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### COMX 312.80: Forensics (Honors)

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# COMX 312 Forensics (Honors)

## Fall 2021

Instructor: Tucker Wilson  
Office: LA 339  
Office Hours: By appointment  
E-mail: [tucker.wilson@umontana.edu](mailto:tucker.wilson@umontana.edu)

### Course Catalog Description:

(R-12) Offered every term. Preparation and participation in competitive speech and debate. The team travels to regional competitions and hosts on-campus and intramural debates and speaking events. Up to 6 credits may apply toward a major or minor in communication studies.

### Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you should:

- Be versed in the different theories and styles of debate
- Have a working knowledge of debate techniques and strategies
- Understand the different elements of persuasion and audience adaptation
- Know how to properly research and prepare debate cases
- Be able to think critically

### Texts:

Readings will be provided for the class as needed.

### Assignments:

Taking this class for credits means that you will be expected to both show up to and participate in class in addition to completing several small assignments, usually in preparation for what is going to be covered in class that week. Consistent failure to complete assignments without accommodations being requested beforehand will result in final grade penalties.

### Grading:

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

A—100-90% B—89-80% C—79-70% D—69-60% E/F—0-59%

For those taking on the Pass/Fail scale a grade of 60% and higher is a pass and less than 60% is fail.

### Grading Philosophy:

It is my philosophy that for grades to be meaningful a C should be average and high grades must be reserved for exceptional work. Cs (not Bs or As) will be given for work that is acceptable and of average college level quality. The grade of C, therefore, **does not indicate any shortcoming** and **may** be the most common grade given. This means that you have met the basic requirements of the speech/assignment, but there is more that could be done to make the speech/assignment better. For example, if a paper requires you to write 8 pages and use 10 different sources, that does not mean that you would receive an A for that work, only that you have met the basic requirements. Remember, this

does not mean that everyone would or should get a C in the course, this only is designed to explain my philosophy about grades.

Grading will be done as follows:

**C:** Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. This score **does not indicate any shortcoming**. All the work was done adequately and completely, and the work showed basic understanding and mastery of the course material.

**B:** Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Not only were all the basic expectations met, it exceeded minimum expected quality levels. This work probably showed one or more of the following characteristics: excellent understanding of the class material, excellent application of theory to practice, unusual thoroughness in thought and preparation.

**A:** Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. This work is superior in every respect, and represents the highest level of achievement. Its quality is so good that it would be unreasonable to ask a college student to improve upon it.

**D:** Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet course requirements. While there was merit to what was done, there were also deficiencies that meant the work did not fully meet the minimal expectations.

**E/F:** Represents performance that fails to meet the course requirements and is unworthy of credit. This work shows serious deficiencies in regard to the expectations for the assignment.

Academic Misconduct:

As a student at the University of Montana, you must practice academic honesty and need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. It is available to download at:

[http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)

As the code explains, academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, and deliberate interference with the work of others. It is the intellectual equivalent of fraud—a crime against the codes of the academy. As an academic crime, plagiarism merits academic punishment, subject to an academic penalty by the instructor. The bottom line is, don't do it.

## COVID-19 Protocols:

- **Mask use is required within the classroom.**
- When possible, windows will be open in the classroom
- If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
- If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress. You can chat with me about whether you would like to attend class via Zoom or if you would prefer asynchronous instruction and materials. Regardless of your preference, I will work with you depending on your circumstances!
- UM recommends students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center.
- Where social distancing (maintaining consistent 6 feet between individuals) is not possible, specific seating arrangements will be used to support contact tracing efforts.
- Class attendance and seating will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts.
- Eating food is discouraged within the classroom. Water will be allowed; however, you cannot fully take your mask off to drink.
- If the class is being recorded, students will be notified of the recording.

- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana:
  - UM Coronavirus Website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus>
- We strongly encourage you to remain vigilant outside the classroom in mitigating the spread of COVID-19

#### Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability that may require modification of the course, please obtain appropriate documentation from the ODE Office and then see me to discuss what, if any, special arrangements need to be made. Please do so within the first 2 weeks of class in order to be effectively accommodated.

#### Grievances (Complaints):

There is a specific process for raising grievances that is defined in the Student Conduct Code. Following this process is necessary for insuring that the rights of all parties to a grievance are respected. In a nutshell, the process simply directs you to address concerns with your instructor first and then proceed up the university hierarchy.

#### Student Consent and Instructor Elasticity:

The instructor stipulates that a student's receipt of this syllabus shall act as a contract between the instructor and the student. Receipt of this syllabus presupposes that a student has read and understands the policies contained herein. The instructor reserves the right to amend course assignments, assignment weights, readings and non-administrative items contained in this syllabus.

#### Travel:

Travel is not a requirement for this course but it is encouraged. Your grade will not be impacted in any way if you do not travel, however.