



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication and Performance

COMM-2055
Argumentation and Debate
Spring 2021

Syllabus

Contact Information

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Instructor Availability

Due to COVID-19, I will be working from home this semester. The best way to reach me is by email. I will be happy to meet with you virtually by appointment via Zoom. Email me if you would like to meet and we will set up a time.

Meetings and Location

Location: Virtual, via Zoom. A link will be posted to D2L for each meeting.
Class Meeting Schedule: See schedule for dates of meetings.

Online Course Information

All material will be presented and turned in using the D2L platform. You will need to use Zoom to complete synchronous class meetings and speaking assignments. You should have a Zoom account through ETSU and can access it on D2L.

All material will be available on a week-to-week basis.

Course Information

Credit Hours

3

Department of Communication and Performance Mission Statement

The Department of Communication and Performance advances the understanding of communication by focusing on the ways people communicate with each other personally and professionally, embracing the complexity of human diversity, and examining the ways in which identity and meaning are created through the stories we tell and are told.

Course Description

This oral communication course (I think the title kinda gives that away!) is designed to help students prepare for, deliver and critique both formal and informal arguments and debates. Learning these concepts will aid in the developing of critical thinking skills in the decision-making process as well as enhance those ever-important listening skills. Students will also learn how to evaluate the credibility of evidence and where to find credible material. By participating in individual and team (not scholastic) debates, writing critiques and other assignments, these concepts will be brought to life. Also, ain't it fun to argue with other folks?

Course Goals

1. Develop Critical Thinking Skills.
2. Use Logic and Reasoning.
3. Learn, Hone, and Apply Research Skills.
4. Create Valid Arguments.
5. Respectfully and Analytically Respond to Others' Arguments.
6. Appreciate Audience Diversity.
7. Prepare and Deliver Effective Oral Presentations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Construct, apply, and identify elements of Toulmin's Model.
2. Recognize and apply pathos, ethos, and logos.
3. Evaluate research credibility, quality and applicability.
4. Cite sources.
5. Identify and employ stock issues.
6. Create coherent propositions and claims of fact, value, and policy.
7. Analyzing arguments according to logic and argument concepts over personal preference.
8. Identify relevant audience characteristics and attitudes.

Major Topics

Argument construction and delivery, reasoning styles, critical thinking, fallacy awareness and oral communication competency.

Course Requirements

Optional Textbook

Inch, E. & Warnick, B. (2014). Critical Thinking and Communication. 7th edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon

Course Policies and Expectations

Classroom and Communication Policies

Email Communication

The ETSU email policy requires all faculty communication with students regarding ETSU business be conducted via the official ETSU email account. Please use your ETSU email account for any email communication.

Attendance and Participation

It is vital to attend every class! You have one absence (excused or unexcused) total for a night course and two absences (excused or unexcused) for a class that meets twice a week. After that participation points will be deducted from your grade. Two points will be taken off of your attendance grade for each absence after your freebies mentioned in the sentences above. We will start our zoom class periods on time.

Community-mindedness: Again, check your handy dandy student handbook on this topic. Community-mindedness will ensure a healthy atmosphere for us to debate on important, contemporary issues that affect our daily lives. Remember who your audience is and respect them.

Assignments and Submission Guidelines

Keep up with all lecture materials presented in class and D2L, complete all speeches, papers, assignments, and quizzes. Keep in mind that all class activities are due **in the D2L dropbox (not emailed)** on the day of the particular assignment. Please use the D2L site to turn in your assignments so I can avoid the plague of “broken” printers that abound.

Testing Policy

We will have three quizzes that will be conducted on D2L throughout the semester.

Late and Missing Submission Policy

Foreseeable absences should be arranged with me in advance. You will only be allowed to make up a missed presentation if the absence was unforeseeable, unpreventable, urgent in nature,

necessitated missing class, and for which documentation proving its occurrence can be provided by a professional relevant to the emergency (e.g., emergency room physician).

Grading Policy

Here is how your grade is configured so we will have no confusion.

First Parli Debate	/70 pts.
First IPDA Debate	/100 pts.
Second IPDA Debate	/100 pts.
Second IPDA Debate Issues Brief	/50 pts.
Second Parli Debate	/70 pts.
Debate Critique Paper	/50 pts.
Quiz #1	/40 pts.
Quiz #2	/40 pts.
Quiz #3	/40 pts.
4 peer reviews (judge sheets)	/10pts. each
<hr/>	
Total	/600 pts

Grading Scale:

Letter Range	Points
A	= 558 or above.
A -	= 540 - 557 pts.
B +	= 528 - 539 pts.
B	= 498 - 527 pts.
B -	= 480 - 497 pts.
C +	= 468 - 479 pts.
C	= 438 - 467 pts.
C -	= 420 - 437 pts.
D +	= 419 - 408 pts.
D	= 407- 360 pts.
F	= 359 or below.

Specific Grade Breakdown:

A 93-100	A- 90-92	
B+ 88-89	B 83-87	B- 80-82
C+ 78-79	C 73-77	C- 70-72
D+ 68-69	D 60-67	F 59 and below

Course Schedule

I, Laughton Messmer, may change the course schedule as well as syllabus requirements to fit the flow of the course. The schedule is in the same D2L folder as the syllabus.

Student Services and Technical Resources

Student Services

The [ETSU Services webpage](#) includes a comprehensive list of services available to all ETSU students.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of ETSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law and the University's commitment to equal educational access. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example arrangement for examinations or seating placement, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Faculty accommodation forms are provided to students through Disability Services in the D.P. Culp Center, Room 326, telephone 423-439-8346. [Visit the Disability Services webpage for more information.](#)

Technical Resources

Help Desk

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk is the best resource for most technical problems. Find answers to common questions on the [Help Desk website](#), call, email, or stop in to see them on the first floor of the Sherrod Library. Phone: 423-439-4648 Email: itshelp@etsu.edu

Desire2Learn (D2L) Online Help

Many answers to D2L related questions can be found on the [D2L Help Student Home](#). If you are still having trouble finding what you need, contact the Help Desk.

Microsoft Office Software

Microsoft Office productivity applications, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote, and more, are available free for students through the University's Office 365 campus agreement. For instructions on how to obtain the software, see the [Office 365 page of the ITS Help Desk website](#).

Turnitin Plagiarism Detection

Turnitin is a plagiarism detection service available to students and faculty at ETSU. This tool compares student written work against a comprehensive database of other work as well as various internet sources. Faculty may employ this service for some or all written assignments, in order to help students learn to cite sources accurately and to ensure academic integrity. Learn more on the [Turnitin home page](#).

ETSU Technical Resources

Many other technical resources can be found on the [Online Help webpage](#).

University Information

Syllabus Attachment

The [ETSU syllabus attachment](#) includes important material such as permits and overrides, advisement, hours, dates and other ETSU information.

ETSU Catalog

[Current Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Syllabus Contract

I will be requiring a signed syllabus contract from every student enrolled in this course. By reading and signing the contract you are telling me that you understand and will abide by the syllabus requirements. The contract will be downloaded from D2L and signed during the first week of the semester.

Major Assignments

Here is a list of the major assignments for the semester as well as grading rubrics used for evaluation.

SAMPLE

IPDA Debate Assignment Argumentation and Debate

This assignment consists of delivering a case about a controversial issue so as to persuade your audience. We will be using the IPDA format. **IPDA** stands for **I**nternational **P**ublic **D**ebate **A**ssociation. This is one style of argumentation used for competitive debating. We will go over this format in class. Be it a case on a fact, value, or policy, all cases must be delivered in an organized, interesting and concise manner to keep your audience's attention. You will have two IPDA debates this semester. One will be an Affirmative (For) speech while the other a Negative (against) speech. You will be exploring pros and cons of one debate topic. Keep in mind that at least one of your IPDA debates needs to be policy in nature. This is a one-on-one debate format that emphasizes research, organization, logic, delivery, and refutation. The topic and which side you are on will be known ahead of time (**1 week before you deliver**) and you should prepare your side of the resolution.

Requirements:

IPDA Structure & Time Limits:

- **1st Affirmative Speech= 5 minutes (present case)**
- **Negative Cross-Examination of Affirmative = 2 minutes**
- **1st Negative Speech = 6 minutes (present counter-debate and refute Aff reasons)**
- **Affirmative Cross-Examination of Negative = 2 minutes**
- **2nd Affirmative Speech = 3 minutes (refute negative counter-debate and defend reasons)**
- **2nd Negative Speech = 5 minutes (defend counter-debate & provide closure)**
- **3rd Affirmative Speech = 3 minutes (provide closure)**

Total Time: ~ 26 minutes

Sources: These should be cited verbally in your debate and listed in the **bibliography of your issues brief (outline for the 2nd IPDA debate)**. Usually 5 – 7 sources are normal for a debate. You are required to cite **five sources**. Make sure they are credible! Check your notes and book on examples of evidence to draw from sources.

Stock Issues: Make sure your presentation clearly demonstrates these points in an organized and concise manner. Make sure you have transitions between them and don't forget to give us an introduction and conclusion to wrap your case up. **KEEP IT CLEAR!!!!**

Issues Brief: You must turn in an issues brief on the day you give your debate in the D2L dropbox. **The issues brief is only due for the second IPDA debate.** Handwritten ones will not be accepted. The issues brief is worth 50 points and will be graded separately from the debate. It should follow the examples given in class and include all the stock issues that are pertinent to your debate.

Attendance: It is vital to attend every class period during debate time. If you miss, even if you do not speak, I will count you absent twice. It is unfair for a student to speak to ten people where another has to speak to 20. This is a shared assignment and I will not tolerate absence. Also, if you do not attend the day you are assigned to speak you will not be allowed a make-up. Keep in mind that you will be assigned an in-class peer review of a fellow classmate that will be handwritten and turned in on the appropriate debate day.

In-class peer review (judge sheet): Each student will be assigned a debate to judge. Judge sheets are located in the D2L content section. You will be given a grade for judging; the judge sheet does not impact the debater's grade although the judge sheets will be returned to them for critique purposes. The judge sheet is worth 10 points.

The IPDA debate is worth **100 points** and you will be graded on the criteria provided on the rubric sheet and evaluation sheet. During the debate, you may use notes taken during the debate to aid in your presentation. Dress is business casual.

IPDA Debate Rubric

Category	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Information	All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and concise.	Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and concise.	Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but was not very concise.	Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.
Organization	All arguments were clearly connected to the resolution and organized by stock issues.	Most arguments were clearly connected to the resolution and organized by stock issues.	Arguments were connected to the resolution but the organization did not utilize all necessary stock issues.	Arguments were not tied to the resolution and it was impossible to follow..
Evidence	Every major point was well supported with evidence (facts, stats, examples, etc.).	Every major point was adequately supported with evidence (facts, stats, examples, etc.).	Every major point was supported with evidence (facts, stats, examples, etc.), but the relevance of some source material was questionable.	Every point was not supported.
Comprehension of debate topic	Clearly understood the resolution and presented their information in a convincing manner.	Clearly understood the resolution and presented their information with ease.	Seemed to understand the main points of the resolution and presented those with ease.	Did not show an adequate understanding of the resolution.
Rebuttal	All counter-arguments were accurate, relevant and strong. All opponent's points were refuted.	Most counter-arguments were accurate, relevant, and strong. There were a few dropped arguments.	Most counter-arguments were accurate and relevant, but several were lacking.	Most arguments were dropped. Counter-arguments were not accurate and/or relevant. All of the opponent's points were not refuted.
Presentation	Consistently used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	Usually used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	Sometimes used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	Presentation style did not keep the attention of the audience.

Parli Debate Assignment Argumentation and Debate

This assignment consists of delivering a case about a controversial issue so as to persuade your audience. **Parli** is short for **Parliamentary**. This is another style of argumentation used for competitive debating. We will go over this format in class as well. Each team of two members will be designated in Government and Opposition Teams. One group will be for a case, while the other against. The teams and topics will be assigned to you. Be it a case on a fact, value, or policy, all cases must be delivered in an organized, interesting and concise manner to keep your audience's attention. You will have two parli debates this semester.

Requirements:

Time Limit and Organization: The team debates will last a total of 40 minutes. Time will be strictly kept, so practice! Here is how the time and organization breaks down:

Gov. Prime Minister 1st Speech - 7 minutes

Opp. Leader 1st Speech - 8 minutes

Gov. Member Constructive – 8 minutes

Opp. Member Constructive – 8 minutes

Opp. Leader Closing – 4 minutes

Gov. Prime Minister Closing – 5 minutes

(Each team will be allowed 4 minutes of prep time during the debate)

Total debate time = 40 minutes

This is roughly based on the classic debate format known as Parliamentary Debate. Pretty cool huh?

Parli Debate Analysis Paper: This will be due one class period after your team presents its case. This is NOT an evaluation of how the debate went, rather a critique of how the group interaction worked in developing your case. Be sure to mention your team member and what they added or detracted from the process. Possible topics to write about include, what jobs did everyone do, how prep. time went, what problems arose, what did your team do effectively, etc. AFTER completing the debate analysis, give a critique of how you thought you did during your part of the actual parli debate. Include positive and elements that you need to work on. This paper will be two full pages typed and is worth 40 points. I need one per person. Don't forget to put it in the D2L dropbox.

Attendance: This is vital again because not only will the class be debating but they will be judges as well. It is vital to attend every class period during debate time. If you miss, even if you do not speak, I will count you absent twice and you will not receive the 20 points for being a judge. This is a shared assignment and I will not tolerate absence. During the debate, you may use five 3X5 notecards to aid in your presentation. Dress is business casual.

In-class peer review (judge sheet): Each student will be assigned a debate to judge. Judge sheets are located in the D2L content section. You will be given a grade for judging; the judge sheet does not impact the debater's grade although the judge sheets will be returned to them for critique purposes. The judge sheet is worth 10 points.

Point breakdown: Let's take a step back and look at how the total points breakdown for this assignment.

Judging: 10 points

Parli Debate Presentation: 70 points

Total: 90 points

SAMPLE

**Debate Evaluation Paper
Argumentation and Debate**

1. You will turn in a two-page evaluation paper, worth 50 points, (10-12 point font, double spaced) answering the following questions:
 - a. What did you like about the IPDA debates?
 - b. What did you like about the Parli debates?
 - c. What did you think your strengths were in debating this semester?
 - d. What would you like to improve upon in debating?
 - e. Do you prefer IPDA or Parli Debate? Why?

SAMPLE

Debate Assessment Form -

PAF 19.1-D

Speaker: _____ Speech: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

EXPECTATIONS

Effective Introduction Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Gained attention, clearly stated thesis, stated relevance, and previewed main points

Main Points Logically Organized Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Clear organizational pattern – Followed previewed order

Arguments Elaborated Clearly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Ideas well developed – Subpoints support main ideas – Examples and explanations used as necessary – Balance of time to applications

Clearly Focused Ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Stayed on topic – Avoided rambling and unnecessary repetition – Clearly persuasive

Clear movement between ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Transition and/or signposts used appropriately (per instructor)

Arguments Supported by Credible Research Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Effectively Integrated Research – Appropriate and credible research used – All arguments supported by research

Addressed stock issues/Responded to opposing arguments Exc. V. Good Good Fair Poor ____/____

Question & Answer/Cross Examination Exc. V. Good Good Fair Poor ____/____
Had sufficiently prepared to answer questions – Provided clear and useful answers

Used Required Number of Sources Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____

Evidence Cited Correctly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Orally cited sources' author, source, and date

Effective Conclusion Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Restated thesis – Reviewed main points – Effectively closed

LANGUAGE & DELIVERY

Appropriate Language Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Used professional and inclusive language appropriate to topic and audience

Vocal Mechanics Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Spoke audibly and clearly at an appropriate rate – Sufficient vocal variety – Avoided disfluencies (e.g., “uh”)

Non-Verbal Delivery Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Maintained eye contact – Effectively used gestures to enhance information

Professional Presence Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Bodily movement enhanced information – Not overly reliant on notes – Demonstrated interest and sincerity

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Time: _____

Final Grade: ____/____

Debate Assessment Form -

PAF 19.1-D

Speaker: _____ Speech: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

EXPECTATIONS

Effective Introduction Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Gained attention, clearly stated thesis, stated relevance, and previewed main points

Main Points Logically Organized Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Clear organizational pattern – Followed previewed order

Arguments Elaborated Clearly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Ideas well developed – Subpoints support main ideas – Examples and explanations used as necessary – Balance of time to applications

Clearly Focused Ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Stayed on topic – Avoided rambling and unnecessary repetition – Clearly persuasive

Clear movement between ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Transition and/or signposts used appropriately (per instructor)

Arguments Supported by Credible Research Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Effectively Integrated Research – Appropriate and credible research used – All arguments supported by research

Addressed stock issues/Responded to opposing arguments Exc. V. Good Good Fair Poor ____/____

Question & Answer/Cross Examination Exc. V. Good Good Fair Poor ____/____
Had sufficiently prepared to answer questions – Provided clear and useful answers

Used Required Number of Sources Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____

Evidence Cited Correctly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Orally cited sources' author, source, and date

Effective Conclusion Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Restated thesis – Reviewed main points – Effectively closed

LANGUAGE & DELIVERY

Appropriate Language Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Used professional and inclusive language appropriate to topic and audience

Vocal Mechanics Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Spoke audibly and clearly at an appropriate rate – Sufficient vocal variety – Avoided disfluencies (e.g., “uh”)

Non-Verbal Delivery Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Maintained eye contact – Effectively used gestures to enhance information

Professional Presence Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ____/____
Bodily movement enhanced information – Not overly reliant on notes – Demonstrated interest and sincerity

ETSU Communication Studies, 2019

Time: _____

Final Grade: ____/____

Parliamentary Debate Ballot

RESOLUTION

Government

Circle the Winner

Opposition

PM

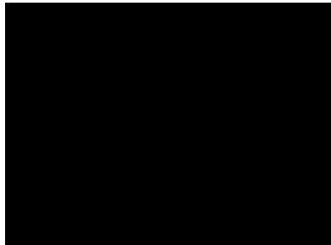
MG

In the boxes below, please assign a grade of A, B, C, D or F for each of the listed categories for the speakers in this round.

LO

MO

	DELIVERY	
	COURTESY	
	APPROPRIATE TONE	
	ORGANIZATION	
	LOGIC	
	SUPPORT	
	CROSS EXAMINATION	
	REFUTATION	



	DELIVERY	
	COURTESY	
	APPROPRIATE TONE	
	ORGANIZATION	
	LOGIC	
	SUPPORT	
	CROSS EXAMINATION	
	REFUTATION	

PM

MG

LO

MO

I vote for the (Government / Opposition) Represented by _____

(circle one)

(team name)

(judge's name)

What were the key Government arguments?

What were the key Opposition arguments?

Provide constructive comments for the Government:

Provide constructive comments for the Opposition:

PLEASE PROVIDE THE REASON(S) FOR YOUR DECISION:

PARLI DEBATE GRADE SHEET

Criteria	Rate:	Comments
PM opening was clear, well organized, factual, and relevant.	/20	
MG argument in support of its position was stated clearly, was relevant, and well informed.	/20	
MG delivery was coherent, professional and clear. Spoke with a clear rate of speech and avoided “ums and ers”. Had appropriate eye contact and gestures.	/5	
PM Rebuttal to opposing side's argument was clear, relevant, well informed, and effective and had clear voters	/10	
MG delivery was coherent, professional and clear. Spoke with a clear rate or speech and avoided “ums and ers”. Had appropriate eye contact and gestures.	/5	
Closing statement was stated clearly, was relevant, and effectively summarized the team's position.	/5	
Overall preparedness, effectiveness, and professionalism in the debate.	/5	

SAMPLE