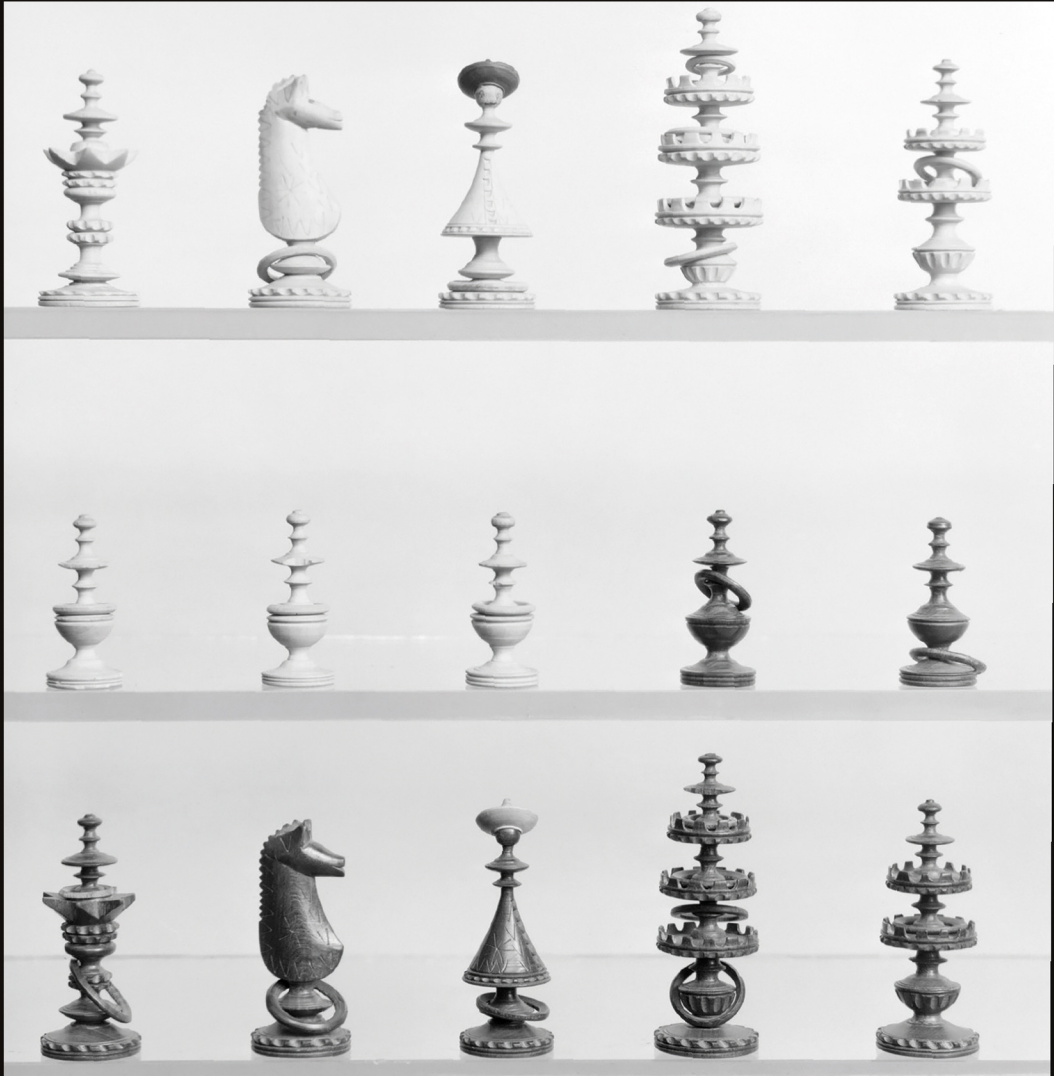




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# The Routledge Handbook of Argumentation Theory

Edited by Scott Aikin, John Casey,  
and Katharina Stevens

# THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ARGUMENTATION THEORY

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*Edited by Scott Aikin, John Casey, and  
Katharina Stevens*

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the use of AI-generated imagery within [Chapter 26](#), ChatGPT Image generator 3.0 was prompted to create generic images from images available in the public domain and free of copyright to illustrate each of the following—a bank robber holding a sack with a dollar sign, a dead polar bear emanating from the exhaust of an SUV in an arctic environment, a wolf in sheep’s clothing, Ronald Reagan wearing the sheep’s clothing, Ronald Reagan wearing the sheep’s clothing while talking to a farmer, the silhouette of Ronald Reagan looking out on an ocean scene with surfers in the water and the setting sun emblazoned with the USSR’s hammer and sickle, and finally three pairs of gendered primates—gorillas, gibbons, and orangutans. Images of the three pairs of primates were embedded in a diagram to show how sexual dimorphism was correlated with mating practice.

# INTRODUCTION

*Scott Aikin, John Casey, and Katharina Stevens*

Argumentation theory is a domain of research devoted to clarifying the concept of argument and the associated practice of argumentation. One site of that clarification is in the distinction between arguments as sets of reasons for or against a thesis or proposal and arguments as acts of communication and coordination between speakers. With the former notion of argument, the informal logical tradition has thrived, and theories of argument schemes and critical questioning have been developed. With the latter notion of argument as a process of reasoning with other people, argumentation theory has flourished as a program of understanding how arguers work out their differences and tackle problems. Just as there are norms for the construction and evaluation of arguments as relations between propositions, there are rules for the exchange of reasons between people. In this regard, argumentation theory is an interdisciplinary research domain, encompassing questions in philosophy (with logic, theories of rationality, and theories of appropriate interpersonal conduct), communication theory (with questions of how one's reasons are framed and made explicit, what kind of statements comprise these exchanges), and rhetoric (with an eye to how effectively some arguments and not others elicit assent or understanding, and to whom arguments are addressed). Additionally, there are intersecting theoretical questions on the psychological influences on how arguments unfold, cultural norms for challenges and answers, political background conditions for critical dialogue, and the ethical limits of argumentative exchange.

One consequence of the variety of the questions in this domain is that there is not only disagreement over answers to the main questions of the area, but there is also disagreement over what the central questions and methods of the research domain are. We hope that the contributions in this volume will be a site of clarity on what the various approaches bring to the table and what the stakes for the debate are, and that they will thereby provide some orientation in this focused but fractious theoretical situation. In pursuit of these ends, we have selected leading representatives of these competing viewpoints to state their cases, and we have asked rising stars to contribute overviews of their cutting-edge work. We believe that the resulting chapters can serve as touchstones, making it easier for new participants in the various debates to inform themselves about the status quo and to gain entry into additional areas of this wide-ranging and exciting field. We also hope that this Handbook will be a site where budding new programs can receive their proper framing.

This volume is organized in two parts. **Part I** is devoted to addressing the organizing debates in argumentation theory: What is the point of argument, and how should we evaluate it? We will include representatives of the various traditions of how to model argument—the deductivist program, the rhetorical program, the pragma-dialectical approach, the epistemic program, the virtue approach, the argument design and normative pragmatic approaches, intercultural argumentation, and empirical studies of argument-effectiveness. **Part II** is devoted to ongoing and emerging debates in argumentation theory. These topics bear on fallacy theory, argument schemes, argument reconstruction, the ethics and justice of argumentative behavior, approaches to teaching argumentation in critical thinking courses, empirical research programs in argument effectiveness, the question of whether argumentation is intrinsically adversarial, what feminist and other intersectional insights can be brought to the theory of public reasoning, what political conditions must obtain for argument, and what the bounds for what counts as argument are. We believe that one lesson that emerges from these debates is that the ground is fertile for further development past this volume. We see argumentation theory as a domain for theoretical reflection that is not only fecund in its own right. It also has particular salience in the political and intellectual climate of the first quarter of the 21st century. Disagreements and debate over politics, science, democracy, and culture are so deep and broad that theories of how to reason well amidst it all (and plans for action in light of those theories) are of real importance. The shifting sands of our cultures and media environments may force us to reconsider what approaches are plausible or useful, and so what may look to us in the early 2020s as a likely successful strategy or explanation may not look so in the later 2020s and beyond. Regardless, we strive to capture things as they appear to us when and where we are, and this is reflected in the chapters you will find here.