ARGUING A POSITION

Formal Outline and Annotated Bibliography
Notes for drafting & revision
Arguing a Position—Formal Outline

Introduction/Claim + Overall Issue

- Introduce and identify/define the issue
- Create reader interest
  - Brief history of the debate
  - What’s at stake/significance
  - Quotation
  - Stat/Anecdote
  - Question
- Claim + Overall Reason (Warrant)
Arguing a Position—Formal Outline

Background/Warrant

- Background
  - Definitions
  - Context/History
    - Use sources for support

- Warrant(s)
  - Gives you authority to proceed with your argument by connecting the claim and reason. Controversial warrants need to be stated and defended—See EA, 186-92.
Arguing a Position—Formal Outline

Reasons

- Define/Explain reasons
- Support reasons (Use sources--research) See EA, 73-84
  - Facts
  - Stats
  - Authorities
  - Examples
  - Anecdotes
  - Cultural assumptions
- Connect reasons as you move through your argument; otherwise, your essay becomes a list of unconnected reasons. Also, consider the order of reasons.
Arguing a Position—Formal Outline

Counterarguments

- State objections (opposing positions) to your claim or questions readers might raise about your claim
  - Refute objections/answer questions
  - Accommodate objections/questions by admitting they have some validity
  - Use sources – research

- This shows you are fair, objective/builds shared values with readers

- Refer to reasons as you rebut counterarguments but be careful not to be repetitive (This especially true if you block your reasons and counterarguments)

- There are various ways to organize Reasons and Counterarguments: For models, see EA, pages 177 (Rogerian), 199 (Toulmin) 173 (Classical Oration)
Arguing a Position—Formal Outline

Conclusion

- Reemphasize the claim
- Significance of the issue in the future
- Related issues
  - Quotation
  - Stat
  - Question(s)
  - Call for action
Annotated Bibliography

- Organize using alphabetical order like you would for a works cited page
- Entries should follow MLA citation style – see RW/EA/Library website guides/MLA Handbook on reserve for our class
- Bibliography should have a variety of sources (e.g., a few sources that oppose your claim) and credible sources) See the Course Notes – “Choosing a Topic” link – for source requirements
- Annotations (see Annotated Bib Handout)
  - Summarize each source – thesis/main point(s)
  - Quality of source
  - Relevance for your topic
  - Style – begin entry with “Argues that . . . “ or “This source . . . “