to submit a new note.

Assignments whose new due dates are more than one week after the original due date will receive minimal feedback. Papers turned in after the final due date for all papers (11:59pm on Friday, December 12) will receive a zero. Unapproved late assignments will receive no feedback and their grade will drop 5% for each day after the deadline.

### **Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct**

All of us at UW-Madison, students and instructors alike, have a responsibility to pursue our work honestly, acknowledging the sources and people who make it possible. Failures of academic integrity can lead to disciplinary action. The UW Administrative Code defines plagiarism, one common kind of academic misconduct, as “seek[ing] to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; [or] us[ing] unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise.” See <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>.

Unfortunately, despite the general abhorrence of plagiarism, the rules for source use are far from universal. It should go without saying that submitting an assignment you found online, ‘borrowed’ from a friend, or paid someone else to complete is a gross violation of academic integrity. If I have reason to suspect your assignment is so far out of line, I will follow University policy as outlined in the link above.

On more complicated questions, however, you might find yourself truly confused. Must you cite our class when you adapt material covered in a discussion? How different does language need to be to count as paraphrase? When does a piece of information become common knowledge? (after all, we don’t cite Lavoisier when we say that fire needs oxygen to burn). In what genres is it okay to appropriate material, and how much?

Overall, the conventions for academic source use rest on two pillars: the idea that others should be able to trace what you’ve done (think of one scientist trying to replicate a previous scientist’s experiment) and the idea that people should get credit for their ideas. If your work adheres to those two goals, you should be fine. If you are in doubt, over-acknowledgement is the safest approach. When you draw from a source (be it your mother, Wikipedia, or a book), include a reference to it. You can also check out the Writing Center’s guide to source use (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>), raise the question during class, or stop by my office hours.

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability that may have an impact your work in this class, please meet with me early in the semester to arrange accommodations that will allow you to fulfill course requirements. If you are interested in receiving university services and accommodations for your disability, please contact the McBurney Center for Disability Services by phone at 263-2741 or email at [FrontDesk@mcb.wisc.edu](mailto:FrontDesk@mcb.wisc.edu).

# **COURSE CALENDAR**

## **Week 1 - Introductions**

Wednesday, September 3 – Arguments for America

## **Week 2**

**“We hold these truths to be self evident...”**

Monday, September 8 – Commonplaces

Read for today:

Gruesz, Kirsten Silva, “America”

Wednesday, September 10 – Identification, Appropriation, Détournement

## **Week 3 – Cycle 1, This Land is my Land**

Monday, September 15 – “Discovery” (European perspectives)

Read for today:

Columbus, Cristobal, “The Letter”

Verazzano, John de, “The Voyage of John de Verazzano”

Wednesday, September 17 – “Discovery” (Seneca and Mahican perspectives)

Read for today:

Handsome Lake, “How America was Discovered”

Quinney, John Wannaucon, “4<sup>th</sup> of July Speech”

Red Jacket, “An Address to White Missionaries”

## **Week 4 – Cycle 1, This Land is my Land, cont.**

Monday, September 22 – The Puritan Errand in the Wilderness

Read for today:

Cotton, John, “God’s Promise to His Plantation”

Winthrop, John, “A Modell of Christian Charity”

Wednesday, September 24 – “Manifest Destiny”

Read for today:

O’Sullivan, John (ed.), “Annexation”

Turner, Frederick Jackson, “Significance of the Frontier in American History”

**Week 5 – Cycle 1, This Land is my Land, cont.**

Monday, September 29 – Removal

Read for today:

Jackson, Andrew, “Address to Congress”

Ross, John, “Letter to Lewis Cass” and “Letter to Andrew Jackson”

Wednesday, October 1 – Refiguring and Reclaiming the Land

Read for today:

Indians of All Tribes, “Alcatraz Proclamation”

Additional Reading TBD, check Learn@UW

**Week 6 – Cycle 1, This Land is my Land, cont.**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 @ 11:59PM – SHORT ESSAY #1 DUE**

Monday, October 6 – Slavery and Colonization

Read for today:

Walker, David, “Appeal”

Williams, Jr., Peter, “Slavery and Colonization”

Wednesday, October 8 - Who made America?

Read for today:

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, “The Case for Reparations”

**Week 7 – Cycle 2, Declaring Rights**

Monday, October 13 – Early Context

Read for today:

“Massachusetts Body of Liberties”

“1765 Declaration of Rights”

Virginia’s “Declaration of Rights”

Wednesday, October 15 – Getting to Independence

Read for today:

Paine, Thomas, “Common Sense”

“Declaration of Independence”

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17 @ 11:59PM - INQUIRY PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE**

## **Week 8 – Cycle 2, Declaring Rights**

Monday, October 20 – Freedom for Whom?

Read for today:

Douglas, Frederick, “What to the Slave is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?”

Garrison, William Lloyd, “Editorial from the First Issue of *The Liberator*”

Osborne, Peter, “It is Time for us to be Up and Doing”

Wheatley, Phillis, “Letter to Samson Occom”

Wednesday, October 22 – Women’s Rights

Read for today:

Anonymous, “Rights of Woman”

McClintock, Mary Ann, Lucretia Cofin Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Martha Coffin Wright, “Declaration of Sentiments”

Truth, Sojourner, “Ain’t I a Woman?” / “Aren’t I a Woman?”

## **Week 9 – Cycle 2, Declaring Rights**

Monday, October 27 – and Woman Suffrage

Read for today:

Catt, Carrie Chapman, “Address to Congress”

Logan, Adela Hunt, “Woman Suffrage”

Wednesday, October 29 – Civil Rights Movement – Birmingham, 1963

Read for today:

King, Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

“They Fight a Fire that Won’t Go Out” *Life* May 17, 1963

## **Week 10 – Cycle 2, Declaring Rights**

Monday, November 3 – The Civil Rights Movement & National Politics

Read for today:

Hamer, Fannie Lou, “Speech to the DNC Credentials Committee”

Read the introduction and listen to the speech at

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/flhamer.html>

Johnson, Lyndon B. “American Promise” (1965)

Wednesday, November 5 – Heading toward the Right to Marry

Read for today:

excerpts from “The Homosexual Citizen”

peruse the Kameny Papers at <http://www.kamenypapers.org>

excerpts from “U.S. v. Windsor” Supreme Court Opinion

### **Week 11 – Cycle 3, We the People**

Monday, November 10 – Constitution

Read for today:  
Articles of Confederation  
Constitution of the United States

Wednesday, November 12 – Nations within Nations

Read for today:  
Boudinot, Elias, “Address to the Whites”  
Apess, William, “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man”

### **Week 12 – Cycle 3, We the People**

<p><b>SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 @ 11:59PM – SHORT ESSAY #2 DUE</b></p>
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Monday, November 17 – Slavery, Abolition, and the National “We”

Read for today:  
Scott v. Sanford (1857)  
Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins, “The Colored People in America” and “Could we trace the Record of Every Human Heart...”

Wednesday, November 19 – Civil War

Read for today:  
Lincoln, Abraham, “Second Inaugural Address”  
Lincoln, Abraham, “Gettysburg Address”  
“The Union: Its Benefits and Dangers”  
Davis, Jefferson, “Inaugural Address”

### **Week 13 – Cycle 3, We the People**

Monday, November 24 – Immigration then

Read for today:  
Roosevelt, Theodore “Commencement Address”  
Sui Sin Far, “In the Land of the Free”  
excerpt from “The Social, Moral and Political Effect of Chinese Immigration”

Wednesday, November 26 – Immigration now

Work for today:  
Watch and read stories and read the blog at <http://www.defineamerican.com>

### **Week 14 – Cycle 3, We the People**

Monday, December 1 – Tea Party

Work for today:

Review two major Tea Party websites: <http://www.teapartypatriots.org> and  
<http://www.teapartyexpress.org>

Watch Rand Paul's speech to the 2014 Conservative Political Action Conference  
(link on Learn@UW)

Wednesday, December 3 – Inquiry Project Presentations

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 @ 10:AM – INQUIRY PROJECTS DUE**

### **Week 15**

Monday, December 8 – Inquiry Project Presentations

Wednesday, December 10 – Exam Review

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12 @ 11:59PM – LAST CHANCE TO SUBMIT WORK**

**FINAL EXAM  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18  
5:05 – 7:05PM**