

FYW 150: Energy Policy Arguments Fall 2019

Dr. Megan Little

Office Location: Founders 172-A

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:00AM-1:00 PM and by appointment

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Course Description

In this course—which is at its core a writing course—we will center our discussions and assignments around energy policy. We'll read arguments debating what makes an energy policy "green" or "sustainable." We'll consider debates about whether nuclear energy is a viable solution for climate change. We'll read optimistic advocates praising new power sources, but also facts about limitations and challenges of developing technologies. We'll consider how regulation works, and read arguments critical of regulatory agencies. We'll read poetry. Science fiction. Technical and scientific reports. Snarky twitter exchanges.

The goal is not to become experts in this field (people get PhDs in just one of these areas!) Instead, we will perform critical investigations into a highly complex issue to make you a better critical thinker and academic writer. Strong writers know how to investigate, understand, and write about complex issues. They know how to read texts actively with an eye toward rhetorical analysis and critical interpretation. They deftly engage different types of texts, genres, and modes of argumentation, assess their merits, and marshal others' voices into their own writing. They are strategic about the claims they commit to (have you ever tried to "back up" an inordinately large claim? It's impossible). And they know how to fine-tune arguments for different contexts and audiences. This semester, we practice these skills.

Our formal learning objectives are to:

- Write in ways appropriate to the audiences and occasions of each assignment
- Write effectively in or about multiple discourses by distinguishing among and responding to rhetorical contexts
- Apply relevant and compelling content, based on strong understandings of assigned subjects, in order to write effectively across multiple types of discourse
- Use credible sources to develop ideas and arguments that are effective within assigned disciplines and discourses
- Cite sources accurately according to conventions of the topic and discipline
- Write clearly and fluently, with few errors in syntax and grammar

Required Texts and Materials

All texts are available in Blackboard, unless otherwise announced

Course Policies

Attendance Policy: If you have **more than three (3)** unexcused absences, your grade will drop by an entire letter grade. (Excuses for absences generally require some sort of documentation: an official note from a coach, a doctor's note, etc.) Some of you commute; some of you have

jobs; I respect the efforts you make to get to class and to get here on time. In a discussion-based class like this one, you cannot make up being in class after you've missed a class. Being with us for nearly every scheduled class is essential to both your success this semester, and the success of the class as a whole. In case you do have to miss a class, make friends with someone who can fill you in on what you missed.

Lateness: *Come on time or early to class.* Come early to reduce stress. Eat a snack; get to know the person next to you; check your email before class begins. It's a relaxing way to start class. If you come in after I have taken attendance, you are late. If this is the case, come see me after class and ask me to mark you as present, but late. Also, make friends with someone who can fill you in on what you missed. If you are repeatedly late to class, your grade may suffer.

Late Work: Deadlines are crucial in academic and professional contexts. Project planning and time management are part of the skill set you should be developing. These assignments prepare you for class and therefore cannot be made up after the deadline. Major assignments are reduced by one letter grade per day if late. In-class work cannot be made up after the deadline has passed. All major assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

That said, I sincerely want you to do well in this course. Your academic success in this course and throughout your college career depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Stress is a common part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected life changes outside the classroom. I strongly encourage you to take care of yourself throughout the term before the demands of midterms and finals reach their peak. There are a number of support services on campus that are ready to assist you and I strongly encourage you to contact them when needed. If a documented emergency arises, let me know. University-sanctioned absences such as team travel should be cleared with me early in the semester.

Email: You need to check your USD email address at least once every weekday to keep up with this class. Generally, I will respond to your emails within 24 hours on weekdays; my response time will vary on weekends.

Personal Electronic Device Policy: Because this class relies primarily on discussion and not lecture, your engagement is required. Sometimes uses of technology hinder that active engagement. Although you will be asked to bring to class and use your electronic devices frequently, I expect that you will refrain from checking email and from logging on to any site that does not pertain to discussions or assignments during class time. During class discussions that do not require computer use, I'll ask you to close your laptops and put away your phones/ tablets. You are, of course, invited (and often required) to use all sorts of digital media in this class.

Confidentiality: *I will respect the confidentiality of anything you tell me in class or in my office, with two key exceptions:*

1. If you sign the form permitting me to share your work with other students and colleagues, I may use your writing as a model in teaching other students, in faculty meetings, or in conference presentations. It is entirely up to you if you would like to give me this permission. Whether or not you give permission has nothing to do with your grade for the course.

2. If you tell me anything suggests that you may be in danger, that someone else may be in danger, or that you have been the victim of sexual violence, it is my legal obligation to report this to appropriate people at the university.

Plagiarism versus Citing Sources: Originality is the crucial ingredient that makes your writing powerfully “yours.” Submitting someone else’s writing as your own is not just a serious academic crime, it’s downright unethical.

Plagiarism harms the relationship between writing teacher and student. Instead of supporting your intellectual and personal growth as a writer, if I suspect plagiarism, I must begin policing and punishing you for stealing someone else’s intellectual property and presenting it as your own. I’m sure you see the problem: it’s very hard for an instructor to do both of these jobs at the same time. If you are panicking about producing your own writing, or confused by an assignment, don’t steal someone else’s words to cover up your fear. Get in touch with me and I will help you figure out a better solution.

The USD Academic Integrity Policy can be found at the following URL: http://home.sandiego.edu/~kaufmann/USD_academic_integrity.html

University Resources

The Writing Center, (619) 260-4581 Founders Hall 190B

<https://www.sandiego.edu/cas/english/centers-and-lectures/writing-center/>

The USD Writing Center, which is free to all USD students, helps students improve their writing. Students may bring work in any stage of completion to the Writing Center, from brainstorming notes to rough drafts to graded essays.

The Copley Library, (619) 260-4799

<https://ole.sandiego.edu/bbcswebdav/library>

The Copley Library, located on the west end of the campus, currently houses over 500,000 volumes. Collections include books, journals, reference works, databases, government documents, newspapers and electronic journals in many languages, as well as maps, videos, sound recordings, microforms and rare books.

Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center, (619) 260-4655 Serra Hall 300

<https://www.sandiego.edu/disability/>

The Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center is committed to helping students with disabilities obtain meaningful academic accommodations and support and to help improve access to the many excellent programs and activities offered by the University.

The Counseling Center, (619) 260-4655 Serra Hall 300

www.sandiego.edu/usdcc

The Counseling Center provides confidential consultations, assessment, and psychological/psychiatric treatment to facilitate students’ personal growth and address their mental health concerns.

Assignments

Informal Work, Preparation, Participation: You will receive credit for all smaller assignments you do that build towards and prepare you for drafting major assignments. This includes finishing reading, informal papers based on readings, being prepared for class, and participating in class! (Talking!) It's your job to help make our class fun.

Presentation: One student will be our fearless leader for a class meeting. You will be responsible for getting the conversation going that day by organizing ten minutes of class time for ONE of the assigned texts. You will sign-up for your reading in advance, talk about it briefly, and then bring questions to lead a class discussion, debate, or activity. I will give you ideas to help you find this requirement creative and fun. You must use the wipe board or the computer console/overhead projector in some way during your presentation.

Formal Work (Papers):

Paper 1: **A complex controversy:** Choose a theme to explain the controversy around an energy policy issue, taking care to represent all stakeholders fairly. Rather than a list of opinions, the paper should feel like a cohesive tour organized around a theme.

Paper 2: **An In-depth rhetorical analysis:** You will pick two different texts and compare the rhetorical strategies they use to make their case.

Paper 3: **Evidence and advocacy:** You will make your case on an energy policy issue, but do so cautiously, the way academics do: by aligning yourself with an argument from a reputable source (you will conduct independent research to find this article), critiquing it, and distinguishing your point in relation to what "they say."

Final Portfolio: An anthology of your own selected writings from FYW 150. It should showcase your growth, skills, and accomplishments as a thinker and writer this semester.

Peer Review: You must be present on the days we conduct peer review in order to receive credit for peer review.

Writing Conference: You will meet with me for a short conference before paper 3 is due. This will be our time to discuss your progress in class, your paper 3 assignment, and any questions you have. I expect students to COME PREPARED. You will be driving the discussion, so be ready to discuss what you want to discuss.

Revision: All formal papers may be revised and turned in for a new grade. (This is voluntary.) The new grade replaces the old grade. The following rules apply:

1. The first draft must have been turned in on time.
2. The student must have participated in peer review for the paper.
3. The student has one week from the time the paper is returned to resubmit the revision for a new grade. For example, if the paper is returned with its initial grade on Monday, the student has until the following Monday to complete the revision.
4. For Formal Paper 3, revisions must be turned by the scheduled Final Exam meeting time.

Grading Breakdown

Participation and Preparation	5%
Student Presentation	5%
Informal Papers (IP) IP1, IP2, IP4, IP5, IP7, IP8 = 2% each IP3, IP6, IP9 = 3% each IP10 (portfolio) = 4%	25%
Paper 1 (grade includes peer review)	20%
Paper 2 (grade includes peer review)	20%
Paper 3 (grade includes peer review)	25%

Peer Partners and Peer Groups

Each unit you will be assigned to a peer or a peer group. A peer partner is your “go-to” resource during that unit. You will be reading each other’s work. You will be giving each other feedback. You can rely on each other if you have to miss class and/or have a question. This collaborative work is part of your general “participation” grade, as well as a chunk of every formal paper.