A Modified Version of the Toulmin “Make an Argument” Form/Explanation
Adapted from G.H. Spencer (Aug 2012) & Stephen Toulmin

THESIS/CLAIM: What are you asserting?
• What do you want your readers/hearers to believe/not believe or to do/not do?
• If your audience remembers one thing from your discourse, what would that one thing be?
• An audience member should be able to answer: “What is being asked of me?” or “How am I being asked to change my mind?”

REASONS/WARRANTS: Why should your audience accept the assertion that you have made?
• Why should they change their beliefs or actions?
• If you were in conversation and someone heard your assertion and then said, “Interesting idea. Why should I accept it?” what would you say?
• Think in terms of “because,” as in “You should believe that Hitler was a puppet of Stalin BECAUSE __________.”
• A reason is a warrant, a premise that links the evidence/data/facts you plan to supply with the thesis/assertion/claim that you are making.

EVIDENCE/DATA: What supports your reasons?
• Since your audience will not accept your reasons “just because you said so,” what support or data make your reasons more credible, more believable?
• Support might come in the form of 1) citations from the discourse you are analyzing; 2) authoritative experts who corroborate your ideas (preferably in more insightful or eloquent ways than you can state); 3) studies that verify that what you think is true has been substantiated empirically; or 4) ethical/biblical connections to your reasons.

Use the attached worksheet to analyze your claim/warrants/data (based on the Toulmin model). Type in your claim/thesis, your reasons/warrants, and affirm that your data/evidence are sufficient to support your reasons/warrants (and ultimately your claim/thesis). Attach this to your outline.
Claim / Warrant / Data Worksheet

I. My Thesis / Claim (the primary argument/position of speech):

My thesis asserts a position that meets these criteria:

___ It goes beyond merely exemplifying (illustrating/demonstrating) a theory.
___ It needs to be defended in order for someone to accept it. (It isn’t “obvious.”)

II. Reasons / Warrants

The first reason to accept my thesis is:

This reason meets these criteria:

___ It provides the reader with justification for accepting the thesis.
___ I have provided evidence/data to support my reasoning

The second reason to accept my thesis is:

This reason meets these criteria:

___ It provides the reader with justification for accepting the thesis.
___ I have provided evidence/data to support my reasoning

The third reason to accept my thesis is:

This reason meets these criteria:

___ It provides the reader with justification for accepting the thesis.
___ I have provided evidence/data to support my reasoning

III. These three reasons make my thesis/claim/pitch/requested action more believable/acceptable/desirable to my audience. Yes or No? _____