

Pols 20: Controversial Legal Issues Spring 2012

**DMH 161
M W 10:30-11:45 a.m.**

**Instructor: Dr. Sabrina Pinnell
E-Mail: SLPinnell@gmail.com*
Office: Clark 404D
Ofc Hrs: M W 2:30-4 and by appt.**

*Preferred method of contact.

Introduction

Contrary to the course title, the primary focus of this class is *not* legal issues; this is a class in *critical thinking*, or the ability to analyze, question and process information as it is presented to you in articles, texts, or other media. The “legal issues” portion of the course is included to give subject areas on which there are varied (and often polarized) opinions; you will exercise your newly-acquired thinking skills by analyzing arguments made on these issues, and coming up with your own. By the end of this class you should definitely be able to do two things. First, you should be able to analyze and critique the arguments and information presented by others, so you know whether or not their opinions are really worth accepting. Second, you should be able to come up with informed opinions on many issues that you can successfully defend against the critique of others. By the end of this course, you should be able to do both of these things in writing and in oral discussion.

The importance of these skills cannot be understated, especially in an academic setting where you are now expected to go beyond simply reading and internalizing information from class materials, lectures and other media; you now need to acquire the skills to analyze information as it is presented and be able to process it so you can use it in writing or discussion. Even if you do not go beyond an undergraduate degree, the skills in this class are vital to being a person who is well-informed, rather than just one who has opinions.

Course Objectives

This is considered a A3 GE course, and as such has some high expectations in terms of objectives. Briefly, here they are:

- ☛ Distinguish between reasoning (e.g., explanation, argument) and other types of discourse (e.g., description, assertion).
- ☛ Identify, analyze and evaluate different types of reasoning.
- ☛ Find and state critical unstated assumptions in reasoning.
- ☛ Evaluate factual claims or statements used in reasoning and evaluate the sources of evidence for such claims.
- ☛ Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism.

☛ Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

☛ Locate, retrieve, organize, synthesize, and communicate information of relevance to the subject matter of the course.

☛ Reflect on past successes, failures and alternative strategies.

The first four requirements will be fulfilled with a combination of in-class participation, homework and writing assignments (argument analyses, summaries of articles for discussion, and a position paper). We will fulfill the plagiarism requirement by using an electronic module as well as an in-class lecture, and demonstration of understanding via citation in the written assignments. The fifth and sixth requirements will be fulfilled via an oral debate. Finally, students will fulfill the seventh requirement through review of work over the course of the semester, and by using a self-evaluation tool at the end of the course.

Readings

There is a textbook that you should acquire as soon as possible, as it is vital to the first half of the course: M. Neil Browne and Stuart M. Keeley's Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking, 10th edition, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2012 (hereafter known as Browne and Keeley). There are also readings on reserve in the library or accessible on-line that you will need to read over the course of the quarter. The on-line readings are listed in this syllabus with the web addresses. You must do the reading for each week ahead of time, as it will prepare you for lecture, discussion and working on in-class exercises; see the Course Schedule for what readings are required per week. If you are not prepared, it will reflect in your discussion and ultimate participation grade. ALL READINGS ARE REQUIRED READINGS.

Evaluation for this Course

Students will be evaluated in the following ways for this course:

Participation	60 points
In-Class/Home Work	40 points
Argument Analyses 1 and 2	60 points
Plagiarism Module	20 points
Debate	80 points
Final Paper	
Outline	20 points
Paper	100 points
Self-Evaluation	<u>20 points</u>
	400 points total

Grading Policy

All grades for participation, analyses, final paper and the debate will be based on a point system. If you divide the number of points you receive by the points per assignment, you can generate a percentage to determine your letter grade: 97-100% is an A+, 93-96% is an A, 90-92% is an A-, 87-89% is a B+, 83-86% is a B, 80-82% is a B-, etc. Keep track of your points over the course of the semester as noted above, and you should have an idea how you stand in

the class. Note: Given that this is an A3 course, a final grade of C- or below is not passing.

In-class/homework assignments will be graded out of 10 points, so 9-10 is an A, 8 is a B, 7 is a C, etc. Assignments turned in will achieve at least a 5; no assignment is a 0.

The plagiarism module and the self-evaluation are assigned points by completion; if you have fully completed these assignments, you receive the full number of points.

All grades are final for this course.

Participation: You are expected to participate in all class discussions and in-class exercises, having prepared beforehand in terms of reading or homework. In-class discussions of the readings particularly in the second half of the course require active preparation and participation, and those not doing the reading will be glaringly discernable from those that are. When class debates are held, you are expected to attend even if you are not directly involved in the debate, and help evaluate the arguments of the people who will be debating that particular class day. While I do not usually take attendance, a lack of attending class will undoubtedly affect your grade in this area; if you are not in class, you are not participating.

A note about discussions: this class is designed to encourage students to analyze others' opinions, come up with informed opinions of their own, and generally to become comfortable with discussing issues in an open class setting. Many of the issues we are going to be discussing are "hot button" issues, meaning that many people may have already have strong positions about them due to past experience, socialization, religion, political ideals, etc. In order to successfully discuss issues in this class, everyone must agree to act civilly towards each other in discussion, allow others to speak and fully state their arguments, and please, do not "get personal." Conduct that goes beyond the bounds of rational consideration of the issues, that uses language or other behavior to show disrespect towards other individuals or insult them outright *will not be tolerated*, and you will be required to leave the class session.

In-Class/Home Work: We will use class time to hand out and begin exercises that work with critical thinking techniques such as identifying and evaluation of issues, language, reasoning, evidence and conclusions in written works such as articles and texts. Students will then finish these exercises on their own and hand them in at the start of the next class session. Each of these assignments will be worth 10 points each for a total of 40 points. Late work will only be accepted if there is a verifiable emergency. Students may work together on these particular assignments, but each student must submit a separate copy or he or she may not receive proper credit.

Argument Analyses 1 and 2: Each student must complete two analyses of written work that he/she will need to locate well before the due date in order to analyze and critique according to the principles that the student has learned up to that point in the course. The first analysis (750-1000 words, approximately 3-4 pages) should concentrate on the language and reasoning of the work you select. This analysis is due February 22nd and is worth 20 points. The second analysis (1000-1250 words, approximately 4-5 pages and due March 21st) should consider the language and reasoning as well as the quality of the evidence in the work, and is worth 40 points. Both assignments must be turned in at the start of class in hard copy form. Late papers will not be accepted unless you have a verified emergency. You will need to find a different written piece for each assignment. The work can be an article (written or electronic), or a section of a text on

a particular issue of your choice. Each source must be at least 1000 words and must take a clear position on an issue; for Analysis #2 the work must also include some form of statistical information (quoted statistics, tables, etc.). Blog entries are not eligible, as these often have evidence problems. You must attach a hard copy of the work to each paper. Grammar, style and ability to cite sources will count in the grade for this assignment.

Plagiarism Module: All students are required to access the Tutorials page at King Library (<http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/tutorial/index.html>) in order to register and then complete an on-line tutorial on plagiarism. A score of 100% is needed on all sections of the tutorial; you can repeat sections if necessary. Once you have your score, you should print out the confirmation page you will receive via e-mail and present it to the instructor by March 14th. Completion of this tutorial is worth 20 points, and I will accept late completion of the tutorial only with a verified emergency.

Debate: Each student is required to prepare for and actively participate in a debate with a partner against another two-person team in class during Weeks 13 through 15 (April 23rd – May 9th). These debates will involve selecting one of the particular issues we will discuss in class (see Schedule) and taking either a position that supports the issue or is against it. You should consider which issue you would like to debate as soon as possible, as I will begin matching up partners and teams in Week 4. If you have someone in particular you would like to partner with, please let me know; if not, I will make the selections. A schedule for debates will go out on March 10th, so you will have plenty of time to prepare as a team for the event. Teams will then need to create arguments to support and argue against the issue, using the sources already available in the syllabus, along with any additional sources they deem necessary. Additional research for this assignment is therefore optional, but encouraged.

Each team in the debate will be required to do the following: present an introductory speech that takes a particular position on the issue, then a rebuttal speech after the other side has presented its arguments. One partner should take the introductory speech, the other the rebuttal. There will be some time between speeches for the other side to prepare to speak, but ideally you should actively listen during speeches and be prepared to argue against the other side as well as defend your position. Finally, the full class will be allowed to ask a few questions of the respective teams about their arguments. The instructor will evaluate what the teams have done in the debate and make decisions as to 1) who wins the debate; and 2) overall grade for preparation and performance. Grades will then be assigned to the individual participants for their conduct in this exercise. The debate exercise is worth 80 points.

A note on debates: while you may be really interested in arguing an issue such as abortion because you have strong views on it, you might want to think twice about debating it. Both teams must prepare to argue *both* pro and con on these issues; the day of the debate, I will flip a coin and the winner gets to choose the side they most want to argue. If you cannot argue the other side of the issue, then do not choose that issue. Also, the ultimate grade for this exercise depends on individual performance, not team performance: if it is clear that one member is better prepared than the other or did more work in the exercise, that person will get a better grade than his or her partner. Finally, winning or losing the debate does not affect your grade; as they say in baseball, “it’s all in how you play the game.” The fact that many students may not be comfortable speaking in public or may be working with a second language will not

be counted against his or her performance. If you are uncomfortable with public speaking, you might want to meet with the instructor ahead of time to discuss concerns and strategies for your presentation.

Students directly involved in debates are expected to appear and be ready to speak on the date they are scheduled to do so; please consult the debate schedule when it is distributed and make any necessary arrangements to ensure sure you will be able to attend. Absent debaters will not postpone a debate; the debate will go on as scheduled without your participation. Unless there is a verifiable emergency that prevents your participation, you will receive a zero for that part of your grade.

Final Paper: This is a research paper (1750 – 2000) words excluding bibliography, approximately 7-8 pages double-spaced) that requires a student to take a position on a particular legal issue. My recommendation is that you choose one of the issues for the course, but I am willing to consider others if you contact me and clear the topic by February 29th.¹ This assignment is a particularly good one for topics you would like to argue but do not want to debate in class. For this paper, you will be expected to provide evidence to support your arguments from academic journals, texts, textbooks or other such media; part of your paper grade depends on your ability to locate information that can stand up to critical scrutiny. You may not use Wikipedia, Encarta or other on-line “encyclopedias.” Website information provided in blogs, organization sites, etc. that does not appear to be based upon critically-reviewed research should also not be used. Your ability to select good evidence will count in the grading, as it will be crucial to making a good argument.

In this paper you will be expected to assert your position, provide evidence to back up your points, and deal with the other side’s position by way of counter-arguments. A successful paper will have a clear argument with sufficient explanation and reasoning to support the conclusion, strong evidence from outside sources to support the argument, counterarguments that show the other side’s position is logically or evidentially weak, and show a command of grammar and citations that reflect a serious, proofread writing effort. Keep in mind that this is your argument. You have spent the quarter taking apart other people’s work – now is the time to show that you can do what others cannot.

As this paper has a large impact on your final course grade, there are two stages of the paper you must turn in, and you are required to file it with Turnitin.com as well. An outline of your basic argument, with a list of the sources you are currently considering using, is due to the instructor on April 4th in class. The paper is due May 2nd in class, to allow time for grading and turnaround. You are required to turn in a hard copy with the instructor in class that day as well as file an electronic copy with Turnitin.com by 11:59 p.m. the evening of the 2nd. Papers (either electronic or the hard copy) that are not turned in at this time will lose ½ grade (6 points) each day they are late, weekend included. Late papers with a verifiable emergency will not be penalized.

If you have not used Turnitin before, log on to <http://www.turnitin.com>, set up a User Profile, and familiarize yourself with the website. All students will need to create a link to the Pols 20-1 class account by using the Class ID number (4670875) and the Password (inundate).

¹. If you do not clear a topic outside those of the course issues by this date, I will deduct the equivalent of a full letter grade (10 points) from the total grade for your paper.

Please do this well before December; errors in uploading due to account problems or last-minute submission could cause your paper to be submitted after the deadline.

Self-Evaluation: On the scheduled final exam date (May 18th), students will be expected to come in and complete a self-evaluation tool to measure each student's perceptions of what he/she learned in this course. You only need to bring writing materials to this assessment. This evaluation is worth 20 points.

Late Work Policy

The A3 classification of this class requires quick turnaround on grading, to give students the ability to review their progress in the class. This means a rather strict late work policy; no work will be accepted in this course late unless you have a verified emergency (illness, accident, family emergency, etc.) that prevents you completing or turning in a particular assignment on time. No assignments will be accepted after the last official day of this class (December 8th) except for the Self-Evaluation that you will complete the day of the final. All work for this course must be turned in as a hard copy.

A Note About Written Work in This Course

Students at the college level are expected to submit written work that fits the grammatical, stylistic and citation expectations for college-level work in English. All written assignments in this course are therefore graded in two ways: both in terms of content (information in terms of logic, quality of evidence, etc.) and in terms of writing. If you are at all uncomfortable with writing at the college level, you need to take steps to rectify this. The instructor is willing to preview rough drafts of work in office hours before assignments are due to provide feedback. You may also want to see the instructor after assignments are handed back if comments indicate that there are specific errors in argument or writing.

In addition to instructor assistance, tutoring when you are writing assignments is available through the SJSU Writing Center in Clark Hall. If you have a specific assignment you need assistance on, you can make an appointment with a Writing Specialist to go over your work before submitting it. See the appointments page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/tutoring/requestforappointment/index.htm> for more information on this service.

Citations are particularly important in this course; one of the Learning Objectives specifically addresses your ability to avoid plagiarism, whether deliberate or inadvertent. **Failure to cite in this course may result in penalties ranging from a failing grade on an assignment to a failing grade in the course, and possible report to the Office of Student Conduct.** Due to the large number of assignments and the rigorous schedule of topics, there are no opportunities for re-writes in this course. At this level of academic work, you should be prepared to submit work that is ready for scrutiny in your first effort.

University Policies on Accommodating Student Disability and Academic Integrity

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me or visit me during office hours as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 (http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with

disabilities requesting accommodations must be registered with the Disabled Resource Center to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU has a policy of Academic Integrity for all its students. Please see the campus website for the specific policy:

http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Aside from Homeworks 1-4 and the debate, you may not collaborate with other students on assignments. Any other assignments where this happens will be treated as instances of cheating. Resubmitting written work from other classes as work for this class or submitting someone else's work as your own are also considered cheating. Instances of cheating could result in penalties ranging from a failing grade on the assignment to a failing grade in the course. The instructor is required to approach the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development when there are clear infractions of the Academic Integrity policy. This is the least pleasurable task the instructor has to do in her profession, but given the number of other students willing to "play by the rules" and the requirements of the University, she will do it.

Electronic Device Policy for This Course

Laptops may be used during class for the purpose of taking notes, but students are expected to stop typing and participate in discussions when they occur. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off for the duration of class. No texting is permitted during class for any reason. If a cell phone rings during class, the instructor reserves the right to answer it; if you are texting, the instructor reserves the right to ask you to leave the classroom.

Important Add/Drop/Withdrawal Dates

Students need to be aware that SJSU requires strict adherence to due dates for adding, dropping and late withdrawals from class. Please note that in the Spring semester, the last day to drop without penalty is February 6th, the last day to add is February 13th, and the last day to withdraw from any course is April 26th.

Course Webpage

There is a webpage for this course connected to my faculty webpage at SJSU, where I post important documents such as the syllabus and various handouts. The direct URL is <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/sabrina.pinnell/courses/CLI/>.

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus may be subject to change with fair notice by the instructor, the Department of Political Science or San Jose State University.

Course Schedule (Important dates are in boldface)

Topic 1 (1/25): Course Introduction

Topic 2 (1/30-2/1): Issues and Conclusions of Arguments, Introduction to Reasoning Browne and Keeley, Chs. 1-3

Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau, "Critical Thinking: Writing an Analysis of An Argument," in Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument, 2nd ed. New York: Bedford Books, 1996, 73-86 (reserve).

Topic 3 (2/6-2/8): Language and Assumptions

Browne and Keeley, Ch. 4-5

Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker, "Nonargumentative Persuasion," in Critical Thinking: Evaluating Claims and Arguments in Everyday Life, 2nd ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1989, 116-131 (reserve).

HW #1 due on February 8th

Topic 4 (2/13-2/15): Fallacies and Fake Reasoning

Browne and Keeley, Ch. 6

Fallacies and Fake Reasoning Handout (in class)

HW #2 due on February 15th

Topic 5 (2/20-2/27): Evaluating Evidence I – Experience, Authority and Research

Browne and Keeley, Chs. 7-8

Argument Analysis #1 due on February 22nd

HW #3 due on February 29th

Topic 6 (2/29-3/7): Evaluating Evidence II – Causation and Statistics

Browne and Keeley, Chs. 9-10

Best, Joel. "Soft Facts: Sources of Bad Statistics," in Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers From the Media, Politicians, and Activists, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, 30-61 (reserve).

Team Match-ups for Debates Announced March 5th

Topic 7 (3/12-3/14): Accept or Reject the Overall Argument, Plagiarism

Browne and Keeley, Chs. 11-12

HW#4 due on March 12th

Plagiarism Module Results Due in Class on March 14th

Topic 8 (3/19-3/21): Medical Issues I – Abortion

Thomson, Judith Jarvis. "A Defense of Abortion," in Christina Hoff Sommers, ed., Vice and Virtue and Everyday Life, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1985, 569-589 (on-line: <http://spot.colorado.edu/~heathwoo/Phil160,Fall02/thomson.htm>).

Lee, Patrick and Robert P. George. "The Wrong of Abortion," in Andrew I. Cohen and Christopher Wellman, eds., Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics, New York: Blackwell Publishers, 2005, 13-26 (on-line: http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL/Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/1405115475/Cohen_sample%20chapter_Contemporary%20debates%20in%20applied%20ethics.pdf).

Politt, Katha. "With Facts on Our Side," The Nation, 5 November 2007 (on-line: <http://www.thenation.com/article/facts-our-side>).

Supreme Court of the United States, Gonzales v. Carhart., 30 April 2007 (on-line: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/05-380.ZS.html>)

Debate Schedule on March 19th

Discussion of Final Paper in Class on March 21st

Argument Analysis #2 Due in Class on March 21st

Spring Break is March 26th – March 30th (NO CLASS)

Topic 9 (4/2-4/4): Medical Issues II – Euthanasia

Pollard, Brian J. “Can Euthanasia Be Safely Legalized?” Palliative Medicine 15 (2001): 61-65 (reserve).

Rogatz, Peter. “The Virtues of Physician-Assisted Suicide,” The Humanist, November/December 2001 (on-line: <http://www.thehumanist.org/humanist/articles/rogatz.htm>).

Supreme Court of the United States, Washington v Glucksberg, 521 U.S. 702 (1997) (on-line: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/96-110.ZS.html>)

Supreme Court of the United States, Vacco v. Quill, 521 U.S. 793 (1997) (on-line: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/95-1858.ZO.html>)

Outline of Final Paper Due in Class on April 4th

Topic 10 (4/9-4/11): Death Penalty

Babcock, Sandra. “The Global Debate on the Death Penalty,” Human Rights: Journal of the Section of Human Rights and Responsibilities 34, No.2 (Spring 2007) (on-line: <http://www.abanet.org/irr/hr/spring07/babcospr07.html>).

Cassell, Paul G. “In Defense of the Death Penalty,” Debating the Death Penalty: Should America Have Capital Punishment? New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004, 183-217 (reserve).

Harrison, Karen and Caroline Melville. “The Death Penalty by Lethal Injection and Hill v McDonough: Is the USA Starting to See Sense?” The Journal of Criminal Law 71, No. 2 (2007): 167-180 (reserve).

Supreme Court of the United States, Baze v. Rees, 553 U.S. ____ (2008) (on-line: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/07-5439.ZS.html>)

Topic 11 (4/16-4/18): National Security I – Detainment of “Enemy Combatants”

Dershowitz, Alan M. Preemption: A Knife That Cuts Both Ways. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2006, 105-121, 240-250 (reserve).

Greenberg, Karen J. “Detention Nation,” The National Interest (May/June 2009): 49-57 (reserve).

Pearlstein, Deborah. “We’re All Experts Now: A Security Case Against Security Detention,” Case Western Research Journal of International Law 40, No. 577 (2009): 577-592 (reserve).

Supreme Court of the United States, Boumediene v. Bush, 553 U.S. ____ (2008) (on-line: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/06-1195.ZS.html>)

Topic 12 (11/17): National Security II – Torture

Charles Krauthammer, “The Truth About Torture,” and Andrew Sullivan, “The Abolition of Torture,” from “Torture: Is It Ever Justifiable?” in Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau, eds.,

Current Issues and Enduring Questions, 8th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008, 804-829 (reserve).

Bowden, Mark. "'Stress and Duress' Techniques are Legitimate Forms of Interrogation," in Tom Head, ed., At Issue: Is Torture Ever Justified? Detroit, IL: Thomson & Gale, 2005, 39-53 (reserve).

Steinhoff, Uwe. "The Case for Dirty Harry and Against Alan Dershowitz," Journal of Applied Philosophy 3, No. 3 (2006): 337-353 (reserve).

Debate Week I (4/23-4/25)

(All students expected to attend, even if not debating)

Debate Week II (4/30-5/2)

(All students expected to attend, even if not debating)

Final Paper Due in Class as Hard Copy on May 2nd and Uploaded to Turnitin by 11:59 p.m. on May 2nd

Debate Week III (5/7-5/9)

(All students expected to attend, even if not debating)

May 9th is the last day to submit any excused (or if the Final Paper, late) work

Self-Evaluation: May 18, 2012 in class

Argument Analyses One and Two

You are required to write two *argument analyses*, or critiques, in this class. The first critique is due on **February 22nd** and is worth a total of 20 points; the second is due on **March 21st** and is worth 40 points. The difference in points reflects the degree to which you will be expected to consider the reasons and evidence in the works you use, and the skills you will apply to the assignment. You will need to select a different example of written work (articles, book excerpts, etc.) for each assignment, each work having at least 1000 words. You also need to append a copy of the written work to your critique when you turn it in. Lack of a sufficiently long source or not appending it to your paper will result in a point deduction in the grading.

This is meant to be an essay that analyzes a written work, and not a summary; you need to make your own, independent argument about how you see the written work, considering its conclusion, reasons, the persona of the author, its overall persuasiveness, etc. The argument you then make is based on your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the original argument. If you do not critically read and address the original work, you will not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

Once you have located a work you would like to consider, you should read it with a critical eye and make notes on the structure of the argument as well as the argument's strengths and weaknesses. You might have to read the work more than once in order to do this.

The two analyses are due at different times of the semester, to allow you to apply what you have learned in class as well as improve over time. Both analyses should include the following:

- ☞ What is the basic *thesis/conclusion* of this work?
- ☞ Is this a *descriptive* or *prescriptive* argument? If descriptive, does the author sufficiently provide an explanation leading to his/her conclusion? If prescriptive, does the author sufficiently persuade you, the reader?
- ☞ What *reasons* are used to support the conclusion? Are there flaws in these reasons? What are they? Are they sufficient to support the conclusion, or are there gaps in the argument you would like to see filled?
- ☞ Are there any *assumptions* in the reasoning? Do you think these are correct assumptions, or are there problems with them?
- ☞ What *types of language* are used in the work (euphemistic, emotive, legalistic, academic, etc.)? How does this affect the argument? Does it make the argument more, or less, effective?
- ☞ What type of *persona* does the author present in this work – an “average person,” an academic, a defender of moral rights, etc.?
- ☞ Ultimately, do you think the author has made his/her case? Is this an effective argument?

The second analysis must also take a hard look at the *evidence* used to support the reasons, and how the evidence affects the argument. You need to include the following:

- ☞ What kinds of *evidence* (intuition, experience, testimonies, analogies, research, etc.) were used?
- ☞ Are there problems with any *statistics* used? (You must have an article with statistics to work with in order to answer this in the second analysis.)

- ☞ Are there *alternate conclusions* that could be made, given the reasons and evidence in the argument?
- ☞ Are there any obvious *counter-arguments* that could be made to the author's conclusion?

Two words of caution: first, you have to find articles or excerpts that make an argument for this assignment to work; regular news articles that just report events cannot be treated as arguments and therefore will not work. Second, it may not be in your best interest to pick an argument that you completely agree with or disagree with; students who do this often rave about what is great (or not great) about the piece, but do not consider the argument critically. If you decide to go with an article that falls along these lines, keep in mind that there is no perfect argument even if you agree with it, and even an argument that you hate could have some valid points.

I suggest you consult the Barnett & Bedau reading ("Critical Writing: Writing An Analysis of An Argument," on reserve) for more information on how to write this assignment. The reading includes an example of both an original work and a critical essay, both of which should be helpful. I have also included a sample argument analysis on my class webpage (<http://www.sjsu.edu/people/sabrina.pinnell/courses/CLI/>). You can get the original article by clicking on the source in the bibliography. I am available for consultation in office hours for this assignment and am willing to consider rough drafts of your work there, but drafts may not be sent via e-mail.

Paper Dimensions: Both papers should be turned in in hard copy form in class. You should use a 12 point font with 1" margins and double-space. Any material quoted from the work should be cited in-text as (Author, page #), but keep this to a minimum. This is your argument. A title page is not necessary, but page numbers are. Analysis 1 must be 750-1000 words in length and Analysis 2 must be 1000-1250 words in length. Clear infringements of these dimensions will result in a point deduction.

Grammar, Style, Citations: Part of your grade (5 points for Analysis 1, 10 points for Analysis 2) will depend upon grammar, writing style, and citations. Areas you will be graded upon include:

Organization: Introduction and conclusion, how your reasons are organized throughout as sentences and paragraphs

Spelling and word choice

Verb tense

Subject-verb agreement

Sentence structure: Should be complete sentences, not fragments or run-ons

Paragraphs: Avoid multiple topics per paragraph, have a clear structure

Language: Avoid colloquial/conversational language

Given that you are only working on one article or piece of text, in-text citations (Author Year, Page #) will be sufficient when you are directly quoting from the author's language or citing one of his/her ideas. Ideally, you should only use quoted language when the actual language of a work is needed; otherwise, paraphrase or summarize and cite. Quotes of one sentence or less can be cited in the body of the paragraph; more text than that needs to be blocked and indented. If you are working with an electronic work, you may wish to number paragraphs within the copy of the work you give me to use in your citations instead of giving me a full electronic cite for each citation (Paragraph 5 of Author Year). The work you use for your analysis should be fully cited at the end of your essay in a References section or Bibliography.

Research Paper

The penultimate project for this class is a research paper of 1750-2000 words (approximately 7-8 pages double-spaced), excluding bibliography. This project is worth 100 points of your course grade (25%). An additional 20 points (5%) of the course grade depends upon a 1-2 page outline of your paper that you will submit ahead of the paper. You are required to select one of the controversial issues for this course and compose an argument on the issue, using evidence you have collected to back your argument. Given that you have been studying critical thinking in this class, you should be able to compose an argument that shows clear reasoning, good use of evidence, and that can stand up to critical evaluation.

You are required to use at least ten sources of evidence for your argument. You do not need to cite all of these in the body of the paper, but they should be noted in the bibliography. Ideally, some if not most of these will be from peer-reviewed journals, texts, or textbooks. Electronic sources such as webpages or electronic articles may be used except for encyclopedias (Wikipedia, Encarta, etc.), or blogs. You should concentrate on finding evidence that can stand up to critical scrutiny, as a lack of such evidence will hurt your argument. Using evidence that is clearly from one side of an issue² is a potential problem; you will need to evaluate these sources before you use them. Finally, any sources used in the paper must be properly cited in both the body of the text and the bibliography. A failure to cite in this assignment will result in a failing grade for this assignment, regardless of your argument.³

If you wish to write your paper on the same topic you are planning to debate, that is acceptable. However, while the debates are collaborative efforts, the papers are not. Each student must do an independent research paper. If you wish to do a paper on a topic not covered in class, you must get instructor approval for the topic by September 29th.

Outline: You are expected to submit an outline of your proposed argument in a 1-2 page hard copy on **April 4th** in class. This can be in outline or essay form. You do not need to submit a copy to Turnitin, but the hard copy must be turned in during class that day to receive a grade, unless there is an emergency. The outline will be graded and handed back with comments to help you in the next phase of writing.

Paper: You will need to turn this in, both as a hard copy in class and online via Turnitin, on **May 2nd**. The Turnitin copy must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. on the due date** to qualify for full credit; papers submitted after this time will be accepted, but will lose points. Papers turned in or uploaded after the due date without emergency verification will lose ½ grade (6 points) per day,

². This is particularly true for abortion topics, as web sites and written sources on abortion very often use sources that are not impartial and “pick and choose” evidence to present. Be careful what and who you use; your performance may be hurt if you rely on evidence that appears biased, uses poorly done research, can be logically dismissed, etc.

³. A failure to cite in the final paper is a problem for two reasons. First, it shows you do not understand plagiarism (see syllabus), one of the course learning objectives. Second, the reader has no reason to accept any un-cited evidence, which undermines your argument. Your grade will therefore be affected both in terms of writing and content.

including the weekend. If you cannot get a hard copy to the instructor in person or via the mailbox in the Political Science office, you should mail a copy (so you get a timestamp of some sort) to me via the Political Science Office, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192-0119. Papers slipped under the instructor's office door will not be counted, nor will e-mailed papers. I strongly urge you to turn in a paper even if it is late; this is worth too much of your course grade to be missed.

Content Requirements

Your paper should include the following:

- 1) A clear *introduction*, with indication of the *conclusion* of your argument;
- 2) Clear, well-organized *reasons*, using the *evidence* you have gathered;
- 3) Addressing obvious counter-arguments to your position;
- 4) A clear *conclusion*, summarizing your position as you have presented it.

The quality of the content in your paper will affect 80 points of your grade.

Organization, Writing and Presentation Requirements

Quality of sources, citations, and following the presentation requirements of the assignment will affect twenty points of your grade. Along with the number of words, the ideal paper should have 1" margins, be double-spaced and have page numbers. No title page is needed, but you should definitely have a separate page for bibliography. Citations can be in-text or notes, as long as you are consistent and cite where appropriate. Writing quality will affect an additional twenty points of your grade. There will point deductions if there are obvious problems with the following:

- ☐ Organization (introduction, paragraphs, conclusion)
- ☐ Spelling and word choice
- ☐ Verb tense and subject-verb agreement
- ☐ Sentence structure (no fragments or run-ons)
- ☐ Language (passive language instead of active, conversational instead of written style)
- ☐ Citations or bibliography

Suggestions for Working on the Paper

Do not wait to start working on this assignment. Start looking at the library catalog and databases ASAP for sources. You will need time to locate, read and digest these before writing. If you have not had an orientation on using the library, consider doing the InfoPower tutorial on the library webpage. If you are doing the same topic as the debate, make sure that you and your partner have copies of sources to work on for your independent papers.

Do more than one draft of this assignment. The instructor is willing to preview drafts in office hours or by appointment, and your peers can help in evaluating your argument before you turn it in. A rushed effort will show in the quality of the finished product.

Enter your citations as you write the paper. Don't plan on entering them after you're done with the draft. This can lead to little-to-no citations.

Finish your paper well before the deadline for this assignment, and give yourself ample time to upload it to Turnitin.

Accessing Course Reserves – A Primer

In order to save funds, articles and excerpts used in this course are either put on electronic reserve with the King Library or links are provided for access to internet versions. In the former case, here is how you can access the articles:

- 1) Access the Course Reserves area of the university library website at <http://library.sjsu.edu/course-reserves/course-reserves>.
- 2) Type in “Pinnell” at the Professor Name prompt.
- 3) Select “Pols 20”
- 4) Click on the title or author name to access the article or excerpt
- 5) The university website will require you to provide your name, student number and account PIN to access the article.

Please be advised that these links could be to .pdfs or to databases where the articles are stored; it could take time to download these depending on speed of your computer, broadband, version of Adobe that you have, etc.

If you are unable to access an article after several attempts, contact the instructor so she can check if there is an issue with the link, or Course Reserves through their chat prompt (on the webpage).