



CHELMSFORD HIGH SCHOOL

SPEECH and DEBATE SYLLABUS CP and Honors

2023-2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SPEECH AND DEBATE – H, CP (Practical Art) 5 Credits (#34011, #34021), Grade 9 - 12 Semester I. This course is open to freshmen through seniors and is designed to introduce students to Speech and Debate. The course is ideal for those students who want to learn how to speak effectively and develop strong analytical skills. Skills developed in these events transfer into business, theater, law and government, and teaching. The class begins with an exploration of the common elements of both Speech and Debate. Every student starts in Debate, but after the first tournament students can opt to remain focused on Debate or choose from a variety of Speech events. Students select their events and prepare for their events with the guidance of the teacher. Students will engage in research, writing, preparing, editing and revising debate cases or their speech piece. Time will be given to students to practice for their presentations, where they will receive feedback and direction to improve upon the debate case or speech piece prior to tournaments. There are no textbooks, no tests, no quizzes. Students are required to compete in at least two Saturday Massachusetts Speech and Debate League tournaments (Think dressed up field trip!). Course grades are based on student preparation, effort, completion and participation. If a student wants Honors credit, they must compete in a third tournament within the semester, in any event of their choosing

Prerequisite(s): None.

REQUIRED TEXTS - None

COURSE GOALS and STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to...

- 1) Adhere to course requirements, classroom expectations and assignment requirements.
- 2) Participate in-class practice speeches and debates, discussions, activities, and submit all requirements as assigned.
- 3) Become familiar with competitive Speech and Debate as governed by the rules and expectations of the related MA and national Speech and Debate organizations, depending on the specific tournament attending.
- 4) Compete in MA or national tournaments in the chosen speech or debate events, following the rules and expectations of each event, exhibit professionalism as a competitor, and making full use of the class time and online resources to thoroughly prepare for competition in their event. .
- 5) Following the tournament, students will review the feedback provided by the judges in each round to review their performance and make the necessary adjustments to improve for the next competition.

COURSE STANDARDS****

[DESE STANDARDS LINK](#)

[MA State Frameworks - Rhetoric 2011 Framework: English Language Arts](#)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chelmsford High School is committed to supporting the success and well-being of all students, regardless of varying abilities and levels of adaptive skills. The Special Education office provides services and resources to empower each student to attain their highest level of academic success and learning independence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Chelmsford High School, students are expected to maintain high moral and ethical standards, as exemplified by the final sentence of our mission statement: *"A spirit of respect is fostered, as members take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the rights and differences of others."* (CHS Mission Statement)

Students should respect themselves, other students, staff members and the school. The acts of cheating and plagiarism violate expectations that students will exhibit respectful, ethical behavior.

[The Academic Honor Code](#) exists to address the issues of cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING POLICIES

Please connect with individual teachers for specific information regarding grading. Students will be able to monitor academic progress biweekly through X2/ASPEN.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the academic support programs and services (such as PRIDE Block, after-school help, etc.) available to them to help ensure and support success. Information about these services can be found by accessing CLEVER and speaking the classroom teacher.

Grading consideration specific to the Speech and Debate course

- 1) Class uses a total point system
- 2) Participation in class; respectfully, regularly, and thoughtfully.
- 3) Thoroughness and completeness of submitting assignments and the participation in classroom preparation, research, writing, practice rounds, completing post tournament reflections, etc.
- 4) Attendance and competition at **two** sanctioned MSDL, NSDA, or NCFL tournaments during the semester of the course, completing in one tournament in each school term. Grades are **not based** on win or loss, but on thoroughness of preparation, engagement, and presentation as demonstrated during the rounds. The grade will also take into account each students' adherence to CHS rules and expectations and those established by the CHS Speech and Debate Team. Student must attend two tournaments – one in Debate and one in Speech
 - **If the student wants Honors credit, they must attend a third tournament in any event of their choice, either Speech or Debate. THIS WILL BE THE EASIEST HONORS CREDIT YOU CAN EARN!** (If you did not sign up for the class for Honors credit, you can always talk with your guidance counselor and Mr. Zopes about changing your status in the course.)
 - **The third tournament MUST be completed before the end of the course!**

COURSE SKILLS

The following skills are addressed in this course:

- 1) Analysis of effective argument and critical thinking.
- 2) Developing questions that guide inquiry and research, which are then used to create debate cases and arguments or structure oral presentations of different types, depending on the different events. .
- 3) Expressing oneself clearly and effectively through writing and speaking.
- 4) Critical analysis of appropriate written sources to support the development of effective oral presentation and delivery.

COURSE OUTLINE

Term 1 - ALL students learn about Public Forum Debate and then prepare to compete in Novice Public Forum Debate at the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League Novice Tournament at the end of October.

Term 2 - students will choose an recognized speech or debate event offered by the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League, learn about that event, prepare to compete in the event as a sanctioned MSDL or national tournament during the Term 2 - the number of tournaments depends on whether they are taking CP or Honors credit. A list of MSDL events students can choose from can be found [here](#).

Final Presentation - written and delivered by the student.

This syllabus and course outline are subject to change as Chelmsford High School seeks to continually improve the learning experiences for all students.

"We foster PRIDE* in our pursuit of excellence."

PRIDE refers to our five core values – Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. These five pillars represent our points of emphasis in supporting the development of quality students and quality citizens.