Key Terms and Credibility
Argumentation is...

- The communicative process of advancing, supporting, criticizing, and modifying claims so that appropriate decision makers, defined by relevant spheres, may grant adherence.
Decision Makers

- … are the people necessary to implement the decision
- … is the audience who can act.
Relevant Spheres

- ... the appropriate argument context.
- Grow out of confluence of arguer, question, and audience
- Are social constructs that guide how arguments are produced
- Are sociological fields with patterns of argumentation
Other Essential Terms

- Proposition
- Issue
- Support
- Argument
Proposition

- ... the overarching or main claim that will organize the argument.
  - The main point the arguer makes
  - Helps focus the field of discussion
  - Defines and limits the relevant issues.

- e.g. “Congress should pass legislation to eliminate broadcast indecency.”
Proposition: "Congress should pass legislation to eliminate broadcast indecency"

1. It has damaging effects on children
2. Violation of privacy in the home
3. Broadcasting is expensive
4. Distracts from the quality of the game
5. Imitation by other media of obscene behaviors
6. Undermines family and social values
7. Government censorship
8. Potential erosion of individual rights
9. Educational programming is interesting
10. Chills future free speech an expression
Support

- ... comes in 3 kinds
  - Evidence
    - Examples
    - Statistics
    - Testimony
  - Values
  - Credibility
Credibility =

- An arguer’s ability to be believed and trusted by recipients
- *Ethos*
- Per Aristotle: “speech is spoken so as to make us think the speaker credible”
Credibility

- Is not a characteristic possessed by the speaker, but attributed by the audience
- Is field- and context-dependent
- Is most valuable when certainty is impossible and opinions are divided
Credibility by power

- Compliance
- Identification
- Internalization
Power

Roderick J. McDavis
Identification
Credibility by Internalization (speech)

- Expertise is the possession of a background of knowledge and information relevant to the argument being made.
- Trustworthiness depends on whether people believe the arguer is motivated to tell them the truth.
- Goodwill depends on whether people believe the arguer has the audience’s best interests in mind.
- Dynamism depends on whether people believe the arguer believes the argument.
Credibility by speech matters...

- When the question being discussed appears to have a right or wrong answer
- When audience members are less involved and have less knowledge
- When audience members are likely to forget who made the argument and shift to content later
- When audience members disagree strongly with the position being argued
- When an unbiased source is expected
Goals for credibility

- To get your audience focused on the content of your message
- To make an initial favorable impression on the audience
- To cause the audience to form a positive impression of your trustworthiness and expertise