

Speech and Debate Syllabus

Course Description

This course will provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in public speaking and debate. Students will learn to write, analyze, and deliver speeches of a persuasive, expository and impromptu nature. Students will also develop skills in argumentation and critical questioning and will have the opportunity to compete in a variety of speech and debate competitions.

Beyond providing students the opportunity to improve public speaking skills, this course will also encourage students to develop interpersonal communication skills as they work through problem solving, negotiation and simulation exercises. In addition to regular coursework students will be expected to follow current events closely and will use these events to hone their skills in speaking and argumentation. Students will be expected to become members of the Speech and Debate team and will be required to compete at league tournaments. Some students will qualify to participate in invitational tournaments as well.

Course Objectives

- Understand the difference between persuasive and informative speeches and learn the proper applications of each.
- Present prepared and extemporaneous speeches on a variety of topics.
- Understand the role of the audience as participants, listeners and critics.
- Develop mechanisms for coping with anxiety related to public speaking.
- Understand the basic steps for preparing and presenting a speech from determining the topic to the final delivery.
- Analyze sources in order to determine their credibility and learn to incorporate these sources effectively in prepared and extemporaneous speeches and or debate cases.

Course Outline

Foundations of Public speaking

- Understand the importance of public speaking
- Determining the right speech for the occasion
- The Public speaker's ethical obligations
- Introduction to competitive speaking
- Introduction to Debate

Building Confidence

- Understanding and managing anxiety
- Professional Conduct

Listening: What speakers should know

- How to keep listeners interested
- Reading nonverbal cues and responding to them
- Incorporating your audience effectively
- Being an active and attentive listener

- The importance of listening in communication
- Analyzing your audience
 - Situational information
 - Demographic information
 - Psychological information
 - Audience receptivity
 - Collecting and analyzing audience information (before and after the speech)
- Selecting and researching your topic
 - Determining and defining topics
 - Preparing outlines
 - Gathering evidence
 - Avoiding research mistakes and judging source credibility
- Supporting your Ideas
 - Using explanations, statistics, and instances
 - Making comparisons, presenting analogies, drawing conclusions
 - Expert Opinions and the skill of interviewing
 - Understanding the difference between proof and clarification
- Organizing your speeches, cases and rebuttals
 - Patterns of organization (topical, chronological, spatial etc)
 - Writing a sound body, a captivating introduction, and a memorable conclusion
 - Creating notes, storyboards and outlines
- Delivering your message
 - Appearance, posture, facial expressions and gestures
 - Tone, emphasis, and articulation
 - Rehearsing and memorizing

Major assignments

- Along with weekly readings and class discussion, students will be expected to complete the following major assignment:
- Short impromptu speech: A five minute impromptu speech will be given by each member of the class. Topics will be randomly selected.
 - Formal extemporaneous speech: Students will have minimal time to prepare a 7-10 minute extemporaneous speech on a topic relating to current events.
 - Persuasive Speech: Students will write and deliver a 7-10 minute persuasive speech in class. Students will be assessed on their writing and delivery and will be expected to incorporate the techniques discussed in class including the use of visual aids and evidence.
 - Informative speech: Students will write a 7-10 minute informative speech on a topic of their choosing.
 - Debate Cases: Students will write affirmative and negative cases for the current debate topic and will participate in impromptu debates (SPAR)
 - Students will review and evaluate their classmates' speeches, providing positive feedback and suggestions for improvement.
 - Students will present their work in its various stages of progress to the class for both formal and informal evaluation.

- Students will have the option of preparing and presenting their work for a school-wide audience and/or in competitions or can take an exam for summative assessment.