

## **Five Types of Claims**

According to author Nancy Wood (*Perspectives on Argument* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. NY: Pearson, 2007:158-172), we can categorize almost all arguments as belonging to one of the following types: claims of definition; claims of cause; claims of value; claims of policy; and claims of fact. Wood suggests that we get a better sense of which type of argument it is (or that we want to construct) by looking at the questions that it answers (or that we want to answer about it). Many times the claim defines the structure of the entire paper; on occasion, it functions as a supporting claim for the larger argument (so more than one claim might operate in the same essay).

### **CLAIMS OF DEFINITION**

- 1) What is it?
- 2) What is it like?
- 3) How should it be classified?
- 4) How should it be interpreted?
- 5) How does its usual meaning change in a particular context?

### **CLAIMS OF CAUSE**

- 1) What caused it?
- 2) Where did it come from?
- 3) What are the effects?
- 4) What probably will be the results on a short or long term basis?

### **CLAIMS OF VALUE**

- 1) How bad is it? How good?
- 2) How moral or immoral?
- 3) Of what worth is it?
- 4) Who says so?
- 5) What do these people value?
- 6) What values or criteria should I use to determine its goodness or badness?

### **CLAIMS OF POLICY**

- 1) What should we do?
- 2) How should we act?
- 3) How can we solve this problem?
- 4) What course of action should we pursue?

### **CLAIMS OF FACT**

- 1) Did it happen?
- 2) Is it True?
- 3) How do we know this?

**\*\* adapted from handouts by PWR instructors Donna Hunter and Scott Herndon \*\***