This dissertation explores the connections between martial arts training, rhetorical theory, and composition pedagogy. The central focus of this project is the common understanding of an argument as a “fight,” and by investigating the training practices of fighting arts, this project expands and complicates what an agonistic orientation can offer argument, teaching, and writing. This inquiry has two parts. Part one explores the importance and influence of ancient Greek martial arts practices in Platonic, Aristotelian, and Sophistic argumentation. By focusing on the “mixed” martial art of pankration, I challenge the pervasive binary of “open hand” and “closed fist” as a way to categorize and characterize arguments that conflates their technical and ethical differences. Part two turns to Japanese martial arts training for approaches to foundational problems in writing instruction: basics of grammar and syntax, form of writing assignments, and the practice of peer critique. By using the threefold method of kihon, kata, and kumite, I defamiliarize and provide a different orientation for discarded current-traditional rhetoric approaches. By investigating martial arts training practices as an approach to rhetoric and composition, I offer a theory and pedagogy of affirmative contention that challenges problematically reductive views of conflict and argument, provides skills and tactics for rhetorical self-defense, and encourages an ethical orientation to language-work that challenges injustices both inside the classroom and “on the street.”