Course Description:
Participation in intercollegiate debate and individual events as a member of the university debate squad, plus participation in related on-campus events. Does not fulfill requirements for a major in speech communication.

Silver Core Objective:
This course satisfies CO 14 Application: Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills developed in previous Core and major classes by completing a project or structured experience of practical significance.

This course allows students to have a structured experience of utilizing research skills and public speaking skills applied to competitive debate. Students compete against students from other universities in policy or Lincoln-Douglas debate events which include performing public speaking/debate skills and applying knowledge gained from core and major courses to researching and speaking about the debate topic. Students also apply their knowledge of public speaking and competitive debate through working with high school debate programs as both coaches and judges. Some students use this experience to become high school debate coaches, go onto graduate school with debate coach assistantships, or can be utilized in any profession where one must problem-solve social/political issues to arrive at sound decisions and present their findings and reasoning to those solutions. Although all majors are allowed to compete and participate in this class, mostly Communication Studies majors will use this course to satisfy their CO 14 requirement (as the major allows students to choose among different application courses to meet this requirement). We also recognize that CO 14 is not limited to just major capstone type courses, so students in other majors needing internship/experiential learning experience or that do not have CO 14 courses might also use this course to complete this requirement.

How this is a structured learning experience:
We liken participating in competitive debate to an internship where a student learns and performs skills particular to an industry or occupation—in this case, competitive debate. Students are coached on how to adapt knowledge to academic debate formats, learn norms and process of participating in academic debate competitions, and learn how to complete required steps to prepare and produce/perform academic debate. The course and the participating in intercollegiate competitive debate tournaments is the structured learning experiences as students learn and are guided through instruction on how to compete in this activity. Apart from competitions, students are also gaining experience in event planning (by organizing public debates on campus or in hosting and operating debate tournaments), and students are learning and applying their knowledge to coaching and judging high school debate. Again, by participating alongside debate coaches/instructors, they are “interning” or apprenticing and learning these skills, which they can apply to becoming debate coaches themselves or use for any occupation where one needs to organize events or conferences.

What is the product of practical significance for this course?
The “Community Outreach” component of the course is the most tangible “product” of the course in that students work to hold public debate events on campus (bringing in local experts to speak on a given topic and then the students engage in debate related to that topic—for example if UNR should allow Conceal and Carry Weapons) for the benefit of a public to hear multiple
sides of an issue evaluated. This past semester, the team organized an intercollegiate debate tournament on campus, so the tangible outcome was providing the forum for debate teams in the region to compete. The students themselves could also be seen as a “product” as they gain the research, problem-solving, brief writing, and speaking skills that they can apply for their future careers or participation in government, legal arenas, or business. Students learn how to evaluate and make sound decisions through debate, and students can apply this experience and their skills/abilities in debating to these other contexts in their future careers.

**How students apply knowledge from previous Core Courses:**

To be successful in competitive speech and debate, students will have to apply knowledge gained from courses incorporating CO 1: Effective Composition and Communication for preparing and presenting public speeches. Students utilize CO 3: Critical Analysis and Use of Information in the research for preparing speeches and the ability to interpret and refute to arguments in the course of debate. Students utilize information gained from courses satisfying Silver Vein II as debate topics revolve around political, environmental, science, or societal issues. Students also incorporate knowledge from Silver Vein III courses, as debate topics often include ethical or moral arguments or address issues of diversity and equity in proposing policies and arguing their positive or negative consequences. For example, one of the current policy debate topics being competed nationally is: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its non-military exploration and/or development of the Earth’s oceans. Not only would students need to understand how to research topics in different disciplines (here would be to understand current government policies as well as science-related knowledge of oceans or concerns for science), but also would bring knowledge gained from courses and how different disciplines study social problems to understand the topic under debate and locate relevant resources. Other students might be debating Lincoln-Douglas topics such as: Resolved: Just governments ought to require that employers pay a living wage. These topics require different types of arguments, and often center around philosophical, ethical, and historical arguments (along with more pragmatic/policy arguments). Skills and knowledge developed from other core courses centered on these issues (from both Silver II and Silver III) would be utilized. Debate topics change from year to year (some from tournament to tournament), so students would be applying the ways of thinking, research strategies, and knowledge from their Core coursework in different ways.

**How students apply knowledge from their Communication Studies Major Courses:**

Students who are part of the competitive debate team would directly apply their knowledge of public speaking, theories of persuasion, and understanding of problem-solving through debate and communication gained from their previous major coursework. All communication studies majors are required to take COM 101 or COM 217 (both are public speaking classes where students make informative and persuasive arguments on a social/political/current event issue). All majors are required to take COM 212, which is a course designed for students to learn how to conduct academic research, and synthesize research into a literature review centered around a research question, using proper APA citation. Most majors complete courses requiring problem-solving and learning skills to communicate and facilitate problem solving groups (such as our COM 315 Small Group Communication). Majors can also take a variety of courses as elective centering on Public Advocacy topics including persuasion, political campaigns, or crisis communication. In these courses, students learn about communication strategies to adapt messages for particular audiences and context, and also learn theories on how audiences interpret and are persuaded by messages.

**Note:** Included with assignments below are ways the assignments show all this application.

**Assessment of CO 14:**
Assessment measures can be created that would assess how students are applying learning related to public speaking, critical thinking and research related to problem-solving social issues, and application of content from various core courses related to debate topics.

- Debate performances can be assessed through collecting judging ballots (which include a standard rubric and comments from judges) to assess student success in their particular debate events. Students’ success in winning debate is related to their abilities to construct quality arguments, listen and respond to arguments, and present strategies of refutation (as indicated in the SLOs for this course), which can all be evaluated from the ballots.
- Debate performances or practices can also be video recorded and assessed by department members following a specific rubric to rate students’ public speaking delivery, quality of argument, and argumentation strategies following departmental guidelines and standards.
- Debate briefs, evidence cards, and presentation outlines can be collected and assessed (in regards to how well students research, cite sources, synthesize information, etc.). Department assessors will use a standard rubric to rate research and synthesis elements related to the debate topic being discussed.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

- Research current event topics to locate, select, and organize evidence to construct speeches for competition.
- Listen critically, interpret, document, and respond to oral arguments.
- Predict and resolve objections related to a particular argument.
- Prepare and present strategies of refutation and persuasion in competitive speeches and intercollegiate speech and debate events.
- Synthesize and apply information from previous coursework to discuss social justice issues.

**Purpose**

This course provides students the opportunity to learn and engage in Parliamentary debate and National Individual Events Tournament events through the forum of class and intercollegiate competition. The purpose of the class is to increase ability in argumentation and speaking ability and prepare for national competition in NPDA, NIET and NFA. Forensics educates through research skills, argumentation, critical thinking, policy analysis, persuasion, performance, organization and audience adaptation. Forensics provides students a chance to participate in democratic decision-making processes. In addition to weekly in class practice, students will be involved with broad research, campus debates and national NPDA travel. Forensics has a rich tradition at UNR. It has been supported and enhanced by many of the current and former faculty and staff of the university.

**Class Requirements**

Regular class attendance, participation, weekly practices and travel are required for credit. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions with prepared material, lead class discussions with their issue briefs and to assist in a debate outreach effort. The outreach assignments are individually arranged and can include fund raising, judging or coaching high school programs, working on a web page, publicity or facilitating the public debates. Students will help facilitate public outreach events with the university and community participants. This participation will increase our visibility in the university and allow our discipline to enhance other areas of study. Your involvement is required at these events.

**Travel**
Traveling to tournaments is an integral function of the class. Some of class time will be dedicated to preparing for our tournaments. There is no fee to travel to tournaments; however, you will be expected to provide your own money for food. While traveling with the team is not mandatory for this course, it is recommended that you not take the class for credit if you do not plan to travel to any competitions. Students that wish to travel with the University are required to do additional work. I will decide the traveling team(s) but hope to include all who desire to travel. Those of you that are not enrolling in the class for credit are still required to do the same workload if they wish to be included on the traveling squad. The privilege to travel to tournaments and represent the University is at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading –
There are no “extra credit” assignments, alternative assignments, or additional points for this course. Grading is based on a +/- system.

Research – 30%
A total of 25 one-two page briefs per the assignment schedule. These should summarize current events issues into the structure of a 7 minute persuasive speech outline and provide counterpoints to the argument presented.

Assignment Dates:
Sept 12: 5 Briefs Due
October 10: 5 Briefs Due
Nov 26: 5 Briefs Due

As noted above, students will apply their research skills and knowledge of interdisciplinary subjects from Core and Major courses to develop their briefs. They will directly utilize knowledge from their public speaking courses in knowing how to focus information appropriate for a persuasive speech and will use outlining techniques also learned in those courses. As noted with assessment above, these briefs and outlines can be collected to assess student research and ability to construct presentations.

Attendance and Participation – 30%
Students are expected to complete a minimum of 1 practice per event per week, class attendance, tournament attendance (3-4 per semester), and active engagement in issues discussions.

As the main requirement for CO 14 is to PRODUCE something, the performance of debate is the tangible outcome. To receive credit, students must practice and present at competitions to perform this skill. As noted in the assessment above, if requested, the department can video or observe student presentations and assess using a rubric to rate public speaking skills and arguments presented.

Quality of Argument and Performance Improvement – 30%
Give your best effort to improve your personal speaking skills. Avoid point deductions in competition for the same errors previously noted. Help less experienced members of the team and contribute positively to the team environment.

In competitive debate, judges provide ballots indicating why a team won or lost the debate (which includes whether they adequately responded to stock issues related to problem-solving, whether they included credible evidence for arguments, whether they provided adequate explanation of the warrant of their arguments, if they were able to evaluate and refute opponent arguments, and general delivery and professional presentations). Students take this feedback from ballots and use it to prepare for the next competition to improve their arguments and
performance. Comparison of ballots from competition to competition (and through observation by the instructor/coach at practice and at meets) to see if students improve their skills and address these issues. As this is a team situation, class time also includes observing how members strategize and help one another to improve based on the ballot feedback. This is related to performance, and is how performance is rated and assessed.

**Community Outreach – 10% of grade but REQUIRED TO PASS CLASS**

- Tuesday Dec 3– Public Debate 5-8 pm
- Others: High School Events (Sept 13-14 Damonte, Nov 15-16 Spanish Springs, Dec 13-14 North Valleys) or Relevant Community Service Project

Community outreach allows students to apply their skills in other contexts. The public debate has them apply knowledge of adapting performance to other audiences, while high school events allows them to either apply their knowledge through help in coaching high school debaters and/or in applying their knowledge of delivery, argument, and other debate skills to assess and judge high school debate competitions. This is assessed through instructor/coach checking that students have completed their service work as well as students’ actual attendance and performance at these events (through sign-in sheets, signed forms/evaluations from high school debate coaches, etc.).

**Travel/Event Schedule:**
- SFSU Depart: Friday, Sept 27, 7 AM Return: Sunday, Sept 29, 4 pm
- L&C Depart: Friday, Oct 11, 9 AM Return: Monday, Oct 13, 10 am
- DVC Depart: Friday, Oct 18, 7 AM Return: Sunday, Oct 20, 4 pm
- Pacific Depart: Thursday, Oct 31, 1 PM Return: Sunday, Nov 3, 11 pm
- Scrimmage: Sunday, Sept 22. 10 am-6 pm and Saturday, Dec 5, 9 am-8 pm

**University Policies**

**Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring/](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [www.unr.edu/writing_center](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center)). These centers support your classroom learning.

**Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who may require accommodation to obtain equal access in this course can contact the Disabilities Resource Center in Thompson Building, Suite 100, 775-784-6000.

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty about absences are unacceptable and will result in grade penalties and University Disciplinary Action. If you are uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Surreptitious or covert video-taping** of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Tentative Semester Schedule for Topics Covered In Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Strategies for the affirmative (Persuasive speaking and organization)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Running and answering topicality (Technical procedural arguments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>Disadvantages to a proposed policy change</td>
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<td>Week Four</td>
<td>Competitiveness and counter-plans (Refutation and negation theory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>Interrogating methodology and attitudes Part 1 (Critical theory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Six</td>
<td>Navigating a tournament (Schedules, sportsmanship, rules)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Learning from competition feedback (Debriefing, ballot analysis)</td>
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<td>Week Eight</td>
<td>Specific skills review (Based on tournament performance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>Rebuttals and Crystallization</td>
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<td>Week Ten</td>
<td>Specific skills review (Based on tournament performance)</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Advance strategies of persuasion and refutation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Twelve</td>
<td>Logic Fallacies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Thirteen</td>
<td>Specific skills review (Based on tournament performance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Fourteen</td>
<td>Interrogating methodology and attitudes Part 2 (Critical theory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Fifteen</td>
<td>Reflection on learning (Apply to academic and professional settings)</td>
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Note: The content of this course is essentially an extension and development of content learned in COM 101 and COM 217 in particular. In these courses, students learn basic public speaking skills and basic argument structure (stating claims and providing evidence), and this course develops those skills by teaching different argumentation and debate strategies related to the particular topics students encountered. Students go more in-depth on these topics and directly apply this to their debate performance.