



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

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ASTU 101 (P03, P04, P05): It's No Game: The Idea of Competition Fall 2018 – Michael Schandorf

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Office Hours: Wednesdays and by appointment

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Course website: mschandorf.ca

Class Schedule: T/Th

P03 – ALRD B101
11am – 12:30pm

P04 – MATH 225
2pm – 3:30pm

P05 – MATH 202
3:30pm – 5pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It's No Game: The Idea of Competition is an introduction to academic and scholarly discourse and writing that focuses on the concept of competition. The idea of competition is so fundamental that we often take it for granted as a natural good. Nearly every aspect of our lives involves competition: we compete in school, we compete for jobs, we compete at work, we compete socially, we compete in games and sports for fun, and when we are not competing ourselves we spend much of our time enjoying watching others compete. But our obsession with competition has several potential complications. A world divided into winners and losers, for example, is an inherently inequitable world – and there will always be far more “losers” than “winners”. Competition also has a variety of interesting relationships with our inescapable need for cooperation and social cohesion. Attempting to disentangle cooperation from competition, in fact, can undermine both sides of this pair: a lack of either can lead to unproductive stasis, and worse. But a complete integration of cooperation and competition can lead to “us versus them” thinking and even war, which US rhetorical scholar Kenneth Burke called “the ultimate disease of cooperation.” To better understand the idea of competition, we will examine the ways that it has been investigated and conceptualized in different academic disciplines. For example, competition is fundamental to Business, Economics, and Political Science. But, because of its inescapable role in human society, competition is also an important topic in Psychology, in Anthropology, in Sociology, and even in the study and practice of Education. In this class, we will explore the ways that competition has been investigated in some of this recent research and scholarship, and students will complete research projects of their own contributing to that scholarly conversation.

What you will learn in this class:

- A nuanced understanding of the idea of ‘competition’ in Western culture, and how that idea has been investigated in the social sciences
- A general introduction to scholarly discourse, rhetoric, argumentation, and evidentiary practices
- How to analyze arguments and evidence in a variety of different forms
- How to productively, ethically, and respectfully contribute to scholarly discourse
- How to locate, evaluate, and use scholarly sources to build your own (academic) arguments

Textbooks and materials

Course readings will be made available online. Recommended textbook: Janet Giltrow’s *Academic Writing: An Introduction*. Third edition. (UBC Bookstore) [I will be referring to this book occasionally throughout the semester.]

Instructor Availability

If you have any questions about the class (check this syllabus first, but) feel free to ask me, whether by email or in person. I encourage everyone to come to my office hours on Wednesdays if you have any questions or concerns. I'm happy to listen, to talk, and to help with the course material and processes in any way that I can.

Other Useful Resources

Chapman Learning Commons: learningcommons.ubc.ca

Arts Advising: students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/contact-us

Counselling Services: students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services

Center for Writing and Scholarly Communication: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing>

Book a Group Study Space (eg, for group presentation practice): bookings.library.ubc.ca

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

ASTU 101 – It's No Game: The Idea of Competition is a seminar/workshop-style class. There are no tests. Students will be assessed based on the effort demonstrated in engaging with the ideas we will be confronting this semester, and in putting those ideas to use. Your individual engagement and contributions will have a decisive impact on the success of the course as a whole—we're all in this together. This means three things: 1) you must attend class, 2) you must be prepared, and 3) you must actively participate both in class and online. Individual grades will be computed as follows:

- Class participation (in class & online): 15%
- Reading responses (total of 5): 15%
- Group presentation: 10%
- Research paper proposal: 5%
- Research paper literature review: 5%
- Research paper draft: 10%
- Oral research presentation: 10%
- Research paper peer review: 5%
- Final research paper: 25%

Participation: In order to participate in class discussions, you must attend class. Absences and tardiness will negatively and significantly affect your participation grade. Sitting quietly in class and hoping others do the talking is not an option. Don't be afraid of saying "something dumb". We are going to be reading materials that will often be entirely alien. The only way to get a grip on them will be to confront them openly together as a class. Go ahead and say something "dumb" – it probably won't be as dumb as you think (and you'll probably find that you're not the only one thinking it). At the same time, if it seems easy or simple, try to figure out what you're missing. Talk to each other. Ask questions. Your participation, both in class and online, will be evaluated in terms of relevance, depth, and consistency.

Participation includes engagement both in class and online, as well as in-class activities. Though I expect to see each student contributing regularly and consistently, there are no hard-and-fast quantifiable measures that I am looking for: no minimum/maximum number of expected posts or comments, no checklist of who speaks and who doesn't in each class. Your job is to read, think, engage, and learn. Do that—actively—and your grade will take care of itself. In that way, online discussions should be an ongoing process of engagement rather than just a weekly burst of activity after class. Let the in-class and online discussions reference and engage with one another in an ongoing dialogue. Ignoring others' posts and comments (failing to respond to comments) or a general lack of online interaction will significantly and negatively impact your participation grade. Do not expect to whip up a flurry of comments and activity in the last week or two of the semester in order to "make your points." Engage.

Reading Responses: The three sections of *It's No Game: The Idea of Competition* will share a website (___) where we will post our reading responses and the discussions they prompt. You will need to sign up for a WordPress account, if you don't have one already. Send me your WordPress username and the email you used to register/sign in to WordPress, and I will add you as an Author to the site (you won't be able to post on the site until I make you an Author). [You **do not** need to use your real name, but you **do** need to make sure I know who you are.] Reading responses will be due by Monday evening. Each class section will be divided into groups that will alternate weekly reading response postings:

Everyone: weeks 3 & 10

Group A: weeks 4, 6 & 8

Group B: weeks 5, 7, & 9

Each week, I will provide a guiding prompt related to the upcoming week's readings. While there is no minimum required length, each week's reading response should do at least these six things:

1. Address the given prompt.
2. Demonstrate that you have read the assigned material.
3. Demonstrate that you have thought about (both the form and content of) the reading in the context of the course.
4. Make connections among the week's reading and earlier course material and class discussions (as well as with related material and discussions in other courses, your own experience, or life in general, when appropriate and useful).
5. Reference and link to at least one other classmate's post.
6. Also, *tag each post* with ASTU101, with your section number (if you like), with the week's theme (e.g., psychology of competition), and with any other keywords that will help people find your post.

Each reading response should be a well-considered, (loosely) essay-style discussion of the week's material that adds to previous class discussion and promotes further discussion. As we move through the term, your responses should make connections among readings, ideas, and discussions from previous weeks. Your reading responses should demonstrate your active efforts to make connections and to question the ideas presented in the readings and class discussions. Your understanding of the material will be demonstrated in your application of the ideas presented to your own knowledge and experience. Remember that everyone in the class will be reading the assigned material: your reading response should NOT be a summary of the readings. A summary tells us (at most) that you read; it doesn't tell us that you've thought about what you read or anything about what you think.

You are not required or expected to read all of the weekly responses by all of your classmates. You are, however, expected to pay attention to what your classmates are saying and to engage one another by questioning, answering, and/or reinforcing each other's ideas and concerns on a regular basis throughout the week. If someone comments on your post, **respond to them** (such engagement—or lack thereof—will factor into your participation grade). You can post, as often as you like, anything that you feel is relevant and of interest to the class.

Group Reading Presentation: During the second week of the term, students will be sorted into small groups and assigned to present a reading to the class. Working together closely, the groups will choose, analyze, and present to the class a reading concerning their respective week's theme. (If your group finds a different article that you think is appropriate and that you would like to present instead of the options I've provided, let me know and I will definitely consider it.) The goal of the group reading presentation is to teach your chosen reading to the class. In informal presentations of no more than 20 minutes, presentation groups will be expected to:

1. Identify the author(s).
2. Succinctly outline and explain the main argument and points of the reading.
3. Succinctly explain what the reading does and how it does it.
4. Position the reading in relation to the week's main reading, as well as to previous ideas and perspectives addressed in class.
5. **Submit your slides and presentation plan/outline to me the Wednesday the week before you are scheduled to present.**

Do not just read your outline or walk straight through the paper. Consider the most appropriate way to present the argument and function of the reading to the rest of the class. Simply going linearly through the reading itself is most likely not the best or clearest way to present the ideas of the reading and what it accomplishes. Presenters are encouraged to bring their readings into online discussions and supplement continuing discussion with the additional ideas and material. My own presentation of the week's main readings can be used as models for your own presentations.

Research Project & Paper: The primary aim of this class is to introduce you to academic discourse, research, and writing. To that end you will be designing your own research project for the course concerning the overall theme of competition. The research project has several parts, and details will be provided as we move through the term. Deadlines:

- Research proposal draft: week 6 (Tuesday, 10/9)
- Research proposal (final): week 7 (Monday, 10/15)
- Literature review: week 9 (Monday, 10/29)
- Research paper draft: week 11 (Tuesday, 11/13)
- Research paper draft peer review: week 11 (Thursday, 11/15)

- Oral research presentations: weeks 12 & 13
- Final research paper: **Friday, December 7**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At UBC and in the scholarly community at large, we share an understanding of the ethical ways in which knowledge is produced. A core practice of this shared value of academic integrity is that we acknowledge the contributions of others to our own work. It also means that we produce our own contributions that add to the scholarly conversation. We don't buy or copy papers or exams, or have someone else edit them. We also don't falsify data or sources, or hand in the same work in more than one course. Because it is so important that research be done ethically, we expect students to meet these expectations. Any instance of cheating or taking credit for someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can and often will result in receiving at minimum grade of zero for the assignment, and these cases will be reported to the Department Head or Chair, the First-Year Programs Chair, and the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean, Academic. See the UBC Calendar entries on "Academic Honesty," "Academic Misconduct," and "Disciplinary Measures," and check out the Student Declaration and Responsibility. See "Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism" from the Chapman Learning Commons, and bookmark the OWL website for how to use references and citations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (H9/6)	Course Intro
Week 2 (T9/11, H9/13) The Idea of Competition	Readings: Bateson – "The myths of independence & competition" Werron – "Why do we believe in competition?"
Week 3 (T9/18, H9/20) The Rhetoric of Competition	Due: First reading response (everyone) Readings: Hutcheon – "Rhetoric & competition" Ingraham – "Competition or exhibition"
Week 4 (T9/25, H9/27) Competition in Anthropology	Due: Reading response (group A) Reading: Molina et al – "Cooperation & competition in social anthropology"
Week 5 (T10/2, H10/4) Competition in Psychology	Due: Reading response (group B) Reading: Garcia et al – "The psychology of competition"
Week 6 (T10/9, H10/11) Competition in Education	Due: Research proposal draft Reading response (group A) Reading: Nelson & Dawson – "Competition, education, & assessment"
Week 7 (T10/16, H10/18) Business Competition	Due: Research proposal Due: Reading response (group B) Reading: Berg et al – "Competition & cooperation"
Week 8 (T10/23, H10/25) Economic Competition	Reading response (group A) Reading: Buckert et al – "How stressful are economic competitions in the lab?"
Week 9 (T10/30, H11/1) Competition in Politics	Due: Literature review Due: Reading response (group B) Reading: Carlin & Love – "Political competition, partisanship, & interpersonal trust in electoral politics"
Week 10 (T11/6, H11/8) Media, Technology, & Competition	Due: Final reading response (everyone) Reading: Stephanone et al – "A social cognitive approach to traditional media content and social media use"
Week 11 Peer editing workshop	Due: Research paper draft Due: Research paper peer review
Week 12 & 13	Oral research presentations