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## COMX 312.80: Forensics - Honors

David J. Airne

*University of Montana - Missoula*, davidairne@gmail.com

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## COMX 312 Forensics/Honors

**Instructor:** David Airne  
**Office:** LA 237/236  
**Office Hours:** T/R 11:15-12:30  
By Appointment also  
**Office Phone:** (406) 243-4551  
**E-mail:** david.airne@umontana.edu

### Course Catalog Description:

(R-12) Offered every term. Prereq., COMM 111A or COMM 242 or equiv. 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:

Your grade will be the product of the following assignments:

Every Thursday briefs are due before class starts. They will be posted to the UM Briefs folder in Dobox in the folder marked class briefs. They should include your name in the header of every brief. You will be graded then on the following standards: 1 credit = 3 briefs, 2 credits = 6 briefs, 3 credits = 9 briefs. It is imperative that you keep up with your research assignments. The briefs will be worth 50% of your grade.

Debates—you will participate in numerous classroom debates in class. Every Thursday we will have debates, unless we are traveling that week. Your participation is critical to becoming a better debater so you need to be on time and ready to debate every Thursday. We will also have some debates on Tuesdays but those will vary but being on time and ready to debate is also critical. The debates will make up another 30% of your grade.

The remaining 20% will be made up of classroom activities and public outreach assignments.

All of these assignments will be explained in more detail.

## 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.

## Make-up Examinations and assignments:

There is no makeup without prior approval. No make-up tests will be given unless the absence was unavoidable or otherwise justified, the student and instructor will coordinate for a make-up examination to be taken as soon as possible. A properly documented medical reason for missing an assignment is an example of a legitimate reason for a makeup. Airline tickets for a vacation or going home early do not constitute a legitimate reason for a makeup exam and no makeup will be offered.

## 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.

#### Students with Disabilities:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

#### 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.

#### Attendance:

Good attendance is a predictor of academic success. This is especially true of a math course as it is in a communication course, where the skills learned tomorrow require mastery of the skills we learn today. When a student cannot attend class he/she must notify the instructor or the administrative office. Students are directly responsible to instructors for class attendance and for work missed for absence for any cause. I do understand that some things come up that are unavoidable, but you need to keep me informed to these problems. There is very little I can do after the fact, so let me know in advance or as soon as possible if you are missing or have missed class. However, no in class assignments (critiques, quizzes, etc.) cannot be made up despite the legitimacy of the absence.

Late work will receive 1 letter grade deduction per late day. Remember I will require some form of documentation if work is to be accepted late. Those with qualifying documents will not be assessed the late penalty, for the arranged make up time, but failure to perform on that day will incur the deduction described above. Absolutely no late work will be accepted after the final exam period. Remember that no in class assignments can be made up no matter the reason.

#### Classroom Conduct:

In order for the class to function properly, all students should follow the following:

*Respect your instructor and your colleagues.* This encompasses all of the following items. It is absolutely necessary for a positive educational experience. Whether it is arriving in class promptly, behaving ethically toward your instructor and classmates, or contributing to a positive classroom climate, please act respectfully.

*Refrain from using media that are unrelated to the class.* This includes but is not limited to cell phones, messaging devices, music players, and the *Kaimin*. Any device that can make noise should be turned completely off for the entire class period. Not only do these items disrupt class, but whoever is speaking will find it exceedingly rude.

#### Travel:

Traveling is not a requirement of COMM 360; however, it is strongly encouraged. You will learn more from one weekend of travel to a competitive tournament than you will from an entire semester of lecture. The University of Montana will provide transportation, hotel and fees. The only thing you need to bring is money for food. Let your professors know of your absences in advance. Be on time when leaving for a tournament. Traveling is a lot of fun and allows you to experience the community of debate. All traveling and activities need to be done as a team since it is privilege to travel to tournaments and represent the University of Montana.

However our travel schedule for the semester is as follows:

US Air Force Academy Round Robin 27 September (1 team allowed)

US Air Force Academy Classic 28-29 September

Lewis & Clark 12-13 October

Colorado College 25-27 October OR University of Puget Sound

Maybe—Northwest College 8-9 November

Over winter break is Mile High 18-20 January (Utah)

A couple of notes on NPDA, the registration deadline is in late February (I do not have the date yet) you will need to know by then if you are going. If you are unsure or need more time then be advised of the following policy. The registration fee is around \$100 per team, but after that date it rises to \$300 and for late registration it is around \$600 (according to last years invite). The team will pay for your on time fees, but if you are undecided or change your mind and want to go later then you will pay the difference between the late fees and the on time fees (so you may have to pay as much as \$500 if you do not know by the deadline). Additionally, all of these fees must be paid in advance so if you have to drop out then you will need to reimburse the team for your fees and any drop penalties that may occur as a result.

#### 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.