

COM 198.02

Professional Practice: Forensics

Spring 2026

Dates & Times: By Arrangement with Instructor

Instructor: Megan Koch

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Office: Fell Hall 061

Office Hours: [by appointment](#)

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this class is to teach you the art of intercollegiate forensics activity, whether in a speech/individual events or debate format. According to the undergraduate catalog, this course is to cover “Training and participation in speech activities. May be repeated; maximum 4 hours. Includes Clinical Experiences: 15 hours, Type 1-4.” Please note that this course involves active participation in intercollegiate debate or speech, which requires your direct involvement in team meetings and practices to receive a passing grade, or training specific to pre-teachers headed into high school coaching positions. Importantly, though, travel to tournament competitions is *not* required to receive a grade in this course and team members do *not* have to enroll in this course. Thus, this course is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of forensics activities.
2. To develop students’ communication competence in forensics activities.
3. To cultivate students’ critical thinking skills.
4. To develop students’ research and information literacy skills.

In addition, this course follows the specific learning objectives relevant to debate and speech/individual events as outlined by the National Forensics Association.

Special Needs Accommodation:

I will be happy to accommodate any special needs you may have throughout the class. Please contact me if there are things I can do to make your learning experience more productive. Although I try to accommodate students whenever possible, I require written documentation from the Office of Disability Concerns for ongoing accommodations. Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact the Office of Access and Accommodations at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).

Academic Misconduct Policy:

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited in both oral and written form when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else’s work constitute plagiarism. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty (including falsifying evidence or plagiarizing a speech) will receive a failing grade in the course

and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Community Rights and Responsibilities. Please note, I am very serious about reporting academic dishonesty and view it as my professional responsibility; I have never been shy about enforcing the consequences of this policy.

Professionalism and Attendance:

Because this course is a practicum, there is no specific class meeting time as there would be in other courses. Therefore, students are responsible for arranging meetings with me and with various members of the coaching staff. Please be sure to coordinate meeting times well in advance. Also, be sure to keep appointments that you set with us as a matter of professional courtesy.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

No incomplete grades will be given. Thus, all assignments must be completed before the end of Finals Week. Take the initiative to e-mail me well in advance to determine if you have fulfilled all your assignments prior to the end of the semester (i.e., asking if there are any missing assignments during Finals Week is likely too late to do anything about it).

Course Assignments:

Within this course, two tracks are offered to students. The first track is geared toward forensics participation. The second track is geared toward forensics coaching. You should e-mail me to identify which track you wish to pursue.

Forensics Participation Track: Students must complete two presentations, through performing their forensics events in front of the coaching staff. Performances can be arranged with the coaching staff during their office hours or posted practice times. Prior to performing one's events, the student must research and prepare his/her events in consultation with the coaching staff. Students must also regularly attend meetings of either the Speech/Individual Events or Debate teams, under the supervision of the coaching staff.

Forensics Coaching Track: For those students involved in the Communication Education program who are pre-teachers headed toward a high school coaching position, this course offers an alternative set of assignments. Specifically, students may enroll in this course to learn coaching and judging pedagogy as well as team and tournament administration. These students might help run our collegiate tournaments, work as hired judges for high school tournaments, help at our high school camp, sit in on coaching sessions, and research topics or literature. Students will shadow various members of the coaching staff for each assignment (i.e., the Director of Forensics, Assistant Director of Forensics, Assistant Director of Individual Events, Director of Debate, and/or one of the Graduate Student Coaches).

Grading:

The grading scale is as follows: A= 100-90%; B= 89-80%; C= 79-70%; D= 69-60%; F= 59% and below. Percentages will be calculated based on points earned from:

Forensics Participation Track:

<u>Presentations</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Speech 1 (with 2 prep assignments)	100
Speech 2 (with 2 prep assignments)	100
<u>Research and Preparation</u>	
Discussion / practice	50 / _____
Analysis of Example Videos	50 / _____
Total	300 / _____

OR

Forensics Coaching Track:

<u>Administration (pick 2 per semester)</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Coaching Administration	100
Coaching Sessions	100
Coaching Pedagogy	100
Judging Sessions	100
Tournament Administration	100
Camp Administration	100
<u>Research and Preparation</u>	
Topic Research	50
Literature Research	50
Total	300