

# Syllabus

## COMM 272: Speech Activities

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**Office Hours:** As Posted in the Squadroom. Specific forensics office hours vary by the week.

**Instructor of Record:** Kevin Minch is the “Instructor of Record” for this course as part of the semester rotation. However, Shane Puckett and Kevin Minch share directorial responsibility for the course and the entire coaching staff shares responsibility for assigning grades.

**Course Objectives:** This course is a vehicle for the preparation and practice of speeches for forensic competition as well as a laboratory for the discussion of forensic pedagogy, tournament procedures, and forensic team planning. It is a practicum course, in the sense that grades and experience are derived through actively engaging in the practice of the art of forensics. Consequently, there is no week-to-week schedule, nor a list of assignments that need to be completed for specific point values. Your job is to meet the basic obligations as outlined in this syllabus and perform to the best of your ability in the events you are working on.

**Course Tracks:** Each student must declare a “track” upon beginning this course. It is assumed that all students are part of the “Competitive Track” unless we are otherwise informed.

**Competitive Track.** Students who are actively engaged in tournament travel are on the “competitive track” and must meet basic travel and practice requirements to earn their grade.

**Academic/Non-Competitive Track.** Students who a) are new to the program and wish to observe and learn rather than actively compete or b) begin in the competitive track and, due to extenuating circumstances or “redshirting,” can no longer travel, are participating in the “Academic Track.” Students on this track MAY NOT merely attend class to earn credit. They must engage in alternative learning activities, as assigned by the DOF, to earn their grade.

It should be absolutely clear that, if you are enrolled in COMM 272 and fail to complete the minimal requirements of one or the other of these tracks you WILL NOT be given a grade higher than a C. You cannot quit competition in mid-semester and expect to receive full credit.

### Requirements of the Competitive Track

- 1) Students must attend a minimum of two tournament weekends (swings do not count as two tournaments) per semester to receive credit. These tournaments will be assigned at the discretion of the Director and Assistant Director.
- 2) Students must attend at least one two-hour evening practice per week to receive credit. Attendance means active WORK, not merely a physical presence.

- 3) Students must schedule at least one half-hour coaching appointment per week with either a member of the coaching staff or a “peer coaching” meeting alternative, as designated by the Director. Students may not find another student and call it “peer coaching” without prior approval.
- 4) Students must meet all draft and memorization deadlines, brief assignment deadlines, filing deadlines, etc., as designated by the Director or his assistants.
- 5) Students must be actively engaged in a minimum number of events by September 24, 2001.
  - \* Novice competitors who elect individual events as their primary area must have two events.
  - \* Second-year or higher competitors who select individual events as their primary area must have three events.
  - \* Debaters who do individual events, but treat debate as their primary area must have at least one individual event, but they are not under obligation to increase that number during the course of the semester. For equalization purposes, debate is considered equivalent to two individual events in time commitment.

Failure to have the requisite number of events prepared by this date will result in a midterm grade of C (or lower, if appropriate).

**Terms of Conduct:** All students enrolled in COMM 272 will be expected to abide by the team’s rules of conduct as outlined in the Team Handbook. Students failing to abide by this code of conduct may be suspended from competition. No exception will be made for grades if a student is suspended from competition and an F may be assigned.

**Tournament Assignment:** Tournament travel is a privilege extended to you by Truman State University. No student possesses a “right” to travel to a certain number of tournaments, or to tournaments of their choice. We do not have the funds or the staffing to travel every student, every weekend. Tournament travel will be determined based on merit considering factors such as preparation, experience/seniority, strategic benefit to the program, degree of difficulty of the tournament, and academic impact, as well as fiscal, logistical, and safety constraints. By the nature of its size, this program operates on a de facto “tier-system” where newer, less experienced competitors and less prepared senior competitors begin at regional tournaments and gradually graduate to more challenging tournaments as their skills develop. This is not done to discourage you, or to stratify the team, but is a matter of strategic, economic, and pedagogical necessity and as an incentive for improvement. The following procedure will be used by the coaching staff to determine preparedness.

- 1) For planning purposes, the coaching staff will prepare a TENTATIVE travel list for a tournament approximately two to three weeks prior to the tournament’s entry date (this has to be done to file paperwork and request checks). The tentative list will be distributed to the mailboxes of students chosen and announced in COMM 272 meetings.
- 2) Students unable to attend the tournament must notify the Director ASAP.
- 3) On the Wednesday prior to the Monday preceding the tournament (8 days before) all individual events students scheduled to travel will be expected to demonstrate “tournament readiness” in their minimum number of events (2 events for novices, 3 events for advanced students). Debaters will be expected to have completed a recent practice debate (or debates) and have completed any briefing or filing assignments as appropriate to their genre of debate. Students not meeting this threshold of preparedness will be removed from the travel schedule.

- 4) The Director is under no obligation to provide students their minimum number of tournaments (two) when the student's self-imposed travel restrictions hinder convenient scheduling or when the student fails to meet "tournament readiness" expectations. It is the responsibility of every team member to make the Director aware of ANY scheduling conflicts with tournaments on the travel schedule, whether or not he or she believes himself or herself to be traveling that weekend.
- 5) When fiscally prudent, students not assigned to travel on a given weekend will replace students removed from the travel roster for a given weekend.

Every effort will be made to maximize the quality of every team member's travel experiences. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they are prepared to make the best use of these travel opportunities.

**Modifications:** The Director and his assistants have the right to modify these policies and procedures, with notice, as needed to maximize team productivity and to adapt to competitive and fiscal realities as they make themselves apparent.