

Master Syllabus

ENL 260: Intermediate Composition

University Studies Cluster Requirement 1C: Intermediate Writing. This University Studies Master Syllabus serves as a guide and standard for all instructors teaching an approved course in the University Studies program. Individual instructors have full academic freedom in teaching their courses, but as a condition of course approval, agree to focus on the outcomes listed below, to cover the identified material, to use these or comparable assignments as part of the course work, and to make available the agreed-upon artifacts for assessment of learning outcomes.

Course Overview

In this class, students learn to analyze and apply the argumentative moves that writers make in academic and professional discourse: argument by fact, definition, evaluation, causes, and proposition. Students begin by learning the Toulmin Model for argumentation. This theoretical model provides the basis for analyzing and applying argumentative structures and for understanding that arguments are part of a cultural context—in other words, writers and audiences have values and assumptions that shape the ways in which they define, discuss, and argue about issues.

In all units, written homework and class discussions ask students to not only identify and analyze texts for the ways in which arguments are structured, but to also assess those arguments in relation to their claims, reasons, and warrants. In addition, students work on their writing to develop a command of grammar, punctuation, and word usage, and to craft sentences, paragraphs, and documents that lead readers through the writer's arguments and achieve the writer's purpose.

Learning Outcomes

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes. After completing Intermediate Composition, students will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss the ways in which writers use argumentation principles to achieve their purpose
- Apply argumentation principles, incorporating claims and evidence and demonstrating an awareness of the assumptions and values that substantiate an issue
- Demonstrate purposeful command of sentences, paragraphs, and the document as a whole to achieve your purpose
- Manage writing and review processes, using effective research methods and demonstrating a developed use of grammar, punctuation, and usage in written work

Cluster 1C Learning Outcomes. After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific context
- Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences
- Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development, and formal conventions
- Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating, and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing

Texts and/or Assigned Readings

The following list represents examples of the type of textbook instructors may adopt for this course:

- *Everything's an Argument, Sixth Edition* by Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruszkiewicz. Bedford/St. Martin's: 2013.
- *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Assignments

The following represent examples of the kinds of assignments instructors may assign.

Assignment	Pages	% of Grade
Factual Argument	3–4	15
Definition Argument	4	20
Causal or Proposal Argument	2–3	20
Evaluation Argument	4	25
Homework (weekly written homework: document analysis, drafts of an assignment, peer critiques, reflections or post-mortems)	20+	20

Common Assignment: Evaluation Argument

Overview for Instructors. In this assignment, students learn and apply the principles of evaluation argument, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a specific text in relation to its audience, context, and purpose. Instructors should assign texts that promote deep reading and critical thinking (an essay about a current issue, for instance). To complete this assignment, students make and support an evaluative claim with appropriate and sufficient evidence, organize the argument for their audience, and demonstrate command of sentences, paragraphs and the document as a whole, purposefully crafting each level to engage readers. In this

assignment, students must incorporate quotes from the textbook and from the text being evaluated to support, define, and/or prove their claim. Length: 3–4 pages. Instructors may decide the format: essay, report.

Instructions for Students. Write an evaluative argument, assessing the strengths and weakness of a specific text in relation to its audience, context, and purpose. Your evaluation should make and support an evaluative claim with appropriate and compelling evidence, be organized for your readers, and demonstrate command of sentences, paragraphs, and the document as a whole. To support your claims, you must incorporate quotes from *Everything's an Argument* and from the text you are evaluating. Length: 3–4 pages.

In your own evaluative argument, make sure you do the following:

- Introduce the text you are analyzing and identify the criteria used to evaluate it
- Make an arguable evaluative claim about the text
- Support your evaluative claim with evidence, including quotes from course readings and examples from the case
- Organize your claims and reasons for your readers

As you write your evaluation, consider these questions:

- What are the argumentative structures used in the text?
- What is the purpose of those argumentative structures?
- What is the arguable claim, the reasons, the warrant?
- How well does the evidence support the claim
- How does the organization and stylistic choices contribute/detract from the overall argument?
- What revisions do you recommend to the writer to make the argument stronger, given the writer's purpose, the audience, and context?

Your argument will be evaluated on these elements: claim, evidence, depth of analysis, organization, command of sentence, paragraph and document structure, and mechanical details, including conventional errors and citations.

Common Assignment Evaluation

The Common Assignment assesses the writer's ability to analyze and apply argumentative structures. In this assignment, students analyze the argumentative structures used in a text assigned by the instructor, and they write an argument, applying the principles of evaluation argument. This assignment also assesses students' understanding of the Toulmin model and the ways in which argumentative structures are situated, reflecting the interests and motives of readers and writers.

University Studies Outcomes. This assignment addresses these University Studies outcomes:

1. Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific context
2. Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences

3. Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development, and formal conventions
4. Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating, and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing

Arguable Claim (1C SLOs 2 & 3)

- Claim is appropriate, identifiable, and compelling
- Writer purposefully develops claim, leading readers through the argument
- Writer pursues the topic in a complex manner, explaining, exploring, defending, investigating, and persuading and/or analyzing toward a unified purpose

Evidence/Support/Use of Sources (1C SLOs 1 & 4)

- Writer uses appropriate and sufficient evidence
- Evidence is well-chosen, compelling readers to think
- All claims are supported with examples or quotes, lending credibility and depth to the project
- Sources are addressed/acknowledged, credible, and selected purposefully
- Sources are integrated into the argument with a combination of quotes, paraphrase, and summary

Depth/Development of Ideas (1C SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

- Analysis of ideas and texts is purposeful and demonstrates sustained attention to given topic
- Writing reflects complex and detailed thinking and serves to deepen the argument
- Main ideas are developed and/or extended with appropriate detail
- Specific and concrete information is provided as necessary

Organization (1C SLOs 2 & 3)

- The order of ideas presented assist in carrying the reader to the end point
- The writer uses transitions at the sentence, paragraph, and document level
- The writer makes explicit the relationships between the working elements of the argument

Style and Conventions (1C SLOs 2 & 3)

- Writer demonstrates command of sentences, paragraphs and the document as a whole, purposefully crafting each level to engage readers
- Figurative language is appropriate for the audience and carefully considered
- Author employs necessary conventions of college-level writing including functional sentences, appropriate citation and adherence to standard format

Sample Course Outline

The following course outline represents the amount and type of work that should be assigned in this course, students complete four major assignments, applying the argumentative frameworks studied in class. In the first unit, the Toulmin Model for argumentation is introduced. This theoretical model provides the basis for analyzing and applying the argumentative structures learned by providing a vocabulary to describe argument, but to also help students understand that arguments are part of a cultural context—in other words, writers and audiences have values and assumptions that shape the ways in which they define, discuss, and argue about issues. Written homework and class discussions also emphasize this focus on context, asking students to not only identify and analyze texts for the ways in which arguments are structured, but to also assess those arguments in relation to its audience, context, and purpose.

In addition, students practice writing skills, working on these elements:

- Basic grammar
- Grammatical sentences
- Sentence style
- Word choice

Unit 1: Argument by fact

This unit introduces students to argumentation and the ways in which arguments are structured within a cultural context. Students learn the Toulmin Model for argumentation, which will be used throughout the semester to discuss and analyze the structural elements and contextual nature of argument. This model introduces terms used throughout the semester: claims, evidence, reasons, warrants, backing, qualifiers, and rebuttal. In this unit, students also learn how factual arguments are characterized and developed, examining how they are part of a cultural context with writers and audiences who come to the situation with values and assumptions. In this unit, students analyze a text, paying attention to how it uses facts, and write a factual argument about the writer's establish objectivity.

Assigned reading for this unit:

- Chapter 1: Everything is an Argument
- Chapter 7: Structuring Arguments
- Chapter 8: Arguments of Fact
- Chapter 16: Academic Arguments
- Handbook: Basic Grammar Review

Major Assignment: Analysis of a text (3–4 pages). The following prompt is an example of the kind of textual analysis instructors may assign.

The Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania hosts <FactCheck.org>, a website dedicated to separating facts from opinion or falsehood in the area of politics. It claims to be politically neutral. Analyze a recent controversial item listed on its homepage. Carefully study the FactCheck case, paying particular attention to the devices FactCheck uses to suggest or ensure objectivity and how it

handles facts and statistics. Then offer your own brief factual argument about the site's objectivity.

Unit 2: Argument by Definition

In this unit, students learn the purpose and use of definition arguments. Students examine a current issue of problem from different viewpoints, learning how writers make and develop definitional arguments, particularly in relation to the types of claims, the evidence, and the warrants. Students also consider the figurative and visual language used to define an issue. To understand the elements of definition and the ways in which those elements work, students compare and contrast two arguments about the same issue, identifying the definitions, figurative language, and visuals for the ways in which the writers define and configure an issue for an audience.

Assigned reading:

- Chapter 9: Arguments of Definition
- Chapter 13: Style in Arguments
- Chapter 14: Visual Arguments
- Handbook: Grammatical Sentences

Major Assignment: Compare and contrast how two different writers define a current issue (4 pages). Students may extend work done in the first unit or instructor may assign a text.

Unit 3A: Causal Arguments (Option A)

This unit extends students understanding of argument by learning how causal arguments are characterized and developed as well as how they are used to move people to take action. In addition to examining causal argument for its claims, reasons, and warrants, students also consider what counts as evidence in an argument and whether a particular strategy of argument is ethical, fair, or accurate. In this unit, students write a causal argument, using evidence to support their claims.

Assigned reading:

- Chapter 11: Causal Arguments
- Chapter 17: Finding Evidence
- Chapter 18: Evaluating Sources
- Chapter 19: Using Sources
- Handbook: Sentence Style

Major Assignment: Write a letter to the editor of the *Torch* that makes a causal argument that responds to current issue (600–900 words).

Unit 3B: Proposals (Option B)

This unit extends students understanding of argument by analyzing how proposals are characterized and developed as well as how they are used to define and respond to needs and problems in a community. In addition to examining causal argument for its claims, reasons, and warrants, students also consider what counts as evidence in an argument and whether a

particular strategy of argument is ethical, fair, or accurate. In this unit, students write a proposal argument, using evidence to support their claim about a proposed change.

Assigned reading:

- Chapter 11: Proposals
- Chapter 17: Finding Evidence
- Chapter 18: Evaluating Sources
- Chapter 19: Using Sources
- Handbook: Sentence Style

Major Assignment: Write a letter to the editor of the *Torch* that responds to an issue on campus and proposes a solution (600–900 words).

Unit 4: Evaluation Arguments

This final unit of the course brings together all of the concepts learned during the semester. Students learn how to characterize and develop an evaluative argument, formulating criteria, making claims, and presenting evidence. For this unit, students evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a text assigned by the instructor (for instance, an essay about a current issue), identifying the criteria for evaluation, using the criteria to evaluate a text, and then writing an evaluative argument that assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the text, particularly in relation to its audience, context, and purpose.

Assigned reading:

- Chapter 10: Evaluations
- Handbook: Word Choice

Major Assignment: Write an evaluative argument, assessing the strengths and weakness of a specific text in relation to its audience, context, and purpose. Your evaluation should make and support an evaluative claim with appropriate and compelling evidence, be organized for your readers, and demonstrate command of sentences, paragraphs, and the document as a whole. To support your claims, you must incorporate quotes from *Everything's an Argument* and from the text you are evaluating. Length: 4 pages.