Course Description

This course focuses attention on two inter-related topics of great importance. The first involves the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness -- one of the largest, most remarkable, and most frequently used wilderness areas in the country. The second topic involves the persuasive use of discourse -- or language -- to effect changes in law and policy within our democratic republic. Such persuasive political oriented discourse is generally referred to as “rhetoric.” These two topics -- the BWCAW and rhetoric -- are intimately related; for the legislation creating and protecting the BWCAW emerged from a series of social and political controversies in which individuals, politicians, interest groups, social movements, and many others, each used rhetoric in an effort to achieve their respective goals. As such, the course considers the controversy over the BWCA and wilderness more generally through the lens of “rhetoric.”

The first week or so of the course will focus on rhetoric. It will consider both argumentative and persuasive elements of rhetoric, and give us the basic tools by which we can analyze arguments, as well as make them (both of which will be important throughout the course). The second week or so of the course moves from analytical tools to the story of the controversy over the BWCAW. Controversies are complex affairs and we will spend time considering the controversy generally, as well as its components -- the arguments expressed by a variety of actors at particular moments of the controversy. The third week or so will be an opportunity to consider other Northern Minnesota wilderness issues in the form of group presentations, and individual persuasive presentations.

By the end of the course you will not only be ready for your long overdue summer. You will be well versed in the history of BWCAW preservation and more aware of some of the important environmental questions affecting the region. Most importantly you will not only be in a better position to judge and evaluate arguments about wilderness, you will have a firmer grounding in persuasion that will enable you to become a better advocate for whichever side of an issue you choose.

Textbooks & Readings:
- Andrea Lunsford, John Ruszkiewicz, Keith Walters, *Everything’s An Argument* (Bedford/St. Martin’s), 5th ed. (WITHOUT Readings) (hereafter EA)
- Occasional other readings will be distributed

Grading & Evaluation (200 points):

34%  Group Controversy Project (68 points)
This project involves the analysis of a Northern Minnesota Wilderness controversy. Each group will be asked to outline the controversy, asking questions including: Who are the parties involved? What do they disagree about? What are their proposed policies? What is each side’s social/political strategy and audience? What are the most important arguments on each side? The project should be based on research into both primary and secondary sources, and will take the form of a brief written summary as well as a class presentation. Some time during class will be set aside for group meeting and planning. Assignment details will be distributed in advance.

34%  Individual Persuasion Assignment (68 points)
This assignment asks each student to take a position in the Northern Minnesota Wilderness issue of their choice in the form of a brief (3pp.) position paper, as well as a persuasive presentation. Evaluation will be based on how well each presenter utilizes the argumentative appeals we have studied. For purposes of economy, many may wish to speak on one side of their group topic. Assignment details will be distributed in advance.

32%  TWO OPTIONS (CHOOSE ONE) (64 points)
OPTION A: Two exams (one for EA, one for TW), Three Quizzes (random)
Exams (20 points each) would take place on 5/20 & 5/28, while quizzes (8 points each) will be at random.

OPTION B: Class Participation
Ideally a class this size involves serious doses of student involvements. In order to reward such involvement (and avoid exams & quizzes) each student has the opportunity to gain up to 8 points per day (4 per session) by contributing to discussion or answering questions. To gain maximum points: exhibit knowledge of the day’s reading and the ability to apply this knowledge, be engaged with the topic at hand and willing to contribute your own reasoned viewpoint, engage your fellow students in discussion and argument, be willing to answer open ended “think” questions. There are many ways to contribute to discussion. One session you might gain your 4 points with one especially impressive answer or contribution. On another you might earn your 4 points through dozens of minor efforts or contributions. Another session may involve your being evaluated in terms of group work. If everyone shows consistent participation we can waive the point system and give everyone an “A” for class participation. On the other hand, if most of you are not keeping up your end of things I may choose to revert to the exam/quiz system.

EXTRA CREDIT OPTION
- Perfect Attendance: +20 points
- Miss One Session (NOT Presentation Day) +10 points
- Miss Two Sessions (NOT Presentation Day) +5 points

NOTE: each class day consists of TWO Sessions

COURSE CALENDAR  Communication 3620: Boundary Waters in Controversy

Week 1 – Introduction to Argument
M  5/14  Course Introduction
   Thinking About Wilderness
T  5/15  Everything’s an Argument?, Lines of Argument
   *Social Movements, Politics: Deliberation & Legislation
   *(EA chaps 1-7)
W  5/16  Imagining, Seeing & Hearing Arguments: Argument Structure, Argument Classification
   *Spheres of Argument
   *(EA chaps 8-15)
Th  5/17  Arguments, Thinking About Group Projects
   *(EA chaps 16-19)

Week 2 – Argument, Wilderness & the BWCAW
M  5/21  BWCAW: Inception of Controversy & Entering Politics
   *Arguing About Wilderness & the Environment
   *(TW chaps 1-3)
T  5/22  Entering Politics and the Congressional Debate
   *(TW chaps 4-6)
W  5/23  the Congressional Debate
   *Analyzing Congressional Speeches
   *(TW chaps 7-8)
Th  5/24  BWCA FIELD TRIP, Noon 5/23-6pm 5/24
Week 3 – Group Controversy Projects, Persuasive Presentations

M 5/28  NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY

T 5/29  Group Controversies I
     Persuasive Presentations

W 5/30  Group Controversies II
     Persuasive Presentations

Th 5/31  Group Controversies III
         Persuasive Presentations