

Welcome to Online Speech 104



I want to welcome you to this online version of Speech 104, Argumentation and Critical Thinking. In this course we will cover everything we do in the face-to-face version of the class, but it will be totally done online. **There are no in-person class meetings.**

Beginning Saturday, February 4, your “virtual class” will be available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I am always asked, “How can a speech class be online?” Speech 104 is designed to make you a better critical thinker and a more confident decision maker. We will be doing that by studying a variety of topics including communication, persuasion, perception, argumentation, language, evidence, reasoning, and the relation between Truth and validity and much more. **And all of this will be done totally online.**

Earning a Grade

I don't grade on a curve. You will receive points for all of your assignments and at the end of the winter session your points will be totaled and you will receive the grade that corresponds to your point total. All of you can receive a high grade if you make the effort.

I will ask you to do **three** tasks in this class:

- participate in online discussions
- take quizzes on each chapter,
- complete homework assignments

If you spend the time and make the effort, you all can do well.

Textbook

We will be using the textbook, Communicating Critical Thinking, by Jack Sterk and Jim Marteney. The text is necessary for the course and can be obtained at the Los Angeles Valley College Bookstore. You should also be able to go to the bookstore online at <http://www.lavcbookstore.com/> to order the book and have it sent to you.

The Class

To be successful in this course you need to log into the class at least three times a week. I will do my best to make the class interesting so you will want to log in even more. Remember, if you were taking this class at the college in a regular class, you would be spending close to 3 hours per week in class and that doesn't include reading the text, studying and doing homework. Then add to that drive time to and from the college and you may spend up to 6 – 7 hours a week in class. So I expect you to be online often and spending time reading the material and participating in the discussions. You do well on these and you will do well in the class. I will always be there to help you succeed.

Myths

I just want to warn you about two myths I often hear from students:

Myth 1: An online class is easier than a face-to-face class. This class is not difficult, but it may actually take more time than a face-to-face class. My goal is to make this class so enjoyable that you will want to visit often and participate.

Here is the good news. An online class may take more time, but it is more convenient. You may take the class anywhere you can find an Internet connection any time day or night. Some students enjoy spending time at Starbucks drinking coffee and connecting to the Internet with their laptop.

Myth 2: I can do my schoolwork at entirely my own pace. You do have a lot of freedom when and where you do your class work. You can work in the morning or late at night, but there will be deadlines for discussions and assignments so you will have to follow a schedule.

You need self-discipline, but you still have some flexibility when you go online to do your work.

As I said earlier, my goal is to make this class so interesting and stimulating that you will want to join us online and participate in the activities. But the class really becomes exciting when everyone contributes. Together, we can really create a great class learning about critical thinking.

Getting Started

Make sure you check out the Virtual Valley webpage at:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/>

The screenshot shows the Virtual Valley website interface. At the top right, there are links for 'LAVC', 'contact', and 'help'. The main navigation bar includes 'STUDENT RESOURCES', 'FACULTY RESOURCES', and 'Class Login'. The central banner features the LAVC logo and a photo of a woman, with the text 'ONLINE CLASSES'. The left sidebar has three sections: 'Schedule of Online Classes' (with a document icon), 'Online Tutorials' (with a green arrow icon), and 'Help' (with a question mark icon). The right sidebar has four sections: 'How to login', 'System Requirements', 'Register for classes', and 'Frequently Asked Questions', each with a brief description of the content.

As you can see, you will find all the information you need about taking an online class at LAVC including:

- How to Log into your class
- Where to Log into your class
- Where to get help
- The system requirements where you can find out what computer you need and browser to use etc.
- Online Tutorials to help you get started

Head over to the website for all the help you should need to get you off on a successful start.

The class officially begins on Monday, February 6th, but I will be opening the class on Saturday, February 4th so you can get started exploring the class.

Help Desk

If you have any problems with logging in or concerns about taking an online class, you can find help at the Valley College Help Desk.

- Their phone number is (818) 778-5834
- Their email address is: etudeshelp@lavc.edu.

You can also receive help in person the Computer Lab at BJ103.

A complete listing of times of operation can be found at the Virtual Valley website.

Making Sure Your Computer is Ready

One of the biggest problems students have in taking this class is with their computer system. Make sure you look at the link on Virtual Valley titled, "System Requirements." Follow the instructions to make sure that your system will work well with the college's online learning system called Etudes. The instructions there include those for the "cache" settings and setting up your "cookies," "java" etc. (don't worry setting this up is easier than it sounds). Your computer will then be ready to go. Follow these instructions and you will experience much less frustration and headaches.

Use the Firefox Browser

If you are using a Mac, you will notice that the Safari browser will not work well and those of you using IE may have problems viewing videos. Firefox is the best browser for the class. The Etudes system requirements site, you will find a link to upload Firefox.

First Assignment

Your first week is designed to get you used to using the Etudes Classroom System, and become comfortable in taking an online class. The information on these assignments is listed in your first module. You need to complete your first assignments by Wednesday night, February 8 at 11:30 pm. **If you do not finish them by then, I will drop you from the class** so those on the waiting list can be enrolled. You must get started early.

When you enter to the class, you will see the first announcement on the right hand side with complete instructions on what you need to do.

Very Important

The first day you can log on is Saturday, February 4, at 8:00 a.m. If you have not logged on and participated in the first discussion by Wednesday night, February 6th at 11:30 pm, then I will assume you do not want to take the class. It is just like attending the first day of class. I will have many students on a wait list wanting to take the class. **You miss this first due date, you are dropped.** So remember, **you need to log into the class and participate before Wednesday night, February 6th at 11:30 pm**

I am looking forward to meeting all of you online and working with you so we can have a fun, stimulating, and successful Spring semester.

Jim "profjim" Marteney