

CLAIMS AND ARGUMENT WORKSHOP

ENGL 108 / SEC. H & I / SUMMER LEAP 2009 / OLDHAM & RUBASKY / CHANG & LEE



In today's workshop, you will assess the strength of the paper's claim and line of argumentation. (By line of argument we mean the development of the claim in the body of the paper.) You will work silently in groups of three, spending about 25 minutes on each paper. Make sure each person in your group starts with a different paper in case you do not finish commenting on both. Please comment on the following questions:

1. Review the writer's claim, which you identified yesterday and mark it again. Has the writer revised the claim since then? If yes, please comment on the effectiveness of the revision.

2. Assess the overall cohesion of the paper. That is, is the claim set out in the introduction developed more fully in the body paragraphs? Does each paragraph relate to the main claim? In the margins, jot down some notes about how you think each paragraph relates to that main claim. (Example: This paragraph provides evidence based on XYZ that supports the main claim.)

3. Please assess the writer's use of details/support. Where should the writer include more detailed/quoted evidence from the text to back up his/her argument? Mark spots where this is the case. Note any sub-claims that are NOT backed up.

4. Finally, does the writer use evidence in ways that clearly convey to readers the significance of the writer's interpretation? Does the evidence help the writer to convey that "so what" question? What are the stakes of this interpretation?

5. Now that you have examined this paper really closely, please take the final moments of the workshop to make one last set of assessments about the writer's claim and the claim's development. Can you make any final comments for revision? Does the claim need to be narrowed? Does it need to be broadened? Be sure to clarify why you are making these suggestions.