

# COMM 220, Argumentation and Debate

Kurtis D. Miller

Spring 2020, M/Th, 3:30 – 4:45, Location TBD

Instructor	Office
Kurtis D. Miller, PhD. <a href="mailto:kurtisdmliller.com">kurtisdmliller.com</a> <a href="mailto:kdmiller@tuscolum.edu">kdmiller@tuscolum.edu</a> 423-636-7300 Ext. 5783	Library 126 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm, Mon/Thu 10:00 am – Noon, Wed also by appointment

**Course Description:** Students will learn about oral argumentation and debate, including case construction techniques, and case analysis and criticism. As part of this class, students will prepare for and compete in debate events as part of the Debate team. Emphasis will be given to discussion of current issues. Travel to at least two competitive events will be required, as well as a fee to offset competition entrance fees, transportation costs, and other expenses. Students may not take COMM 120 Debate Team Practicum and this course for credit in the same semester.

*The syllabus for this course is subject to change at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, such elements as required assignments, grading requirements/scales and the course calendar. Updates will be communicated through the Moodle announcement system.*

## General Education Student Learning Outcomes

This course is a part of the General Education Program. The following learning outcomes will be assessed:

1. Writing: Students will structure evidence to convincingly support their arguments. The final **Argument Diagram** will be used to measure this learning outcome.
2. Public Speaking: Students will create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.
3. Public Speaking: Students will evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.

## Other Learning Outcomes

1. Students will explain the importance of communication in civic life. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.
2. Students will identify the challenges facing communities and the role of communication in resolving those challenges. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.
3. Students will utilize communication to respond to issues at the local, national and/or global level. The **Assessment Worksheet** provided in the final weeks of the class will be used to measure this learning outcome.

## Required Texts and Materials

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings may be assigned and distributed through Moodle. You will need paper and a writing utensil, a device for conducting research (phone, laptop, etc.), and a standard kitchen timer in every class meeting.

## Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken regularly. Attendance records will be kept and reported to the extent required by law and university policy. Participating regularly in class is assessed as a portion of your [Professionalism](#) grade. Attendance is strongly encouraged, as the majority of the points in this class come from in-class activities.

## Late Work Policy

Late work may be turned in up to 1 calendar day after the deadline. Late work will lose 10% of the available points. Late or missing work will also result in penalties to your [Professionalism](#) grade. Using technology is a basic expectation of students at this level of study – issues with technology are not an excuse for late or missing work. If you need assistance with technology, contact [Information Services](#).

### *Alternate Deadlines*

In some rare cases an emergency may require you to miss class and turn in work after the assigned due date. These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and, depending on the situation and documentation, this work may be assigned an alternate deadline. Coursework assigned an alternate deadline is graded for full credit, but will not receive feedback.

Alternate deadlines will not be assigned for absences that can be planned for – this includes school-sponsored events, such as athletics.

## Classroom Behavior

We are a community of learners, and your classmates are entitled to the standard professional courtesies. Show respect for every person in the classroom. Complete your assigned work on time. Be ready for classroom discussion and activities. Ask questions. Be supportive audience members. Any member of an activity group should be prepared to present the work of the entire group. Each student is required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Racist, sexist, or other offensive or discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Keep all devices (phones, tablets, laptops, headphones, etc.) out of sight, unless their use is required for a classroom activity. Unprofessional behavior in the classroom will result in penalties to your [Professionalism](#) grade.

## Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be determined by the total points received out of 1000 points possible. Your points will accumulate through the semester. The largest portions of your final grade comes from **Content Knowledge**. A second significant portion of your final grade comes from **Practicing Debate**. You will also earn points from **Professionalism** **Extra credit** is available for this class. **You must participate in two debate competition in order to pass this class.**

## Grading Scale

The grading scale for the class is below. When determining final grades I will round up decimals to the next full point. I will not round up multiple points. There are many extra credit opportunities; see above for more information.

Total Points	Grade	Quality Points <sup>1</sup>
930+	A	4.0 per semester hour
900+	A-	3.7 per semester hour
880+	B+	3.5 per semester hour
830+	B	3.0 per semester hour
800+	B-	2.7 per semester hour
780+	C+	2.5 per semester hour
730+	C	2.0 per semester hour
700+	C-	1.7 per semester hour
680+	D+	1.5 per semester hour
630+	D	1.0 per semester hour
less than 630	F	0.0 per semester hour

## Content Knowledge

Demonstrating content knowledge contributes 500 points to your final grade. You will complete two [Argument Diagrams](#) worth 200 points. You will also complete a syllabus quiz and an exam on the rules of one form of debate competition that the team is competing in during the current

semester, worth a total of 100 points.

## Practicing Debate

Practicing Debate contributes 400 points to your final grade. You will have receive a grade for completing [Practice Speeches](#), [Prep Participation](#), [Flow Sheets](#) and [Judge Sheets](#) during the course of the semester. You will receive an overall grade in each of these areas at three points during the semester. Your average across the semester in each area contributes 100 points to your final grade.

## Professionalism

Displaying basic [Professionalism](#) is an expectation in this class and one of the most useful skills to have when you graduate. You will receive an overall professionalism grade at three points during the semester. Your average of all three grades contributes 100 points to your final grade.<sup>2</sup>

## Extra Credit

Students can earn up to a maximum of 60 points in extra credit toward their final grade. Extra credit opportunities will be announced as they become available. If you have suggestions for extra credit activities, please contact me so I can inform the class. Extra Credit may not be turned in after the last class meeting.

## Email Policy

Email is the primary and preferred method of communication for most student issues. I check and respond to my email once daily, except weekends and holidays.

The privacy of student educational records is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I will not respond to any communication about a student which does not come from an official school email address. I do not accept assignments by email. Brief emails asking questions which are already answered in course documents (syllabus, calendar, assignment descriptions, etc.) may not receive a reply.

Engaging in professional communication with your professors and the university staff is important. Some students benefit from the below email template, which comes from a post I wrote to help students with [writing professional emails](#). Whether you are in my class or any other class at the university, this template should work well. Just replace the information in brackets as needed:

Subject: [class number and section]: [your issue]

Dear [Title Last Name – if you can’t find out, use “Professor” to be safe],

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<sup>2</sup>Keaton, A. F. (2015). Teaching students the importance of professionalism. *Teaching Professor*, 29(6). <https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/114/Teaching-Students-the-Importance-of-Professionalism-13541-1.html>

I am in your [time] [class name] class on [days class meets]. I have checked the [syllabus/assignment instructions/rubric/textbook/class resources] for an answer, but it does not adequately answer my question. I need some additional help with [your issue].

[Second paragraph explaining your question. Describe where you looked for answers, what you found, and how that information is not enough for you to have a clear answer to your question. You may also include other relevant aspects of your situation.]

[OPTIONAL third paragraph where you propose answers or next steps.]

Thank you,

[Your First and Last Name]

## **Final Exam Policy**

There is no final exam for this course.

## **Grade Disputes**

If you believe that you have been graded unfairly, wait 24 hours after receiving the grade, review the rubric, and schedule a meeting to discuss it with me. I will not discuss your grades publicly. Come to this meeting prepared to provide evidence supporting the need for a grade change. Grades are considered final one week after they are posted in Moodle.

## **University Policies**

The following policies apply to *all* courses at Tusculum University.

### **Minimum Grade for a Course to Count Toward a Major or Minor**

Grades below C- earned in the student's major and minor will satisfy the course prerequisites requirement; however, grades below C- cannot be counted in the total number of hours required in the major and minor.

## **Tusculum Communication Policy**

All students are responsible for checking their personal Tusculum University email account each day, as it is the university's only official communication tool.

## Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy

Cheating and plagiarism are violations of Ethics of Social Responsibility – one of the outcomes that has been identified as essential to the Civic Arts. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. It consists of knowingly presenting in writing or in speech the intellectual or creative work of others as if it were one's own. This includes:

1. Failing to identify direct or word-for-word quotations by use of appropriate symbols and reference to the source.
2. Restating in your own words the work (ideas, conclusions, words) of another without reference to the source.
3. Presenting as your own the creative work (for instance, music or photographs) of another without proper acknowledgment. Besides plagiarism, other forms of academic dishonesty include the following:
4. Submitting the same work in two or more courses without significant modifications or expansion and without the approval of the instructors involved.
5. Submitting purchased, borrowed, copied or specially commissioned work as if it were one's own.
6. Knowingly permitting others to submit your work under their names.
7. Copying the work of others during an examination or other academic exercise.
8. Knowingly allowing others to copy your work during an examination or other academic exercise.
9. Using "cheat sheets" or any other unauthorized form of assistance during an exam, quiz or other academic exercise.
10. Manipulating or fabricating data to support erroneous conclusions.

## Academic Accommodations and Students with Disabilities

Tusculum University makes available to qualified students with disabilities those reasonable accommodations or services as are necessary to provide such students with unrestricted access to the learning environment and the opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement. In order to procure services or classroom accommodations, the qualified student is responsible for self-identifying and directing all requests or accommodations or services to the Academic Resource Center counselors. Contact information: Counseling and ADA Services, 423-636-7300, ext. 5402; [counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu](mailto:counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu); Room 233, Garland Library.

## Tutoring

Free tutoring services are provided by Tusculum University. The campus Tutoring Center is located in the Garland Library on the Greeneville campus. Tutoring is available in English and Mathematics, including Statistics, in the Tutoring Center, Rooms 317-318, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. For all other subjects, sign in at the Garland Library Circulation Desk (Main Floor/2nd floor), 7:00 PM – 9 PM, Sunday through Thursday. Tutoring is available during the stated hours on a walk-in basis, and you can also schedule an appointment by emailing [tutoring@tusculum.edu](mailto:tutoring@tusculum.edu). In some circumstances, written approval to meet in other public locations

can be obtained from the Tutor Coordinator. Please note that the faculty reserves the right to require students to attend tutoring sessions.

## Title IX

Tusculum University is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of sex and gender-based discrimination and harassment, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, you are strongly encouraged (but not required) to contact the Title IX Co-Coordinators at (423) 636-7318 or email either of them: [jgresham@tusculum.edu](mailto:jgresham@tusculum.edu) or [mcooney@tusculum.edu](mailto:mcooney@tusculum.edu). Please note that all Tusculum University faculty members are considered “responsible employees,” meaning any situation involving sex or gender-based discrimination shared with faculty must be reported to the Title IX Co-Coordinators. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, contact Dr. Michell Temple (Garland Library 233; tel. 423-636-7402; [counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu](mailto:counselingandadaservices@tusculum.edu)). For more information regarding Title IX reporting options and links to available resources, please visit <https://web.tusculum.edu/titleix/>.

## Inclement Weather Policy

When Tusculum University classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, students will receive direction on how to complete scheduled and assigned activities on the Moodle site. In the case of inclement weather and the University is not closed, students and faculty are to exercise good judgment concerning personal safety related to traveling. If the University does not close and students miss class, they are responsible for contacting the course instructor prior to the class. Tusculum University will post information regarding closings or changes in the schedule on the home page of the university website, as well as to the Tusculum Facebook page and the Twitter feed. All students are encouraged to sign up for the Pioneer Alert system by following the instructions at <http://www3.tusculum.edu/pr/inclement-weather-policy/>.

## Student Veterans

For information on support provided by Tusculum to veterans, contact Dale Laney, Director of Veteran Services, 121 Garland Library, tel. 423-636-7371, or [dlaney@tusculum.edu](mailto:dlaney@tusculum.edu).

## Calendar

*The calendar for this course is subject to change. Updates will be communicated through the Moodle announcement system.*

#	Date	Focus
1	M, 1/13	Welcome, Course Overview <a href="#">Handout 1</a> , <a href="#">Handout 2</a>
2	R, 1/16	Structure of Debate Competition

#	Date	Focus
-	M, 1/20	<i>No Classes, Martin Luther King Day</i>
3	R, 1/23	<b>Syllabus Quiz, Assessment Pretest</b> Customs and Traditions in Debate
4	M, 1/27	Flowing Debates
5	R, 1/30	Research and Prep
6	M, 2/03	Rogerian Argument Structure
7	R, 2/06	Guest Speaker
8	M, 2/10	<b>Rules Exam</b> Fact Debates
9	R, 2/13	Value Debates
-	M, 2/17	<i>No Classes, Presidents' Day</i>
10	R, 2/20	<b>Argument Diagram 1 Due</b> Policy Debates
11	M, 2/24	Delivery and Time Management
12	R, 2/27	The Constructive Speech
13	M, 3/02	The Rebuttal Speech
14	R, 3/05	Students' Choice
-	M, 3/09	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>
-	R, 3/12	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>
15	M, 3/16	Judging Philosophies
16	R, 3/19	Guest Speaker
17	M, 3/23	Using Questions
18	R, 3/26	Delivery
19	M, 3/30	Structure
20	R, 4/02	<b>Argument Diagram 2 Due</b> Evidence
21	M, 4/06	Transitions
22	R, 4/09	Students' Choice
23	M, 4/13	Developing Arguments Across Speeches
24	R, 4/16	Alternative Flow Systems
25	M, 4/20	Judging Criteria
26	R, 4/23	Kritiks
27	M, 4/27	Topicality
28	R, 4/30	Students' Choice
29	M, 5/04	Course Evaluations, Assessment
		Make-up/Review
30	R, 5/07	<b>NO Final Exam</b>