

**PLEASE REVIEW
THE FOLLOWING “CORE” CONCEPTS
WE LEARNED THROUGHOUT THIS SEMESTER...**

“ARGUMENT”: At the start of the semester, we briefly discussed the influential book *Everything’s an Argument*. In it, authors Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters state that every argument “expresses a point of view” designed “to influence... to inform, to convince, to persuade, to explore [and] to make decisions.”

“ARISTOTLE AND RHETORIC”: From there, we learned about the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. He developed the concept of **rhetoric**—the “art of making an argument.” Aristotle gave us specific ways of think about arguments, how they are constructed, and why they can be so convincing. Aristotle famously wrote that persuasion is achieved:

1. Through the **ethos** (credibility, trustworthiness, believability, authority) of the person making the argument, along with the ethos of her or his sources;
2. When the argument “stirs the emotions” through **pathos**; and
3. Through the argument’s use of **logos**—that is, the logic (structure, organization) of the argument. (Like a math equation, when we put all the pieces together, do they “add up” to the point someone is trying to prove?)

In short, according to Aristotle, when we use rhetoric in our own speaking or writing, we seek to persuade others to believe something (or in something), or to call people to a specific action (convincing them to behave in specific ways).

“TOULMIN”: After discussing Aristotle, we studied educator and philosopher Stephen Toulmin, who built on Aristotle’s ideas. Toulmin sought to develop a new model of argumentation—one which could be used to evaluate moral issues. (A moral issue is an argument that deals with justice, social problems, or the standards of living in a fair society).

Toulmin’s Model contains six components. We limited our discussions to four:

1. The **claim**—a clear, well-stated, concise, specific point or message that the whole argument is trying to prove—and its **sub-claims** (well-stated, concise, smaller points that the rhetor seeks to prove);
2. The **evidence** (specific, credible examples or information) and **elaboration** (thorough explanations as to how that evidence proves or supports the claim and sub-claims);
3. **Warrants** (stated or inferred reasons for having the argument) that provide context or background information, so as to answer the question, “*Why should people care?*”
4. **Counterarguments** (explaining opposing opinions or ideas) and rebuttals (using evidence to demonstrate how or why “the other side” is weak or flawed).

In sum, the Toulmin Model suggests that the point of any argument is not “to win” or “beat” other arguments, but rather to (i) be as organized as possible, (ii) come as close as possible to solving a problem, and (iii) calling people to action (so that *they* can help solve the problem).