

Intro to Speech & Debate Semester Class

Semester Course Spring 2019

Class Disclosure Document

Teacher: Mr. Joseph Wright

Contact: email @ joseph.wright@meritacademy.org, or visit me in **Room 204!**

Class website: mrwrightmerit.weebly.com

Main Text:

Writing & Rhetoric by Brett McInelly & Brian Jackson. We will have several copies in class, but most of you should be accessing the text via the class website / class, or you may purchase your own textbook online for about \$5 if you wish (abebooks.com is the site I recommend).

Introduction to the Class:

Speech and debate with Mr. Wright is a fun and challenging class in which students will stretch themselves, face their fears, think deeply on important issues, learn to persuasively speak their opinions, and use their skills to compete in various competitions and events throughout the semester.

Each class begins with 20 or so minutes of discussion and debate on current events, politics, moral issues, and big ideas. During this time our students get to match wits with each other and Mr. Wright and are challenged to think more deeply than they ever have before.

In class students will gain thinking, writing, speaking, and debating skills and apply them to:

- Persuasive Writing
- Impromptu Speaking
- Extemporaneous Speaking
- Oratory
- Student Congress Debate
- Lincoln Douglas Debate, etc.

Students should be warned that this is not a class where they spend most of the time listening to the teacher. The majority of every class involves students thinking, discussing, researching, writing, and more than anything speaking and debating because A) it's way more fun that way and B) that is how students learn best. In addition, by being in the class, students will compete in tournaments throughout the year against others from across the Utah and the nation. Competition is one of the most frightening, motivating, exhilarating, and educational experiences you will have in your entire life, but a worthwhile activity nonetheless.

Let's be honest—Our world has no shortage of problems. Thankfully we live in a country that has always looked to its own people to determine the answers. We the People really do get to decide what our country will be. And that decision is made in the American free market of ideas. Those who can think deeply and speak persuasively are the ones who guide the discussion in our market of ideas. Students who take this class will be better prepared for higher education, business, and life in general, but most importantly, they will be the next generation of decision makers for our society.

Required Materials for Class Each Day:

- Three Ring Binder (0.5"-1.0" is fine) **and** blank loose-leaf college-ruled paper
- 4 Tab Dividers for different binder sections (easily made with Postit note tabs)
- A Black and/or blue pen **and** a pencil
- At least 10 3x5 index cards (you can get a package of 100 for about \$1)
- Highlighter **and** a can-do attitude!
- Any **assignment** due that period (reading, homework, presentation, etc.)

To **be prepared** for class each day you need to bring these materials with you as well as have read the assigned reading for the day. As a rule, all **assignments** are due at the **beginning** of class.

Grading Categories and Scale:

- Exams/Quizzes, Tests, etc. = 25% of total class grade
- In-Class Work (Participation, Bellringers, etc) = 30%
- Homework Assignments = 20%
- Project Assignments = 25%

100-94% = A	89-87% = B+	83-80% = B-	76-74% = C	69-60% = D
93-90% = A-	86-84% = B	79-77% = C+	73-70% = C-	>59% = F

Class Rules:

1. Be on time, on-task, & prepared to learn with a positive attitude every day!
2. Keep all personal electronics put away*
3. Be responsible for your own learning
4. Respect: your teacher, your classroom, & your classmates
5. Trash goes into the trash can! #NotYourMaid

**Except when directed as part of class (for example, a kahoot activity, research, etc.)*

Late Work Policy:

I realize that you have a life and things come up. Therefore, you will be given **four late homework passes per semester**. You can use each pass to turn in an assignment **one class period late** without penalty. If you do not use your late passes, they may be redeemed at the end of the term or semester for extra credit. Each late pass is worth 5 points extra credit.

Without a late pass, late assignments lose 10% percent of the *earned* points each week it is late, **with a maximum of two weeks for late submission**. For example, is an assignment is submitted 2 weeks after the deadline, 20% of the total score is subtracted from the earned score. Because of grade deadlines, **late work is not accepted the last week of any given term**.

Late assignments may also cost you in **participation points** as well, as much of the reading, etc. you are doing is prepping you for the next class discussion. Don't be that guy/gal.

**I do reserve the right to consider extenuating and radical circumstances. If you have such circumstances, let me know and I'll consider being a bit more lenient.*

Participation:

Participation is worth 5 points per day and is graded every week. When you are on time, on task, and prepared, you earn full credit. Being tardy, off-task, or inappropriate will lose you points. Excused absences are able to get their points back (it is however **your responsibility** to come talk to me to get these points). Skipping class is an automatic zero. Participation cannot be made up. Extended absences will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Attendance:

We in Mr. Wright's class will be abiding by the policies described on the Merit website for attendance. If you know in advance that you will be absent, feel free to ask for upcoming assignments. **You are responsible for making up work** when you miss class. Check with your **Learning Buddy*** first, then the class website, then lastly me.

**Each student will be choosing their own Learning Buddy, or possibly two. Check with them first for help whenever you miss class!*

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, Fidget Toys, and Other Distractions: NO cell phones, cameras, electronic devices, fidget toys, earbuds or headsets are allowed in my classroom. I abide by the school phone policy. If you take your phone, device, or toy out during class without permission, I take it and you may retrieve it at the end of class. On the second occurrence, I take your phone, device or toy to the office and you may retrieve it at the end of the day. On

the third occurrence, I take your phone, device, or toy to the office and the administration will schedule a meeting with your parents to come retrieve the phone, device, or toy and review the school policy.

Discretionary Breaks: We currently have 90-minute class periods. I realize it is difficult for students (as well as adults) to sit for 90 minutes at a time. Therefore, I will plan my class period with necessary breaks and time for students to move around. Nevertheless, please remember to use the restroom and drinking fountains during passing periods. Our class time is valuable and should be respected. Students will be asked not to leave the classroom during the first or last 20 minutes of class.

Academic Honesty:

In keeping with Merit Academy policy, evidence of academic dishonesty **will** result in a **zero** on the assignment without the possibility of revision or resubmission and possible disciplinary review by the academy. Examples of **academic dishonesty** include **plagiarism**, using assignments from previous terms, sharing information during an exam, discussing an exam with another student who has not taken the exam, consulting reference material during an exam, submitting a written assignment which was authored by someone other than yourself, etc. This is not intended as an exhaustive list. Please, **do not jeopardize** your school standing for a “quick fix”; cheating doesn’t help anyone, least of all you. As per the Merit plagiarism policy, any student who plagiarizes all or a portion of an assignment will lose credit for that assignment. On the second offence, you and your parents will be required to attend a meeting with me and Dr. Meeks. On the third offence, you will lose credit for the class.

Equal Opportunity:

If you have any disability that may impair your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the administration. Academic accommodations are granted for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated through the Special Education department. Every qualified person has the right to receive an education, and we want to guarantee your chance of success. I expect students with IEPs and 504s to self-advocate and adhere to the terms of the assignment contract with their teachers.

Disclosure Document Verification

Detach the Disclosure Document and keep it. Return this last portion / page, after reviewing with your parents to Mr. Wright for Credit!

“I have read & understand the policies and content of Mr. Wright’s disclosure document.”

_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Printed Student Name	Date
_____	_____
Student Signature	Date

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION: Is there anything you would like me to know about yourself / your student?