



Welcome to COMM 180!

Semester:	Fall 2025	Instructor Name:	Dr. Elvinet Piard
Course Title & #:	COMM 180 Argumentation & Debate	How to Contact Your Professor:	Students are welcome to contact me outside of class time. You may e-mail me, message me via Canvas, or call my office and leave a message.
CRN #:	10513		
Classroom:	Bldg 2700 - Rm 2721	Email:	elvinet.piard@imperial.edu
Class Dates:	Aug 11 – Dec 6, 2025	Office #:	2796
Class Days:	T/Th	Office Hours:	M/W 1:00-3:00p
Class Times:	1:00p – 2:25p	Office Phone #:	(760) 355-6150
Units:	3	Class Format/Modality:	In-person

Course Description

An introduction to debate, with emphasis on the creation and refutation of arguments concerning current social, political, and legal issues. (C-ID: COMM 120) (CSU/UC)

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

None.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to:

1. write a case for an argumentative debate;
2. write and submit five properly worded debate propositions;
3. use logos to support their arguments during the debate process.

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal delivery skills while managing speaking anxiety in a variety of faculty-supervised and faculty-evaluated oral presentations in the English language
2. Compose and deliver sound and compelling oral arguments tailored to diverse audiences in a variety of settings and contexts, demonstrating rhetorical sensitivity to equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility
3. Apply rhetorical strategies and principles of logic to analyze and evaluate historical and contemporary public discourse
4. Refine the use of ethos, pathos, and logos (i.e., the three Aristotelian appeals) while applying rhetorical organizational strategies to create and arrange oral arguments in the English language
5. Evaluate the relevance and reliability of primary and secondary sources; skillfully select, summarize, and employ different types of evidence to support arguments in oral debate
6. Critically listen to classmates' oral arguments and provide constructive feedback in the English language
7. Demonstrate ethical communication strategies when preparing and participating in live oral presentations and debates, employing honesty, accuracy, active listening, credible sources, unbiased terminology, and sound reasoning while avoiding condescension, distortion of information, use of fallacies, and degrading and/or intimidating language.

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

1. John Meany and Kate Shuster. 2003. *On That Point! An Introduction to Parliamentary Debate. Discipline Classic International Debate Education Association*. ISBN: 978-0972054119 PDF Version: <https://tinyurl.com/On-That-Point> to prepare for quizzes, prepare for debates, and participate in lecture/discussions.
2. OER Textbook: Various. 2023. The Debatabase Book. International Debate Education Association. URL: <https://idebate.net/resources/debatabase> for debate preparation.
3. Britannica ProCon: <https://www.procon.org/> for debate preparation.
4. Opposing Viewpoints – comprehensive coverage of a wide range of topics; database available via IVC library.
5. CQ Researcher – provides summaries and in-depth analysis of current topics; database available via IVC library.
6. *Inherit the Wind* (1999) feature film - <https://youtu.be/NYCfo4hVolQ> - Based on a real-life case in 1925.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

Lecture, discussion, group work, debates, debate cases/position papers, critiques of debates, quizzes, homework.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Final Grades: Your final grade in class will be determined based on how many points you have earned on all the assignments combined. However, if you do not complete the assigned mandatory speeches, you will not pass the class, regardless of whether you scored above a certain percentage. The grade breakdown is as follows:

A=89% - 100% B=79% - 88% C=69% - 78% D=59% - 68% F=below 59%

DEBATES:

Category (Possible points)	Speeches (150)	Speech Outlines (150)	Peer and Self Evals (90)
Debate Speech #1	50 points	50	30
Debate Speech #2	50	50	30
Debate Speech #3	50	50	30

ALLOCATION OF POINTS

Assignments	Point Value	Weighted Value
Speeches (includes Peer/Self Evaluations)	240 points	28%
Speech outlines	150 points	17%
Midterm	50 points	6%
Attendance	150 points	17%
Position Papers (25 pts each)	50 points	6%
Quizzes & Other Coursework	220 points	26%
Total	860 points	100%



To be successful in this course...

All of us in the class, you, me, and your peers, have a responsibility to create an environment in which we can learn from each other. I expect everyone to participate in class so that we can all benefit from the insights and experiences that each person brings. Active participation is crucial to your success in this course. To ensure a productive learning environment, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Engagement with Course Materials:** Regularly engage with all course materials, including readings, videos, homework and interactive activities assigned during class. Your understanding of these materials will directly impact your ability to participate meaningfully in the course. Complete all assignments to maximize your potential to succeed in debate.
- **Attendance and Timely Submission:** While attendance is measured by physical presence, your engagement is also tracked through timely submission of homework and in-class assignments, participation in debates, and interactions with your peers. When you don't show up to debate, the whole class is affected.
- **Ask questions and stay in contact:** Regular communication with your instructor and peers is expected. Asking questions is part of the learning process. Outside of class time, you can reach out to your instructor or peers via Canvas messaging. You are also expected to check school e-mail regularly and respond to e-mails, when necessary, within 24 hours.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** Debates can sometimes seem confrontational, but they are primarily about respectful discussion. Your arguments and shares should be thoughtful, respectful, and contribute to the classroom conversation. Maintain a respectful and professional tone in all course communications. Be considerate of others' opinions and support your statements with evidence when applicable. *Please identify which course and section you are enrolled in to facilitate your e-mail communications with your professor.*

Plagiarism, Cheating and the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

IVC prioritizes critical thinking, communication skills, and academic integrity. Submitting any academic work where outside sources are presented as your own constitutes academic dishonesty. This includes: (1) plagiarism, such as copying or paraphrasing without citation; (2) submitting another's work, including a tutor's or your own from a different course; and (3) using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, CourseHero, CoPilot) without attribution. All forms of cheating violate IVC's Academic Integrity policies and may result in sanctions, including but not limited to failing the assignment or failing the course.

To engage with AI ethically in college, focus on responsible use, transparency, and academic integrity. Familiarize yourself with the AI tools available for academic purposes, such as writing assistants, spelling and grammar tools, research aids, and data analysis software. Using AI tools to replace your own thinking and writing contradicts our mission and academic honesty policy. Always cite AI-generated content appropriately. Leverage AI to enhance your understanding of subjects. Use it for brainstorming ideas, improving speech outlines, or clarifying complex concepts.

All submitted work should reflect your own critical thinking and voice, with all sources clearly cited. Use outside sources and tools appropriately, without substituting them for your learning.

Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your instructor or the area dean for assistance.

If you have specific accommodations through DSPS, contact them for additional assistance. We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.



Course Policies

Drop Policy: Students missing the first class are automatically dropped. It is the student's responsibility to drop all classes they are no longer attending. A student may be withdrawn from the course after the add/drop deadline due to excessive absences. Students who remain enrolled in a class beyond the published withdrawal deadline will receive an evaluative letter grade in this class (A, B, C, D, F).

Late Work Policy: Any assignment submitted after the due date published on Canvas will be considered late. Should you submit an assignment late, your final grade on the assignment will be penalized by 10%. After that, late work will be penalized at an additional 10% per day. Late work will only be accepted up to 5 days from the day it is due for a maximum 50% deduction. **Only emergencies are acceptable exceptions to this rule.**

Attendance Policy

The course has about 32 class meetings. Attendance is expected, but if you cannot attend, please inform me. Each class is worth 5 points, with a maximum of 2 excused absences. Any additional absences will result in a -5 point penalty per missed class, impacting your overall grade. If you anticipate missing more than 2 classes, please contact me to discuss options.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

College Policies	Disability Support	Technical Support
Food and Housing Support	Tutoring	Career Services
IVC Library	IVC Happenings	Student Health and Wellness
Financial Aid and Scholarships	Academic Counseling	Admissions and Records
Child Care	Bookstore	Military/Veterans Success
English as a second language	IVC Cares	Request Support

Course Calendar on next page...

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Date or Week	Activity, Assignment, and/or Topic	Check Canvas for due dates
Week 1 8/12, 8/14	Syllabus <i>Inherit the Wind</i> (1999)	Argumentativeness Scale Assessment
Week 2 8/19, 8/21	Introduction to Debate	Practice "A.R.E." Practice Refutation – "I Disagree" Chapter 1-2 (Quiz 1)
Week 3 8/26, 8/28	Taking Notes and Topic Interpretation Developing a Case Outline	Flowing Exercise APA Quiz Word Economy Exercise Chapter 3-4 (Quiz 2) Position Paper #1 due (2-3 pages)
Week 4 9/2, 9/4	Research & Evidence Opposition Strategy	Chapter 5-8 (Quiz 3)
Week 5 9/9, 9/11	Debate Round 1	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 6 9/16, 9/18	Debate Round 1	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 7 9/23, 9/25	Debate Round 1	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 8 9/30, 10/2	Topic Selection	
Week 9 10/7, 10/9	Debate Round 2	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 10 10/14, 10/16	Debate Round 2	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 11 10/21, 10/23	Debate Round 2	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 12 10/28, 10/30	Topic Selection	
Week 13 11/4, 11/6	Debate Round 3	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 14 11/11, 11/13	Debate Round 3	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 15 11/18, 11/20	Debate Round 3	Peer Evals x 2 Self-Assessment
Week 16 11/25, 11/27	Thanksgiving Break (Nov 26-29)	
Week 17 12/2, 12/4	Finals	Position Paper #2 due (3-4 pages)

Subject to change without prior notice