

Tentative Title of Dissertation:

Toward a Martial Art (of) Rhetoric: Theory and Pedagogy of Conflict, Contention, and Coercion

Dissertation Abstract:

Whether in politics, law, or journalism, the fight is the prevailing metaphor of argument, as Deborah Tannen shows in *The Argument Culture*. This metaphor comes from the ancient Greek *agōn* (contest), e.g. boxing and wrestling, which is, as Debra Hawhee shows in *Bodily Arts*, the way rhetoric was first taught and practiced, as a fight. Many students also think argument is a fight, necessarily violent, making some students argument-averse, and unprepared for the arguments they will encounter in the future. However, the problem is not that argument is fighting, but that our model of fighting is limited, reductive, and Eurocentric.

What Tannen identifies are not metaphors of “fighting” in general, but Western boxing specifically, which marginalizes non-Western styles of fighting like *karate* as merely “Japanese boxing.” However, while both *karate* and boxing are arts of striking, they are not the same in technique, training, and application, or in theory, history, and practice. By more closely attending to these differences between styles of fighting, this dissertation provides a way to fight differently.

The Japanese martial arts *karate*, *kobudo*, and *judo* provide a different model of fighting than the native Western, win-at-all costs attitude, as they aim instead for self-discipline and compassion. Using this different model, this project will develop a rhetoric and writing pedagogy and curriculum that provide a more expansive, nuanced concept of argument as fight, and provide students the skills to argue effectively, reflectively, and ethically in any situation: a way to *street fight without hatred*.