

## **What We Mean by an “Argument”—a Rubric SOCI 206, Spring 2015**

An important part of your project proposal is a statement of the argument that will be given in your film. The “argument”, in general terms, has to do with the overall flow and intent of the content of the film. However, we break it down into three elements: (1) the argument; (2) the story objective; (3) the narrative arc.

### **The Argument**

Here we have a narrower and more focused meaning for the term argument. The argument here is somewhat like what we would mean by the argument in the paper. In a paper we look for a statement of the central thesis or the question to be answered and this is given in the first paragraph or two.

Beyond this initial statement of the question or hypothesis, we have a section of the paper that gives information about the topic. Often this involves factual information or an explanation of how a process works (if you are talking about a cooperative farm you would have to tell what it is, what it grows, how cooperation works and is organized and a substantial part of your paper or presentation would be describing and explaining things.

In some arguments there is a pro and a con argument and it is important to give a fair and full explication of the con argument before you give your pro case. After that you usually give substantial information about your pro argument in order to make your case clear.

After you state the problem, give information, and elaborate on the pro and con cases you must have a conclusion that tells how you resolve the opening problem or the disagreement between the pro and con positions. A film also must have a concluding portion that wraps things up, tells what we have learned, and that gives convincing sense that it is time to end the presentation.

### **The Story Objective**

The objective of the story tells us “so what?” As you think about your film, you want to think clearly about why you personally got interested in your project and why you care. You also have to know that the purpose of both a paper and a film is to interest, convince, and communicate to an audience. Thus, you have to include material that communicates the importance of the material and the purpose that is achieved through your narrative. You probably will have some narrative (interviews, explanations, events that make the “so what?” part clear) that is specific and explicit in terms of telling the objective of the story. However, these elements also may weave through the entire film. The objective may come out through interviews, visual shots, or explanations, related in ways that connect particular points to the overall objective. For this to happen, you must be clear about what that objective is.

**Story Arc**

Your overall narrative will be made up of a number of sub-parts, or we might call them scenes. These involve a shift of focus from one topic to another and often a shift of content and location. The story arc begins with a list and a brief description of each of the scenes. But you also must fill out the entries on this list both by telling what happens in each scene and by thinking through and explaining what you need to assemble and have available in order for each scene to be successfully executed.

When you put all of the scenes and their contents together you will have a completed story that moves through a variety of content areas and action events. These collected contents are the arc of the story.