WRDS 150 (11M, 14M): It's No Game: The Idea of Competition
Spring 2019 – Michael Schandorf

Office: IBLC 355 (358)	**Class Schedule**: T/Th
Office Hours: Wednesdays by appointment	
Email: michael.schandorf@ubc.ca	11M – BUCH-D 323 14M – BUCH-D 207
Course website: mschandorf.ca	9:30am – 11:00am 2pm – 3:30pm

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 relevant and credible arguments

Course materials

Course readings will be made available online. Recommended text: *Better Presentations: A Guide for Scholars, Researchers, and Wonks* (2016) by Jonathan Schwabish. (This will probably not be in the UBC bookstore, but you should be able to find a reasonably priced copy online.)

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 set up some time to meet with with me 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: <u>learningcommons.ubc.ca</u>
Arts Advising: <u>students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/contact-us</u>
Counselling Services: <u>students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/counselling-services</u>
Center for Writing and Scholarly Communication: <u>learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing</u>
Book a Group Study Space (eg, for group presentation practice): <u>bookings.library.ubc.ca</u>

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN
WRDS 150 – 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: 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%

File Naming Format: [section]-[last name, first initial]-[assignment]-[course]-[submission date]
> e.g.: 11M-SmithJ-ResearchProposal2-WRDS150-20190327.docx

Participation: In order to participate in class discussions, you must attend class. Attendance is required. 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. 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 (mschandorf.ca) 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.] Required reading responses will be due by Monday evening. Each class section will be divided into three groups for required response posts. After the first assigned group responses, each student is required to post 2 more posts over the course of the semester, for a total of 3. (No more than one reading response post per week will be credited). While there is no minimum required length, each reading response post should do at least these six things:

1. Address the given prompt (if a prompt is provided).
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 #WRDS150, with your section number (if you like), with the week's theme (e.g., #psychology), and with any other keywords that will be help people find your post.

Each reading response should be a well-considered, (loosely) essay-style discussion of the week's material that makes a point, 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 reading(s). 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 expected to pay attention to your classmates' post and comments, and to engage one another by questioning, answering, and/or reinforcing each other's ideas and concerns on a regular basis throughout the week. **Each student is required to post at least one SUBSTANTIVE comment per week.** ("Great post!" is not a substantive comment.) If someone comments on your post, *respond to them*. You can post, as often as you like, anything that you feel is relevant and of interest to the class. (Online engagement is part of your participation grade.)

Group Reading Presentation: Students will be sorted into groups 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. 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. **Meet with me twice (two consecutive Wednesdays) before your presentation: the first meeting will discuss your plan, the second will be a run-through.**
6. **Submit your slides and presentation plan/outline to me *the Wednesday the week before you are scheduled to present*.**

Your presentation should not be a simple outline of the reading—you are to present and explain the reading's argument. 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 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 is informative, not argumentative—*you are not trying to "prove" something; you are trying to learn something*. What you learn—your evidence—will be provided by your research into what has already be learned about the topic. The research project has several parts that build upon one other. It is ***extremely important*** that these steps are completed on time and in order. To that end, a 5% penalty will be assessed for every day that an assignment is late. Deadlines:

- Research proposal draft: week 5
- Research proposal (final): week 8
- Literature review: week 9
- Research paper draft: week 10
- Research paper peer review: week 12

- Research presentations: weeks 11 & 12
- Final research paper: **April 11**

Research Proposal: The goal of a proposal is to convince your audience/reader that your project is worthy of support. Think, for example, of a business proposal or a research grant proposal that aims to secure funding from investors or donors. Your goal in this case is to convince me that you have a relevant topic that is of value and worth pursuing, which is focused enough to allow you to reach relevant, credible, and valuable conclusions in a final paper of less than 2000 words. To this end, your research proposal should 1) explain the problem or knowledge gap you are interested in, as well as its relevance, 2) articulate a clear, specific and answerable research question—what do you want to learn?, 3) provide an outline of your plan for answering that research question, including a few initial, credible, scholarly sources you can begin working from (these can include course readings), and 4) provide a hypothsis about what you expect to find in your research and why such an answer (or refutation) is important (i.e., relevant). The research proposal does not need to be more than 600 words. It is very likely that we will go through several versions of your proposal before you get one approved. That's perfectly normal, and part of the value of the process of honing your ideas. Don't get discouraged if your proposal is not immediately approved. Keep asking questions, keep digging. The research proposal provides you with a direction, a goal. That direction (and even your research question itself) will very likely shift (maybe dramatically) as you move through the research process. That is perfectly fine and normal. Keep asking questions. Keep learning. Follow the research.

Literature Review: The literature review can be considered the first draft of the first draft of the introduction to your research paper. The goal of the literature review is to demonstrate that you have credible evidence to work with, and that you have an idea of how that evidence is relevant to the problem. The literature review IS NOT a set of summaries of your sources. (The literature review is not an annotated bibliography.) It is an explanation of the components of the problem you are addressing, organized around and in relation to existing evidence, and shaped by your research question. The literature review should cite at least 8 credible academic sources, and does not need to be more than 800 words.

Research Paper Draft: The first draft of your research paper should be as complete as possible. It should provide a thorough introduction to the topic and problem and their relevance shaped by the research question, thoroughly present and explain the evidence you are drawing from, and lead logically to your conclusions (i.e., the answer to your research question). The more complete your draft is, the better and more useful the feedback you will get both from your peer reviewers and from me, which will be invaluable for your final paper. The research paper draft will be used for double-blind peer review across course sections. For that reason, the draft must include a cover sheet that provides paper title, your name, course and section, and submission date. **Your name must not appear anywhere else in the paper** (including the metadata, i.e. document properties). The draft must be double-spaced, use a standard 12-point serif font, and include a header with paper title and page number in the top right corner. In-text citations must be used properly and effectively, and the References or Works Cited must be formatted properly and correctly (using either MLA, AP, or Chicago style). Bring two hard copies of your draft to class during week 10.

Individual Research Presentation: The research presentation provides a brief overview of your topic and research question, explains the relevance of your project, and thoroughly explains the (possibly tentative) conclusions you have reached, based on credible evidence, as an answer to your research question. Presentations are to be no less than 5 minutes and no more than 7 minutes in length. (I will have to cut you off if you go longer than 7 minutes; rehearse carefully and thoroughly so that doesn't happen.) The following structure is strongly suggested: 1) an intro slide with your project title, your name, and (possible) contact information (e.g., email); 2) a slide that presents your research question; 3) 2-3 slides of evidence; and 4) a slide that presents your conclusion(s) as an answer to to your research question. (Always number your slides.) The research presentation days will be structured in the form of a conference panel: after all of the presentations, the audience will ask questions of the presenters.

Peer Review: You will be provided with a research paper draft to review (unless you do not turn in a draft of your own in time to participate). Your review should address all three levels of concerns (to be discussed in class) with the goal of adding value—of making the paper better. If you wish to provide an edit of the paper, your name must not appear anywhere in the review, including the comment headers.

Final Research Paper: The final research paper should be ~1800 words (not including the cover sheet or references), double-spaced with 1-inch margins, use a standard 12-point serif font, and include a header that identifies name and page number at the top right. In-text citations must be used thoroughly and correctly, and the References or Works Cited must be formatted properly and correctly (using either MLA, AP, or Chicago style). The research paper should

(roughly) follow the IMRD structure (to be discussed in class); course readings (and the research articles you find) can (and should) be used as models of argument structure and formatting.

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 0 (H1/3)	Course Intro
Week 1 (T1/8, H1/10) The Idea of Competition	Reading: Bateson – "The myths of independence & competition"
Week 2 (T1/15, H1/17) The Rhetoric of Competition	Due: Reading response (group A) Reading: Hutcheon – "Rhetoric & competition"
Week 3 (T1/22, H1/24) Competition in Anthropology	Due: Reading response (group B) Reading: Molina et al – "Cooperation & competition in social anthropology"
Week 4 (T1/29, H1/31) Competition in Psychology	Due: Reading response (group C) Reading: Garcia et al – "The psychology of competition"
Week 5 (T2/5, H2/7) Competition in Education	**Due: Research proposal draft** Reading: Nelson & Dawson – "Competition, education, & assessment"
Week 6 (T2/12, H2/14) Business Competition	Reading: Berg et al – "Competition & cooperation"; Tepper – "The myths of Capitalism" part 1
	Spring break
Week 7 (T2/26, H2/28) Economic Competition	Reading: Buckert et al – "How stressful are economic competitions in the lab?"; Tepper – "The myths of Capitalism" part 2
Week 8 (T3/5, H3/7) Competition in Politics	Reading: Carlin & Love – "Political competition, partisanship, & interpersonal trust in electoral politics"
Week 9 (T3/12, H3/14) Media, Technology, & Competition	**Due: Literature review** Reading: Stephanone et al – "A social cognitive approach to traditional media content and social media use"
Week 10 (T3/19, H3/21) Peer editing workshop	**Due: Research paper draft** (Attendance is NOT optional.)
Week 11 (T3/26, H3/28) Research presentations	
Week 12 (T4/2, H4/4) Research presentations	**Due: Research paper draft peer review**
Final Paper Due 4/11 (email or Canvas: as always, if you do not receive a confirmation from me, I did not receive it)	

COURSE READINGS

Week 1: The idea of competition	Bateson, Mary Catherine. (2016). The myths of independence and competition. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, *33*, 674-677.
Week 2: Rhetoric of competition	Hutcheon, Linda. (2003). Rhetoric and competition. *Common Knowledge*, *9*(1), 42-49. **Supplemental:** • Werron, Tobias. (2015). Why do we believe in competition? A historial-sociological view of competition as an institutionalized modern imaginary. *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, *16*(2), 186-210.
Week 3: Competition in Anthropology	Molina, Jose, et al. (2017). Competition and cooperation in social anthropology. *Anthropology Today*, *33*(1), 11-14. **Supplemental:** • Cooper, Amy, & McGee, Lisa. (2017). "At such a good school, everybody needs it": Contested meanings of prescription stimulant use in college academics. *Ethos*, *45*(3), 289-313. • Linney, Catherine, et al. (2017). Maternal competition in women. *Human Nature*, *28*, 92-116. • Tognetti, Arnaud, et al. (2016). Men increase contributions to a public good when under sexual competition. *Nature Scientific Reports*, *6*(29819). DOI: 10.1038 • Couacaud, Leo. (2015). Same-sex avoidance relations and what they reveal about male competition. *Anthropological Forum*, *25*(1), 42-65.
Week 4: Competition in Psychology	Garcia, Stephen, et al. (2013). The psychology of competition: A social comparison perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *8*(6), 632-650. **Supplemental:** • McGiure, Jessica, & Leaper, Campbell (2016). Competition, coping, and closeness in young heterosexual adults' same-gender friendships. *Sex Roles*, *74*, 422-435. • Worrell, Frank, et al. (2016). Competition's role in developing psychological strength and outstanding performance. *Review of General Psychology*, *20*(3), 259-271. • Toma, Claudia, & Butera, Fabrizio. (2015). Cooperation versus competition effects information sharing and use in group decision-making. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *9*(9), 455-467. • Caughron, Jay, et al. (2013). Competition and sensemaing in ethical situations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, DOI: 10.1111/jasp.12141 • Van Loo, Katie, et al. (2013). Competition in stereotyped domains: Competition, social comparison, and stereotype threat. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *43*(7), 648-660. • Wittchen, Marion, et al. (2013). The two sides of competition: Competition-induced effort and affect during intergroup versus interindividual competition. *British Journal of Psychology*, *104*(3), 320-338.
Week 5: Competition in Education	Nelson, Robert, & Dawson, Phillip. (2017). Competition, education and assessment: Connecting history with and recent scholarship. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *42*(2), 304-315. **Supplemental:** • Chen, Ching-Huei, et al. (2018). How competition in a game-based science learning environment influences students' learning achievement, flow experience, and learning behavioral patterns. *Educational Technology & Society*, *21*(2), 164-176. • Reitz, Thomas. (2017). Academic hierarchies in neo-feudal capitalism: How competition processes trust and facilitates the appropriation of knowledge. *Higher Education*, *73*, 871-886. • Posselt, Julie, & Lipson, Sarah Ketchen. (2016). Competition, anxiety, and depression in the college classroom: Variations by student identity and field of study. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(8), 973-989.

	• Rigas, Bob, & Kuchapski, Renee. (2016). "Strengthening" Ontario universities: A neoliberal reconstruction of higher education. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, *180*, 47-80. • Cagiltay, Nergiz Ercil, et al. (2015). The effect of competition on learning in games. *Computers & Education*, *87*, 35-41. • Pulfrey, Caroline, & Butera, Fabrizio. (2013). Why neoliberal values of self-enhancement lead to cheating in higher education: A motivational account. *Psychological Science*, *24*(11), 2153-2162.
Week 6: Business competition	Berg, Roberta Wiig. (2010). Competition and cooperation: The wisdom to know when. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *73*(2), 176-189. **Supplemental:** • Levine, Sheen, et al. (2017). Strategic intelligence: The cognitive capability to anticipate competitive behavior. *Strategic Management Journal*, *38*, 2390-2423. • Mollerstrom, Johanna, & Wrolich, Katherine. (2017). The gender gap in competitiveness: Women shy away from competing with others, but ot from competing with themselves. *DIWE Economic Bulletin*, *22/23*, 219-225. • Rigdon, Mary, & D'Esterre, Alexander. (2017). Sabotaging another: Priming competitive behavior increases cheating behavior in tournaments. *Southern Economic Journal*, *84*(2), 456-473. • Sonenshein, Scott, et al. (2017). Competition of a different flavor: How a strategic group identity shapes competition and cooperation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *64*(4), 626-656.
Week 7: Competition in Economic Psychology	Buckert, Magdalena, et al. (2017). How stressful are economic competitions in the lab? An investigation with physiological measures. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *62*, 231-245. **Supplemental:** • Kalwij, Adriaan. (2018). The effects of competition outcomes on health: Evidence from the lifespans of US Olympic medalists. *Economics & Human Biology*, *31*, 276-286. • Bonte, Werner, et al. (2017). Economics meets psychology: Experimental and self-reported measures of individual competitiveness. *Personality & Individual Differences*, *116*, 179-185. • Barker, Jessica, & Barclay, Pat. (2016). Local competition increases people's willingness to harm others. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, *37*, 315-322. • Schurr, Amos, & Ritov, Ilana. (2016). Winning a competition predicts dishonest behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *113*(7), 1754-1759.
Week 8: Political competition	Carlin, Ryan, & Love, Gregory. (2016). Political competition, partisanship and interpersonal trust in electoral democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, *48*, 115-139. **Supplemental:** • Balliet, Daniel, et al. (2018). Political ideology, trust, and cooperation: In-group favoritism among Republicans *and* Democrats during a US national election. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *62*(4), 797-818. • Goldsmith, Benjamin, et al. (2017). Political competition and the initiation of international conflict: A new perspective on the institutional foundations of democratic peace. *World Politics*, *69*(3), 493-531. • Konig, Pascal. (2017). The role of competitive advantage in party competition. *Politics & Policy*, *45*(1), 51-82. • Neundorf, Anja, & Adams, James. (2016). The micro-foundations of party competition and issue ownership: The reciprocal effects of citizens' issue salience and party attachments. *British Journal of Political Science*, *48*, 385-406. • Bowler, Shaun, & Donovan, Todd. (2011). Electoral competition and the voter. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *75*(1), 151-164.

Week 9: Media, technology, & competition	Stephanone, Michael, et al. (2018). A social cognitive approach to traditional media content and social media use: Selfie-related behavior as competitive strategy. *New Media & Society*, doi: 10.1177/1461444818795488. **Supplemental:** • Church, E. Mitchell, & Thambusamy, Ravi. (2018). Competition and deception in online social networks. *Journal of Computer information Systems*, *58*(3), 274-281. • Dekavalla, Marina. (2018). Vizualizing the game frame: Constructing political images in referendum coverage. *Visual Communication*, DOI 10.1177/1470357218801395 • Knupfer, Curd. (2018). Diverging perceptions of reality: Amplified frame competition via distinct modes of journalistic production. *Journalism Studies*, *19*(4), 694-611. • Griffiths, Robert, et al. (2016). Competitive video game play: An investigation of identification and competition. *Communication Research*, *43*(4), 468-486. • Lee, Seok Ho. (2016). When ideology meets bottom line: Analysis on market competition and ideological bias in newspapers. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *26*(5), 407-426.