



*Argument*  
**COMMRC 0500**  
*3 Credits*

**Description:** This course teaches students to recognize, explain, research, construct, present and critique arguments. Assignments invite students to create their own research-based arguments, express them capably to peers and instructors, eloquently refute competing arguments, and judge the soundness of arguments made by others. A survey of key concepts in argumentation theory will provide background for students to develop their argument skills in a variety of both oral and written activities that feature lively intellectual interchange. Faculty members are free to develop a tailored repertoire of classroom activities (e.g. SPAR debates, policy debates, parliamentary debates, mock trial, role-play simulations) for students to hone argument skills. However, at least one classroom debate must use the common CHS Argument Forum question. The top performing students in this classroom debate will be chosen to participate in a second round of debating conducted for a wider public audience, which must be at least twice the size of the original Argument class. In organizing such public debates, faculty members should bear in mind the following: 1) The public debate is a required component of the Argument class; 2) The exact wording of the common CHS Argument Forum question should be used; 3) The public debate must be video recorded, and a copy of the recording must be forwarded to the CHS offices by the date set by the CHS Faculty Liaison. Schools may then choose to participate in the final tier of debating at the annual Argument Forum.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Grading:** Students should complete at least one research-intensive argument activity (e.g. formal debate, role-play simulation, mock trial), integrating the equivalent of 20 distinct sources into their preparation and performance.

**Textbook:** University of Pittsburgh faculty tailor the required texts for each section of this course, selecting from a common pool of approved materials and supplementing those with their own readings, to achieve an optimal blend that covers fundamentals of argument and enables faculty to play up their own particular pedagogical strengths. CHS teachers may follow a similar procedure by coupling their own readings with selections from a clearinghouse of optional, open-access teaching materials approved for inclusion in their courses. See <https://pitt.box.com/Argument>.

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**Students enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh COMMRC 0500 course pursue the following learning outcomes:**

- 1. Argumentation concepts.** Students will learn to identify and describe key components of a sound argument: claim, data and warrant.
- 2. Research-driven argument invention.** Students will hone ability to create and express sound arguments, backed by research, to support a point of view.
- 3. Refutation.** Students will develop creative expression skills to effectively counter arguments presented by interlocutors.
- 4. Critical argument analysis.** Students will develop interpretive skills to reach sound critical judgments when assessing competing arguments in a debate context.



**Academic Integrity:** All College in High School teachers, students, and their parents/guardians are required to review and be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's Academic Integrity Policy located online at [www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity](http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity).

**Grades:** Grade criteria in the high school course may differ slightly from University of Pittsburgh standards. A CHS student could receive two course grades: one for high school and one for the University transcript. In most cases the grades are the same. These grading standards are explained at the beginning of each course.

**Transfer Credit:** University of Pittsburgh grades earned in CHS courses appear on an official University of Pittsburgh transcript, and the course credits are likely to be eligible for transfer to other colleges and universities. Students are encouraged to contact potential colleges and universities in advance to ensure their CHS credits would be accepted. If students decide to attend any University of Pittsburgh campuses, the University of Pittsburgh grade earned in the course will count toward the student grade point average at the University. At the University of Pittsburgh, the CHS course supersedes any equivalent AP credit.

**Drops and Withdrawals:** Students should monitor progress in a course. CHS teacher can obtain a Course Drop/Withdrawal Request form from the CHS office or Aspire. The form must be completed by the student, teacher and parent/guardian and returned to teacher by deadlines listed. Dropping and withdrawing from the CHS course has no effect on enrollment in the high school credits for the course.