

**English 225: Academic Argumentation**  
Winter 2014 Section 005  
Tues/Thurs 4:00 - 5:30PM  
Understanding and Making Arguments about Food

**Instructor:** Aubrey Schiavone

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**Course Description:** All sections of English 225 focus on examining and employing effective academic argumentation. Academic argumentation here refers to the presentation, explanation, and assessment of claims through written reasoning that utilizes appropriate evidence and writing conventions. The course builds on and refines skills from introductory writing courses English 124 and 125 courses, as well as provides a basic introduction to finding, and effectively incorporating research into student writing, for use in a range of future academic contexts.

In recent years, arguments about food have become more and more prevalent (and controversial) across national media outlets. In this section of English 225, we will analyze and construct arguments about contemporary food issues. Through course readings, major writing assignments, and posts to the course blog, students will be encouraged to engage with their own experiences with food, food policy, food activism, current trends in eating and dieting, as well as popular portrayals of the food industry such as documentaries or advertising. Major writing assignments will involve the meaningful incorporation of course readings, secondary research conducted out of class for students' chosen research topics, evaluation and integration of source material, and a final multimodal composition assignment.

**Student Learning Goals for English 225:**

1. To hone mechanics, attention to language and audience, style, and craft in students' academic writing.
2. To develop a critical understanding of some key practices and examples of academic argumentation.
3. To develop an awareness of different rhetorical approaches in academic writing and to practice these approaches.
4. To develop a working set of skills and resources for academic research projects, including the distinction between primary and secondary sources, and an understanding of how to begin, carry out, and complete a (short) writing assignment incorporating research.
5. To develop an awareness of the rigors and potential pleasures entailed in reading about, discussing, researching, and writing about pertinent issues in academic contexts.

**Required Materials:** I will provide course texts through our course website.

**Grading Policy:** I will provide a detailed grading rubric for each major writing assignment listed below. In general, the grade scale for the course follows University of Michigan's LSA grade scale:

A	93-100%	C+	77-77.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C	73-76.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B	83-86.9%	D	60-70%
B-	80-82.9%	F	Less than 60%

### Grade Breakdown:

Argument of Definition:	5-6 pages	100 points
Annotated Bibliography:	10-12 sources	150 points
Argumentative Research Paper:	10 pages	250 points
Course Blog:	5 posts	250 points
Re-mediation and Reflection:	2-3 minutes, 2-3 pages	100 points 150 points
Short Responses:	10 responses	100 points
Total:		1000 points

Although class participation is not formally graded, the course is discussion and workshop based and your success in the course relies heavily on your continued attendance and active participation in the course. Your participation and engagement with the course will be reflected in the quality and completion of your major writing assignments.

Peer review is an important part of the drafting and revising process for each major writing assignment. Peer review days will involve small group peer review of each others' writing in progress. I will provide you with detailed handouts to guide your reading and commenting on one another's drafts. Because these peer review sessions are so influential to you and your classmates' development as writers, any absence during a scheduled peer review workshop day will likely result in a letter grade deduction for the major paper being peer reviewed.

### Assignment Descriptions:

*Argument of Definition:* Definitions matter. Crucial critical, political, social and scientific terms are constantly reargued, reshaped, and updated. For this assignment, you will investigate a particular term that you have identified as influential to contemporary conversations about food. You will then construct an argument conveying how this term currently functions in discourses about food.

*Annotated Bibliography:* This is a list of sources including an annotation for each source which consists of both a summary of the source and an evaluation of the text for its credibility and usefulness in relationship to your chosen research project. (10 – 12 sources, at least four primary, at least four secondary; at least three of the secondary sources must be scholarly.)

*Argumentative Research Paper:* Based on the research you have done, the sources you have gathered in your annotated bibliography, and your analysis of those sources, write an argumentative paper which offers a position on a controversial aspect of your chosen research topic. The research over the course of the unit will provide the context, supporting evidence for

your position, and explanation of the opposing view. Remember that you must develop your argument in depth and draw upon the knowledge acquired over the course of the semester to sustain your ideas. (8 full – 10 pages; 8 -10 sources)

*Course Blog:* 5 posts and 10 comments: The course blog is an opportunity to further explore course topics, to generate or continue class discussions with your classmates, and to share resources with the class. Over the course of the semester, you will compose 5 blog posts in response to specific prompts that I will post to the blog. Throughout the semester, 2 blog posts of your choice ought to incorporate some not-only-textual form of composing. This means, at least 2 of your blog posts throughout the semester should incorporate some visual aspects such as still images or video or some audio aspects. These multimodal blog posts will serve as an opportunity to explore different modes of composing in anticipation for your final major remediation assignment in the course. In addition to composing your own blog posts, you should keep up with your classmates' posts, and for each of the 5 major blog post assignments, you should comment on at least two of your classmates' posts (10 comments overall throughout the semester). Also on the course blog, we will use tags for various disciplines, genres, media, and other core concepts to create a class-sourced, indexed resource that will help you with your writing projects this semester, and in your future coursework. I encourage you to post additional thoughts and resources, as well as relevant news, events, or readings that might be useful to you or your classmates.

*Re-mediation Assignment:* For this assignment, you will re-mediate one of your earlier text-based, written arguments from the course. This means, you should re-mediate either one of your major writing assignments or one of your text-based blog posts. Your re-mediation should meaningfully incorporate text, image, audio, and/or video in order to convey some argument to a particular audience that you have identified as stakeholders. In addition to your re-mediation, you will submit a 3-5 page reflection about your composition and about your process in constructing that composition.

**Attendance Policy:** Again, because the course is discussion and workshop based, your success in the course will depend heavily on attendance. You may miss two class sessions without penalty. Each absence after those two will likely result in ½ letter grade deduction on your final grade for the course. Extenuating circumstances such as absences due to medical and family emergencies and to participation in university teams or programs will not count against your final grade; however, you must communicate with me about these absences in a respectful and timely manner.

Any absence during a scheduled peer review workshop day will likely result in a letter grade deduction for the major paper being peer reviewed.

**Late Work:** I will likely not accept late reading and writing response assignments or late in-class assignments. For late major writing assignments, I will likely deduct a full letter grade for each day they are missing (this is not each *class period* but each *day* that the major assignment is not turned in). Again, extenuating circumstances such as absences due to medical and family emergencies and to participation in university teams or programs will not result in grade deductions, but need to be communicated to me clearly and in a timely manner.

**Technology Use:** Please silence all cell phones and electronic devices prior to each class period. If you choose to use a laptop in class to take notes, access course readings, or to access your written work for workshop, please refrain from any extraneous activities such as checking email or facebook during class. If you are using electronic devices for anything other than coursework, I reserve the right to ask you to refrain from using a laptop or to ask you to leave class.

**Plagiarism:** The University of Michigan defines plagiarism as ‘Submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, work of art, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the students’ own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.’ Plagiarism is when you knowingly (or unknowingly) submit someone else’s ideas or words as your own. Please read through the “Memo to all students taking courses in the English Department” for a fuller definition of plagiarism and its various forms:

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>

If you commit an act of academic dishonesty in this course by either plagiarizing someone else’s work or allowing your own work to be misused by another, you will fail the assignment and possibly the entire course. In addition, I will report the incident to both the English Department and the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Please also note that if you submit work already completed for one course as original work for another course, you are violating university policies and will fail the assignment and possibly the course.

**Sweetland Center for Writing:** “The Sweetland Center for Writing supplements formal writing instruction by providing free programs that help students understand assignments, develop ideas, support arguments and claims, integrate new media, cite sources, and revise at the paragraph and sentence level.” The Sweetland Center for Writing is located at 1310 North Quad. I encourage all students to seek out the Sweetland Center for Writing and take advantage of their resources for undergraduate writers. Please visit their website for more information or to make an appointment: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland>

**Accommodations:** In accordance with University of Michigan policy, I am happy to provide accommodations for students with learning disabilities, and I will protect the confidentiality of students’ individual learning needs. I will work closely with the Office for Students with Disabilities (SSD), and if you have not already contacted them, I encourage you to do so. The office for students with disabilities is located at G-664 Haven Hall, and can be contacted either by phone: (734) 763-3000 or on their website: <http://ssd.umich.edu/index.html> Please email me by the second week of the term if you would like to show me your letter from SSD describing approved accommodations. I will set up a confidential appointment with you to discuss accommodations.

**Religious Observances:** If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me so we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but, in accordance with U-M policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.