

# Debate Class Syllabus

Helena High School  
2017-18

Mr. Pogreba  
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## General Expectations and Why We Are Here

Mr. Don Pogreba

**Office/Classroom:**

Room 14

**E-mail:**

[dpogreba@gmail.com](mailto:dpogreba@gmail.com)

**Class Website:**

[Quixoticpedagogue.org](http://Quixoticpedagogue.org)

**Google Talk:**

[dpogreba@gmail.com](mailto:dpogreba@gmail.com)

**Phone:**

324-2262 (school)

We are surrounded with a cacophony of sound in our modern world—an endless stream of “experts” who tell us what to think and why to think it. Whether it is Rush Limbaugh on the radio, or one of those people whose only apparent vocation is TV punditry, there is no shortage of people who want to make you believe what they want and to see things how they want them to be seen.

My goal is to help you become a more critical consumer of argumentation and someone whose insight is not limited to sound bites, but in-depth understanding. We are going to learn about the foundations of argument, techniques for persuasion, and tools for evaluating the advocacy of others. In the mix, we might also throw in some philosophy, ethics, current events, great films, and more.

Your obligation is to come to class prepared to talk and to listen. We will do a lot of work in groups and your willingness to cooperate and work with others will go a long way towards determining how the class goes.

## Grade Scale

- ◆ **A: 100%-90%**
- ◆ **B: 89%-80%**
- ◆ **C: 79%-70%**
- ◆ **D: 69%-60%**
- ◆ **F: Below 60%**

Assignments that are late will receive an automatic 10% deduction. After one class day, they will not be accepted. No exceptions!

## Academic Requirements

- The exact nature of grading and academic requirements will depend largely on the nature of the units we cover each semester. A large part of your grade will depend on class activities and debates.
- I am not fond of using daily assignments or busy work to determine your grade, but periodic daily assignments will be graded.
- It is important to keep up with the class work, as assignments will often build towards a final culminating project.
- If you miss a class debate day, you will need to see me immediately about a makeup assignment.

## Units of Study

- Ethics
- Ancient Philosophy
- Existentialism
- Wilderness Philosophy
- Mock Congress
- Mock United Nations
- Globalization
- Genocide
- Justice
- Economic Philosophy
- Impromptu Speaking
- Classical Rhetoric
- Speech Analysis
- Demonstration Speeches
- Elevator Speech
- More!

Students can deliver homework via e-mail, using [dpogreba@gmail.com](mailto:dpogreba@gmail.com)



## The Rules

I suppose that I could list a series of rules and expectations here, but community rules and norms tend to evolve over time. I suspect we will have a better sense of the rules that govern our class as we get to know each other. There are a few points that are not negotiable:

**Tolerance.** Recognizing that other people have different values, beliefs, appearance and desires is a hallmark of maturity. Some people never reach it; you should make every effort to. I will not tolerate language or actions that exclude or demean. Heated

## Class Attendance

Coming to class is an excellent idea. Even if you doze off, you might learn something before falling asleep! Attending my class means being physically and mentally present—be involved!

Please be on time. Consistently coming to class without a reasonable excuse may lead to dire consequences.

Bring all of your material every day. If you need to leave for a pen or book, you will be

argumentation should be the model for our class—argumentation that is focused on issues and not personality.

**Respect for Substitutes.** This is an absolute requirement. Subbing can be an unpleasant experience; it should not be for people who sub in my class.

**Plagiarism.** Don't! If you are unsure if something is ethical, odds are that it is not. More information about plagiarism and how to avoid it can be found on the website

considered tardy.

**Makeup work is your responsibility.** You will have one day for each day you missed, plus one day to make up assignments. You must get the information from the website or by asking. I will not keep track of makeup assignments for you.

Please check in advance about planned absences, i.e. activities, family travel.

## Class Website

Almost everything that we do during the school year will be available on the class website—from daily assignments to news about the class. I encourage parents and students to visit the site frequently—for information about class, upcoming tests and assignments, grades, and Helena High News.

The site is designed to be interactive, so feel free to contribute information relevant to the class. Almost every part of the site is interactive—so look around and see what you can contribute!

Students are bound to follow the same restrictions contained on the District Acceptable Use Policy while using the site.

<http://www.quixoticpedagogue.org>