



Semester:	Spring 2026	Instructor Name:	Deborah Zipnick, MMC, JD
Course Title & #:	COMM 180 Argumentation & Debate	Email:	deborah.zipnick@imperial.edu
CRN #:	20675 or 20586		
Classroom:	zoom	Office #:	virtual
Class Dates:	2/17- 6/12	Office Hours:	Fridays by appointment 7-11a
Class Days:	MW for 20675 TR for 20586	Office Phone #:	n/a, please message through Canvas
Class Times:	1-2:25pm		
Units:	3	Class Format/Modality:	synchronous

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.



Textbook

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Argument_and_Debate/Arguing_Using_Critical_Thinking_\(Martenev\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Communication/Argument_and_Debate/Arguing_Using_Critical_Thinking_(Martenev))

Additional Resources:

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.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

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

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Debates 50%

Debate Preparation (group work, homework, assignments) 25%

Debate Critiques and Participation in class activities 25%

Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification. Students should not use AI or copy and paste info from the internet for this class.

Course Policies

Attendance/Drop Policy: A student who fails to attend the first class is automatically dropped from the course. Successful students attend every class session. It is the student's responsibility to drop all classes they are no longer

attending. However, a student may be withdrawn 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: No late work is accepted and there are no "make ups." There are 1000 points available in the course and students only need 900 for an A, so there are 100 points just in case of emergency.

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.



Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Week	Activity, Assignment, and/or Topic	Readings/ Due Dates
Week 1/2	Syllabus and expectations: valuing your strengths	Chapter 1-2
Week 3/4	Introduction to Argumentation and Debate	Chapter 3-4
Week 5/6	Taking Notes and Topic Interpretation	Chapter 5-6
Week 7/8	Midterm	Chapter 7-8
Week 9/10	Research	Chapter 9-10
Week 11/12	Debates	Chapter 11-12
Week 13/14	Debates	Review
Week 15/16	Final wrap up	

	Check your grades!	

*****Subject to change without prior notice*****