

**ENG 677-01: Argumentative Discourse  
Writing for Social Change  
Course Syllabus: Spring 2015  
Dr. Tabettha Adkins**

**Class space:** Hall of Languages 208  
**Class Time:** Wednesday 4:30-7:10PM  
**E-mail Address:** Tabettha.Adkins@tamuc.edu  
**Office phone:** 903.886.5269  
**Office Location:** Hall of Languages 229  
**Office hours:** Monday: 10 AM- 11:30 AM, 2PM- 5PM  
Wednesday: 10 AM- 11:30 AM  
Friday: 10 AM- 11:30 AM  
Tuesday and Thursday: by appointment

**Course Information**

**Textbooks Required:**

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*  
Katrina Powell, *The Anguish of Displacement: The Politics of Literacy in the Letters of Mountain Families in Shenandoah National Park*  
Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*  
Nancy Welch, *Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privatized World*  
Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*

**Articles Required:**

All articles are available in the DocSharing section in our eCollege/ Learning Studio course shell.

Preface, chapters 4, 6, 7, and conclusion of *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* by Wayne C. Booth

Special Issue of *College English*: Reimagining The Social Turn. 76.6 July 2014.

Carter, Shannon and Kelly L. Dent. "East Texas Activism (1966-68): Locating the Literacy Scene through the Digital Humanities." *College English* 76.2 (November 2013): 152-170.

Carter, Shannon and James H. Conrad. "In Possession of Community: Toward a More Sustainable Local." *CCC* 64.1 (September 2012): 82-106.

Gogan, Brian. "Expanding the Aims of Public Rhetoric and Writing Pedagogy: Writing Letters to Editors." *CCC* 65.4 (June 2014): 534-559.

### **Course Description:**

ENG 677 is designed to help graduate students master argumentative discourse. In past sections, this goal was often achieved through the study of ancient and modern rhetoricians. This semester, we will achieve this goal through the study of modern texts that were written towards the goal of social change.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to discuss and write critically about the argumentative strategies used by authors of course texts.
2. Students will be able to present ideas about argumentative strategies not covered in class.
3. Students will be able to design and execute a research project examining argumentative strategies for social change.
4. Students will be able to identify an appropriate venue for publishing for the writing they produce in the course.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

#### **Attendance Policy**

Since you are all graduate students, I assume you want to be here and will attend all classes. If you cannot attend a class due to illness, family emergency, etc., please try to let me know in advance, and be sure to e-mail me before you return to class so you will be up-to-date with class activities. More than one absence (since this is a once-a-week class) will reflect on your grade. Tardiness will be reflected in your participation grade.

#### **Assignments**

**In-class discussion & participation (20% of final grade):** Since this is a graduate seminar, I expect graduate students to engage in class discussion each week and come prepared to discuss texts. Being “prepared” means that students complete all assigned reading, clarify questions (like terminology, for example) whenever possible, and come prepared with questions, arguments, and ideas concerning the texts. Of course, you can only earn in-class discussion credit when you attend class regularly and participate in discussion.

**Presentation (20% of final grade):** The purpose of the presentations is to expose members of the class to even more texts than we will be reading in class this semester. On the first day of class, you will select a text to present on (and the date you will present). During your presentation, you are to (1) briefly summarize what the text says/argues/does (2) discuss the significance of this text (3) talk about the rhetorical strategies used to help make the argument, and finally (4) comment on the rhetorical effectiveness of this text.

As a model for this talk, refer to TED Talks. Ted Talks are never longer than 18 minutes. TED speakers do not read a script; instead, they use notes. TED speakers supplement their talks with

relevant images, terms, or bullet points. TED speakers NEVER read a Power Point presentation to their audience. Your talk should be between 15 and 18 minutes. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions following your talk. Presentations will be given directly following the half-way break in class.

Topics and dates can be found on the course calendar at the end of this syllabus.

**Argument analysis:** For the dates indicated on the course calendar, please come prepared to turn in what I am calling an “argument analysis.” Your argument analysis should be a short list, outline, or diagram (however you think this information should be presented) that helps me see that you (1) have understood the main argument/ purpose of the text (2) strategies used to make the argument (3) examples of how the argument is made. For these weekly assignments, I am not asking you to write a long narrative; bullets points, lists, diagrams, etc. are encouraged. For the weeks when we are reading more than one text, choose only one text for your analysis.

**Final paper (25% of final grade):** This paper should be 18 to 20 pages long (with standard font & margin size) and represent the culmination of your work in this class. You will submit a **proposal** for this paper (**5% of final grade**) **in class for workshop March 25**. This paper should illustrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes for this class, which are listed at the beginning of the syllabus. Additionally, in your proposal and as a preface to your final paper, you will identify publication venue where you could submit work like this. This step will require you to research publications to see if work like yours is being published in that text.

I am flexible on the topic you take on for this paper, as long as it meets the following requirements:

- appropriate for an academic publication (book chapter, journal, etc.)
- takes on an argument outside of the books we read in class (though I could be convinced to accept a paper that greatly expands arguments we made about course texts if we talk about it in advance)
- examines a text/speech composed toward the means of social change OR a person involved in a movement toward social change
- consistent with course themes

**Assignments, Weights, and Deadlines:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage of final grade</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Presentation	20%	Varies
Argument Analyses	30%	Weekly (except when noted on the course calendar at the end of the syllabus)
Final paper proposal	5%	March 25- in class to workshop
Final paper	25%	Monday, May 11 at noon via eCollege
Participation	20%	Weekly

**Grading Scale:** 90%-100%= A, 80-89%= B, 70-79%= C, 60-69%= D, 59% & below= F

## Technology Requirements

You will need access to the Internet and a printer.

All writing assignments must be typed. Final paper must be submitted via eCollege. Reading responses must be submitted in class.

You may need access to library databases to conduct research for some assignments.

Class website can be found on Learning Studio (formerly known as eCollege).

## Communication and Support

The very best way to contact me is to send me an e-mail at [Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu](mailto:Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu)

I am also available for meeting during my office hours (listed at the beginning of the syllabus) and by appointment. My office is located at HL 229. Appointments scheduled through e-mail are appreciated.

I can be reached via telephone during my office hours. The number is (903) 886-5269.

## Course Policies and Procedures

### Academic dishonesty/ Plagiarism

Professors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University- Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3]).

I promise to *never* use turnitin.com or other proprietary tools like it because these programs make money off your work without compensating you. Here's how it works: A university pays turnitin.com for its services (with your tuition dollars). Teachers place student papers in the program's "bank," and the program compares that paper with other papers existing in the bank. At that point, the student's paper becomes part of the bank. Therefore, turnitin.com and other tools are making money from this bank full of papers written by uncompensated students. For more information on this issue, see this article in the Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/article/Plagiarism-Detection-Tool/29885>.

I also promise, however, that I take academic dishonesty very seriously. *If I catch a graduate student committing plagiarism, that student should expect to fail my course and be reported to the director their graduate program.* You're in graduate school, folks; no excuses.

### Grievance Procedure

If you have concerns about the class or about me as an instructor, please speak to me about those concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our conversation, the next person in the chain of command is the Department Head of Literature and Languages, Dr. Hunter Hayes.

### **Other course policies**

1. I do not accept late work.
2. You must turn in all assignments in order to pass the course.
3. Please be courteous to me and to your classmates; come to class on time. See attendance policy for more information.

## **University Procedures**

### **ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability  
Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-  
5835

Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)  
[u](#)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

### **Graduate Advising- Literature and Languages graduate students**

Please be sure to send an email to or make an appointment with your graduate director regarding your degree program to ensure that you are on the right track. It is especially important to remember the 12-hour rule: students will lose anything over 12 hours if they have not been fully admitted into a degree program or if they change their program.

Doctoral students should contact Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom at [Donna.Dunbar-Odom@tamuc.edu](mailto:Donna.Dunbar-Odom@tamuc.edu). Master's-English students should contact Dr. Susan Stewart at [Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu](mailto:Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu). Master's-Applied Linguistics (TESOL) students should contact Dr. Lucy Pickering at [Lucy.Pickering@tamuc.edu](mailto:Lucy.Pickering@tamuc.edu). Master's-Spanish students should contact Dr. Flavia Belpoliti at [Flavia.Belpoliti@tamuc.edu](mailto:Flavia.Belpoliti@tamuc.edu).

## Course Calendar

This schedule may be adjusted to accommodate for student learning needs.

Class Meeting Date	Argument Analysis Due?	Be Prepared to Discuss:
W1 January 21	N	
W2 January 28	N	Excerpts from <i>The Rhetoric of Rhetoric</i> in eCollege/ Learning Studio shell
W3 February 4	Y	<i>College English</i> special issue on The Social Turn in Composition in eCollege/ Learning Studio shell
W4 February 11	Y	<i>The Anguish of Displacement</i> chapters 1-3 Presentation: "I Have A Dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr.
W5 February 18	Y	<i>The Anguish of Displacement</i> chapters 4-6 Presentation: "What Is Poverty?" by Jo Goodwin Parker
W6 February 25	Y	Shannon Carter's 2 articles in eCollege/ Learning Studio shell
W7 March 4	Y	<i>I Am Malala</i> Presentation: "Ain't I A Woman?" by Sojourner Truth
W8 March 11	Y	<i>I Am Malala</i> Presentation: anything by Lucretia Mott
Spring Break No class		
W9 March 25	N	Workshop: writing for social change projects  (If more students add class: Presentation: Adrienne Rich, "Claiming An Education.")
W10 April 1	Y	<i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> Presentation: excerpt from Upton Sinclair's <i>The Jungle</i>
W11	Y	<i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i>

April 8		Presentation: “Solidarity in the Struggle for Social Change” by Leslie Feinberg
W12 April 15	Y	<i>Lean In</i>  Presentation: anything by Margaret Sanger
W13 April 22	Y	<i>Lean In</i>  Presentation: anything by Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Cady Stanton
W14 April 29	N	<i>Living Room</i> Gogan’s CCCC article (in Learning Studio/ eCollege)  Presentation: Desmond Tutu, “Two Steps Obama Can Take To Defeat AIDS.”
W15 May 6	N	Present final papers (still in progress)  (If more students add class: Presentation: Adrienne Rich, “Claiming An Education.”)
W16	No final exam for this class. <b>Final papers due Monday, May 11 at noon via Learning Studio (formerly known as eCollege).</b>	