WRT 105
Argument Unit
Claims and Warrants

In arguments, *claims* are statements writers wish to prove, points writers believe are true.

Warrants are often less explicit, less obvious than claims: they are assumptions writers make that signal the very foundation of the argument. In *The Informed Argument* a warrant is defined as "a general statement that establishes a trustworthy relationship between the data and the claim; it is a fundamental assumption…on which a claim can be made and supported" (31). Sometimes the assumptions are ethical, sometimes they are religious, or political, or ideological. Recognizing warrants will make you a much more savvy evaluator of arguments **and** a much more sophisticated writer of arguments.

Here's an example of a claim and warrant:

I might claim that it's impossible for a college student to strengthen her writing skills if she does not simultaneously strengthen her reading skills. A warrant behind my claim is that it's important for college students to be competent writers. Now, that warrant might be persuasive to other composition teachers with a shared set of experiences and beliefs, but less persuasive to young undergraduates who feel that writing is *not* an important skill, or not a skill worth their time to develop. Warrants, then, are linked to audience. One audience might accept a warrant without hesitation; but another audience might balk at the underlying assumption of a claim.

Understand, too, that there is no *one* perfect or correct warrant for a claim. See if you can generate a warrant for each of the claims below, and then we'll compare what we all have written.

Claim: Diversity should be a theme of SU's Freshman Orientation in Fall 2013.

Warrant:

Claim: The mayor of Syracuse, Stephanie Miner, should be removed from office because she was once arrested for protesting the Iraq War.

Warrant:

Claim: Any novel that includes the use of racial slurs should be banned from public school classrooms.

Warrant:

Claim: All college students should be required to spend at least one semester abroad.

Warrant:

Claim: Bratz, the Barbie-doll alternatives for girls 9 to 12, reinforce the notion that even young girls should be sexual and alluring.

Warrant:

Identify a claim and a warrant in each of the readings I have assigned so far in the unit.