As I said in the first lecture, arguments

are used for many purposes.

And in the lecture just before this one,

we saw that it

can be used for persuasion and also for

justification of various sorts.

But persuasion and justification are not

the

only purposes for which arguments are

given.

Arguments are also given in order to

explain things.

So we're going to spend this lecture

talking about explanation.

Indeed, what we're going to try to do is

to explain explanation.

We explain things all the time and I may

give an

example that'll probably really tick off

my co-teacher Ram because he's

from Chapel Hill, but my example is

somebody might ask why

did the Duke basketball team win the

National Championship in 2010.

The answer might be, they had great

players and a great coach and of

course, they got lucky.

you have to have some luck to win a

National Championship.

But in any case, an explanation of that

event is a reason why it happened.

so to explain something is to give a

reason why

it happened or to answer a question about

why it happened.

Notice that when you explain something,

you assume that it's true.

It wouldn't make any sense to

ask why did Duke win the National

Championship in 2011, because they didn't.

You can only ask why this thing happened

if it happened.

So we've already got one difference

between explanation and justification and

persuasion.

When you try to persuade someone to

believe something.

That thing doesn't have to be true, and

they don't have to of believed it in

advance.

When you justify something,

right?

You can justify belief in something that

they don't already believe.

But when you explain something, both the

arguer and the audience are assuming that,

that

thing happened, that the conclusion is

true, and

they're looking for the reasons why it

happened.

So if the goal of explanation is not to

persuade or to justify and the

arguer and the, and the audience both

already believe the conclusion then what's

the point?

What's the goal of explanation?

The goal of explanation is to increase

understan