

# About arguments and communication

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To all the clever students here today

# Overview

- Argumentation and persuasion – what sort of communication is that?
- Logic and Rhetoric: formal/practical
- Topoi – Model for producing arguments
- Toulmin - Model for analyzing arguments
  
- Dirty tricks and the battle of discourse

# *communicatio*

Something about community, meeting and sharing

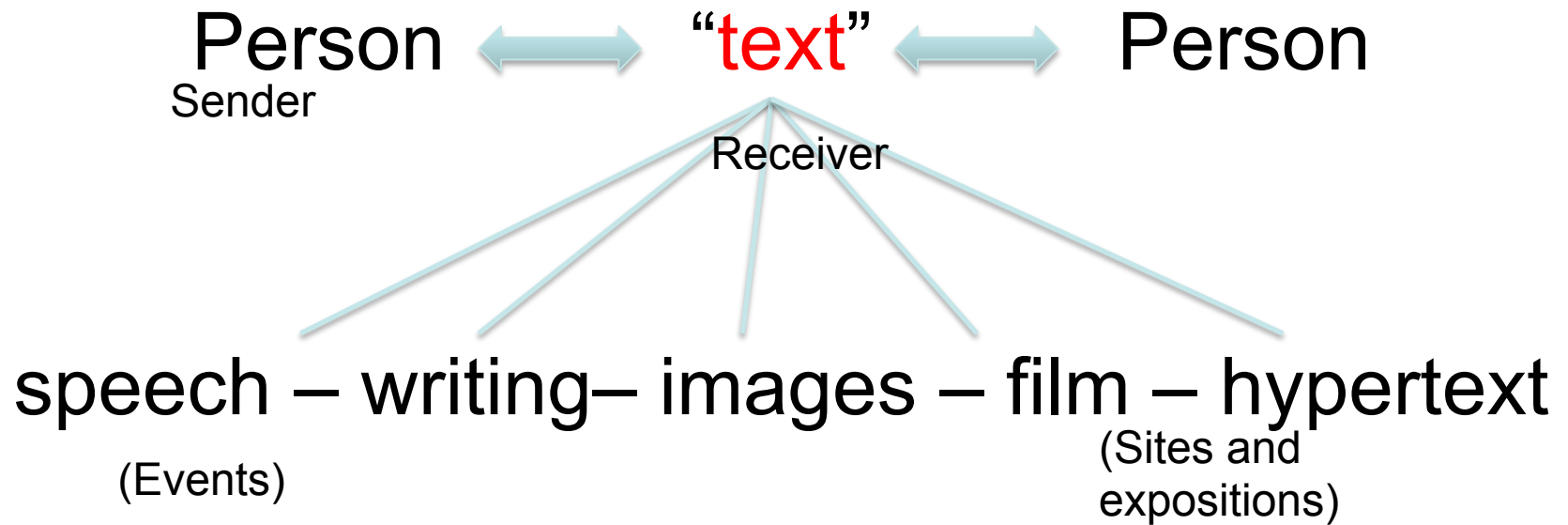
Communication is "an interaction between persons"



This interaction takes place by means of gestures, speech, writing, video, sites, etc.

These "products" are often referred to academically as "texts" – and their *form* can be analyzed to reveal a *content*

# Communication is an interaction by means of “texts”



Content analysis examines what a specific “text” consists of, how its elements are formed and how they function (contribute to communication and perhaps persuasion/argumentation)

You are all good at logic 😊

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I am not good at math.

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When not good at math, then not good at logic.

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When not good at math, then not good at logic.

So: I am not good at logic

This is a perfect logical argument (called *modus ponens*)

p

p  q

-----

q

When p is true,  
and when it is true that p implies q

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Then it is true that q

Logic has sharp terms, syllogisms rest on a clear classification

All lions are cats

All cats are mammals

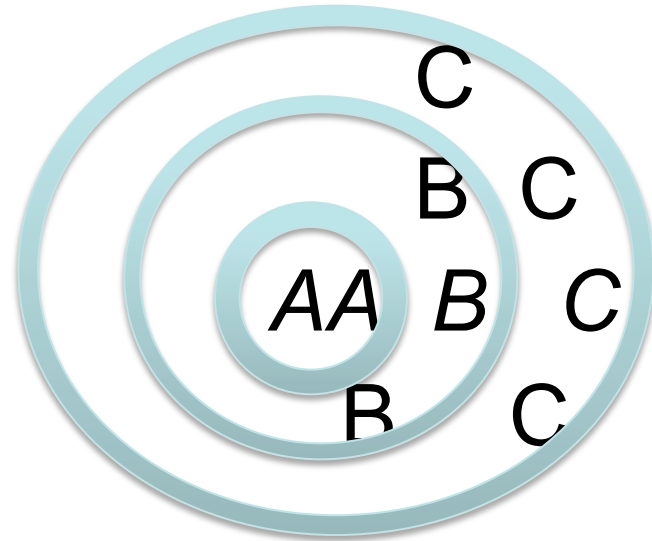
so:

All lions are mammals

*If you like snakes, and you call your favorite snake "Lion", then this does not work, because you are not using terms with exactly the same meaning each time*

# Formalizing

- All A's are (within) B
  - All B's are (within) C
- so:
- All As are (within) C



The conclusion follows with necessity.

But anything can be loaded into this model!

# Same again

Premise (minor): All x are y

Premise (major): All y are z

so

Conclusion: All x are z

In formal logic all terms have to have a fixed “meaning” - actually they are just “empty” symbols – that is why it is purely formal

# Classic

Premise (minor): Socrates is a human

Premise (major): All humans are mortal  
so

Conclusion: Socrates is mortal

# Same again?

Premise (minor): **Jesus** is a human

Premise (major): All humans are mortal

so

Conclusion: **Jesus** is mortal

In formal logic all terms have to have a fixed “meaning” – but in normal language and discussions “meanings” are not fixed

# Looks like logic?

Some Muslims are Arabs

Some Arabs are terrorists

so:

Some Muslims are terrorists

But it is not – see the next slide: same form, but now it is obviously wrong

(besides: it is not a valid syllogism)

# Looks like logic?

Some French are redhaired

Some redhaired are Germans

so:

Some French are Germans

We find that being French excludes being a German.

So the question is, does being a Muslim exclude being a terrorist?

And that is not a matter of logical calculation, but of interpretation and opinion.



- Formal logic is an abstract world of its own. But real argumentation takes place in a changing world of interpretations, presuppositions and ambiguity
- An argument is not a representation of the world as it is, but an attempt to draw up a picture of an ordered world for an audience
- Being good at arguing is not a matter of being logical (are we all), but a matter of being smart, creative and tough!

# Logic and rhetoric

We communicate not in an abstract world (of distinct entities like in math/formal logic) but in a changing and complex world – arguing is situated

In order to **mean** something we have to use words and phrases open to interpretation and even misunderstanding

So naturally body language, the voice, style, and personal performance (and **ethos**) are also important in everyday arguments

# What it is to argue!

- To argue is to try to show that your own point or claim is not an isolated, random opinion or (false) claim.
- But on the contrary a (necessary or at least likely) part of a larger, coherent whole and view of things.
- And that it should be regarded as (fitting with) the right view and opinion about the true state of affairs.

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offers a special view (a pattern, an ordering) of the  
world: "You have a headache today!"

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- "because you drank too much yesterday" (and when you drink too much, you get a headache)
- "because the air is bad in this room" (and when...)
- "because you do not like to be here any more" (and when...)

Here the reasons offered for explaining the headache leads into three very different directions (topics, worlds)

# To argue

- Is like standing a dark night out in a forrest with a magic torch. You decide in what direction you will flash the light and what pictures you will draw and project.
- But you are not alone, and the others also have their lamps and may want to shed light on other items. So what are we going to see?
- And behind every torchlight there is perhaps always something left in the dark...



Pro & con?

Should we have more video  
(camera) surveillance in our cities?

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Should we have more video  
(camera) surveillance in our cities?

We can usually all come up with a few arguments pro & con. To find more arguments it helps to check out various “topoi”, as did the ancient Greek rhetoricians.

Here follows a modern version:

# Topoi

– suggestions for places to look.

Points of view, both pro & con:

- Economy
- Environment & Climate
- Ethics
- Aesthetics
- Culture
- Religion
- Individual
- Society

# Pro: more video cameras

(suggestions, examples only)

**Economy:** will stop thieves and vandalism

**Environment & Climate:** will stop littering

**Ethics:** will make us feel safe

**Aesthetics:** modern cameras are beautiful

**Culture:** will stop crime culture and gangs

**Religion:** will reinforce “God sees everything”

**Individual:** old people feel safe in the streets

**Society:** much more order and less crime

# Con: more video cameras

(suggestions, examples only)

**Economy:** expensive way to fight crime

**Environment & Climate:** will use energy

**Ethics:** will make us all feel like in a prison

**Aesthetics:** modern cameras are ugly

**Culture:** better to build on trust and freedom

**Religion:** only God should see everything

**Individual:** no privacy or individual freedom

**Society:** too much “Big Brother”, alienation

“We are at war”

“Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass  
destruction”

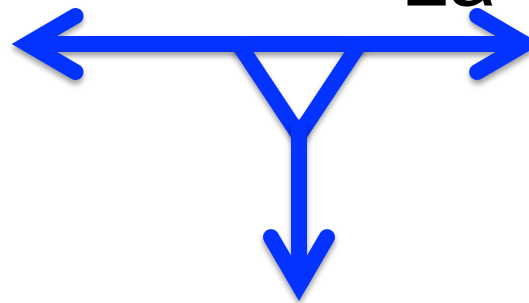
Observe how these statements can be placed in all 3  
places of the Toulmin model of argumentation

Data

Claim

Les Données  
(det givne)

La Conclusion  
(pointen)



Warrant

La Garantie

(grundantagelsen)

To see more:

My Prezi presentation about

**Arguments:**

[https://prezi.com/\\_pcqwmlzaedq/arguments/](https://prezi.com/_pcqwmlzaedq/arguments/)

See more essays and material on:

<http://www.henrikjuel.dk/>