

Deliberate Conflict: Argument, Political Theory, and Composition Classes

Associate Professor Patricia Roberts-Miller PhD

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In *Deliberate Conflict: Argument, Political Theory, and Composition Classes*, Patricia Roberts-Miller argues that much current discourse about argument pedagogy is hampered by fundamental unspoken disagreements over what democratic public discourse should look like. The book's pivotal question is: In what kind of public discourse do we want our students to engage? To answer this, the text provides a taxonomy, discussion, and evaluation of political theories underpinning democratic discourse, highlighting the relationship between various models of the public sphere and rhetorical theory.

Roberts-Miller seeks to diffuse student antagonism toward argumentation by increasing instructors' awareness of different models of democracy in argument pedagogy. She provides a range of theories, discussing the major features and rhetorical applicability of the liberal, the interest-based, the communitarian, and the deliberative models of the public domain.

Deliberate Conflict cogently advocates reintegrating instruction in argumentation into the composition curriculum. By linking effective argumentation in the public sphere with the ability to affect social change, Roberts-Miller pushes compositionists beyond a simplistic Aristotelian conception of how argumentation works and offers a means by which to prepare students for active participation in public discourse.



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