

# Syllabus

**Course:** COM411-D&DN Debate  
**Credit:** 3 Semester Hours  
**Semester:** Fall 2025 (Session 1-2, 16 weeks)  
**Time:** Online: TBD  
**Instructor:** Becca Howell, becca.howell@calvary.edu,

*\*About This Course: This is a blended class, meaning that both campus and online students take this class together. Campus students attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. All interaction and assignments for campus and online students are done in the online classroom.*

*\*About Disabilities: Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.*

*\*About Assistance for All Course Assignments: The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all CU students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams, and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.*

*\*About Changes to this Syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time during the course, but any changes made will only be done after clearly communicating the need for the change and the specific change to be made via in-class announcement and Canvas announcement.*

## I. DESCRIPTION:

This course studies the research, formulation and presentation of arguments in public policy debate. This course will include research techniques useful in debate preparation, methods for selecting and employing arguments in a debate, and tools for critically evaluating an opponent's argumentation. The role of rhetorical persuasion in preparing and presenting speeches and engaging in cross-examination in such contexts will be explored. Formal debate techniques and the role of judges and coaches will be discussed. (BOT- #2, 3, 5, 6, 8)

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

**A. General competencies to be achieved:** You will be able to . . .

1. Identify the fundamental elements and most common types of debate. (PLO- #1 & 2) (A- #A, B, C, & E)
2. Prepare and participate in a variety of debates. (PLO- #1, 2, & 3) (A- C & D)
3. Articulate the biblical mandate for excellence when Christians engage in debates. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- A & E)

*Our Mission: "...to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview."*

**B. Specific competencies to be achieved:** You will be able to . . .

1. Identify the fundamental elements of the debate process and apply these principles to specific debates. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- A, E)
2. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of various debates as to their organization, clarity, and effectiveness. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- B)
3. Demonstrate the ability to identify inadequate forms of argumentation and to employ appropriate forms of argumentation. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- C)
4. Prepare and engage in the variety of public debates. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- C)
5. Demonstrate comprehension of the biblical mandates which must guide the Christian engaging in public debates. (PLO- #1, 2, 3, & 4) (A- E)

**III. REQUIREMENTS**

**\*Note:** Specific instructions for each assignment are posted in Canvas.

**A. Read the course textbook and write reflections.**

1. Read the course textbook according to the Class Schedule in Canvas.
2. After designated in-class sessions, answer the corresponding study questions posted in Canvas.

**B. Evaluate debates.**

1. Listen to **three (3)** assigned debates.
2. Following the viewing of the **three (3)** debates, submit an evaluation of each of these debates.

**C. Prepare a variety of debates.**

1. Do the necessary research in preparation for the following kinds of debates.
  - a. Lincoln-Douglas style debate
  - b. Public Forum Debate
  - c. Collaborative Debate
2. Prepare for the following kinds of debates and debate settings.
  - a. Lincoln-Douglas style debate (as individuals)
  - b. Public Forum debate (in teams with judges and moderator)
  - c. Collaborative Debate (playing a variety of roles during debate)
3. **Note:** All "Blended" students make a way to work with their assigned teams in the preparation process while the course instructor will ensure the greatest consideration for the time constraints of all the students.

**D. Engage in the debates.**

1. Participate in the following kinds of debates.
  - a. Lincoln-Douglas style debate (as individuals)
  - b. Public Forum debate (in teams with judges and moderator)
  - c. Collaborative debate (as individuals)
2. Following each debate, submit a critique of your own performance as well as that of the others engaged in the debate.

**IV. METHODS**

**A. Presentation:**

1. **In-class methods:** listening to lectures, participating in class discussions, formulating talks, and taking tests & quizzes.

**\*About Class Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory for in-class students. Online students may attend the live sessions, or may watch the videos after the fact, but they will be required to attend debates online. More than 3 absences will result in the loss of a letter grade. Points to be earned during a missed class cannot be made up.

**\*About Classroom Use of Media:**

-**Computing devices** are permitted during the lecture and class discussion sessions for the sole purpose of taking notes. Use of these devices to access the Internet, make telephone calls or video calls, text messaging, updating social network services, etc. is not allowed, let alone very distracting to other students.

-**Cellphones / smartphones** may only be used in an emergency, and in those situations the student may take the call but must leave the room and not return until the next break out of courtesy to fellow classmates.

**\*About Note Taking:** Students are expected to take notes during each class. Significant peer reviewed studies continue to demonstrate that notes taken by hand are understood better and remembered longer than those taken with a computer. Computer use which is a distraction to others (i.e., noise, blocking the screen, displaying non-class related material, etc.) is not allowed.

2. **Out-of-class methods:** observation, evaluation, and reading preparation.

**\*About written assignments:** Unless directed otherwise, all written assignments must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.

**B. Grading:**

**\*About Late Assignments:** Assignments turned in late will be lowered **10%**

**each day** it is late, up until 3 days. Then the assignment will be closed.

**\*About Plagiarism:** *Plagiarism* is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person's ideas and presenting them as your own.

*Other forms of cheating* include copying another student's work, allowing a student to do your work, using notes instead of reading the literary works, basing your research essay on another essay, bringing cheat sheets or written information to a quiz or an exam, and working collaboratively with another student on individual assignments. This also includes handing in one essay for assignments given in two different courses to reduce the amount of student work. Please check with the professor if you have concerns or doubts about the academic approach you plan to take for an assignment.

*Originality:* Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Most assignments at Calvary require the student to produce original work. Therefore, unless specifically permitted by the instructor, the use of AI-generated content is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. AI, however, may be utilized in cases where the instructor has explicitly permitted its use to accomplish specific tasks. It is only in these cases that AI-generated (or modified) content may be submitted by the student. If there are any questions as to the permissibility of AI use for an assignment, please ask your instructor for clarification.

**\*About course grades:** See the grading scale in the University Catalog for specific grading scale that will be used for final course grade.

1. General grading criteria:

A = completed assignment well beyond assignment criteria  
B = completed assignment as specified and very well done  
C = completed assignment with average work  
D = completed assignment but poorly  
F = did not complete assignment and/or unacceptable work

2. Possible points for each specific assignment:

**\*Note:** An assignment-specific rubric will be provided for each assignment.

a. Coll. Debate Self-Evaluations (8 @ 10 ea)	80 points
b. Debate Video Evaluations (2 @ 50 ea).	100 "
c. Debate Research (2 @ 75 ea).	150 "
d. Debate Preparation (2 @ 50 ea).	100 "
e. Debate Participation (2 @ 100 ea)	200 "
f. Debate Critiques (2 @ 35 ea)	<u>70</u> "
g. Debate Reading Packets (8 x 50 ea)	400 "
h. Collaborative Debate Participation (8 x 50 ea)	400 "
<b>Total</b>	<b>= 1500 "</b>

## V. MATERIALS

### A. Required:

1. English Bible (NAS, NASB-U, NKJV, NET, ESV, or other by approval).  
  
-The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT AND NIV) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.
2. Freeley, Austin J., and David L. Steinberg. [\*Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making\*](#). Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2013. Amazon E-Copy: Rent, \$44.49. Buy Used: \$20-\$50

### B. Recommended Debates:

[A list of good debates to observe online will be provided in class.]

## VI. ABBREVIATED CLASS SCHEDULE

[**Note:** An expanded schedule will be presented during the first class session.]

Week	Class Discussion	Assignments Due
1	Reasoning & Research	Dis Q #1
2	Reasoning & Research	Disc Q #2
3	Questions and Objections	Review #1, Disc Q #3
4	Debate Formats	Research & Preparation
5	Lincoln-Douglas Debate / Video	Critique #1, Review #2, Disc Q #4
6	Lincoln-Douglas Debates	Research & Preparation
7	Public Forum Debate / Video	Critique #2, Review #3, Disc Q #5
8	Public Forum Debates	Research & Preparation
8		Critique #3, Disc Q #6 & 7
9-16	Collaborative Debate Schedule	

**COM411-D&DN Debate  
Syllabus, Fall 2025**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Class Discussion</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
	TBD	