

Course Syllabus

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COMMUNICATION 2140—Advocating in Public- Fall 2026

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Instructor: Brian Lain, PhD

pronouns: he/him/his

T 3:55-5:15pm, TH 121

E-Mail: blain@unt.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesday 1:30-3pm and Wednesday 2-3:30 pm and by appointment

Instructor's Office: GAB 320D

Communication Expectations: Canvas is the primary tool we use to communicate with students. Secondary communication tools include remind.com and Zoom. This is a communication course so practicing professional communication online is important. . PLEASE NOTE WHEN ON ZOOM YOU ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE A CAMERA AND MICROPHONE. Using a camera and microphone helps to build community and presence in interactions. Personal concerns or questions can be directed to Brian Lain either through Canvas DM, Zoom meeting, or email. Please be aware that it may take up to 24 hours to respond to messages. Grades are posted within 2 weeks of assignments due date.

Welcome to UNT!

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

Overview to the Course:

Advocating in Public is an introduction to the critical dimensions of rhetoric and argument through presentation and evaluation of public discourse. This course offers balanced attention to theory and practice enabling students to analyze the persuasive function of public discourse, to discuss the role of audience in the construction of public discourse, and to develop skills for constructing, supporting, and evaluating public discourse.

Course Structure

Comm 2140 is being taught in-person. The Class meets in a lecture/recitation format. Large Lecture meets on Tuesday at 3:30-4:50 . Recitations (identified as sections 201, 202, 203, or 204) meet at different times on Thursdays. If you are not aware of what recitation you are in you can check on my.unt.edu. Recitations are assigned by the registrar and students may not move recitations. This course is 16 weeks long, has 4 major assignments, and involves student teams.

Course Goals:

1. Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in an appropriate style to subject, occasion, and audience through an oral presentation (Communication)
2. Synthesize evidence and critically evaluate the issues related to a specific social controversy in order to formulate an argument (Critical Thinking)
3. Engage in dialogue across differences, grounded in respect for the dignity of others to broaden understanding (Social Responsibility/Civil Discourse)
4. Connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making (Personal Responsibility)

Texts Optional:

There is no required textbook, However, if you wish to get additional information you can consult:

Keith, W. and Lundberg, C. (2008) *Essential Guide to Rhetoric*. Boston: St. Marten's Press.

This course uses Canvas as a part of UNT's launch, please go to <https://unt.instructure.com/> to login to the course site. You will be able to see the large lecture 001, in which materials will be posted.

Teaching Philosophy:

For this course we support transparency and accountability. We will never ask you to do anything we have not done ourselves. Every activity and assignment attempts to learn or practice a particular skill toward the course goals.

Getting Text Reminders:

You can sign up to use Remind a free app to get text messages delivered to your mobile device. Just text 81010 the message "@2140fa26" and you will be registered to receive automatic text message updates.

Course Requirements:

Editorial Analysis Speech: (10%)

In the first presentation, students analyze a newspaper editorial in order to examine its argumentative content. This speech asks the student to break the editorial down and determine the way claims and evidence are organized.

Refutation Speech (10%)

Students will use the same editorial they have analyzed using the tools of argument and formulate their own response to the editorial. This is a speech of critique where students not only identify arguments in a public forum, but they use their research and opinions to refute them. As speeches of public argument, responses to a publicized editorial.

Debate Research(Debate Case) : (10%)

Each student Team will be responsible for constructing a 4-5 page debate speech. In this case, students will use their argumentation skills to argue in favor of or against a change in policy. The case will serve as the starting point of the debates.

Student Debate (15%)

Finally, the last presentation is a student-run debate in which you will propose or refute a change of policy. Your own research will be integrated into your knowledge of the way that argument works for this final presentation.

As a part of this function, we will decide the topic, teams, even format.

Recitation Activities (20%)

Each week, small groups of students meet in recitation. This is an active learning session that applies concepts we discuss during lecture. Each recitation has activities and assignments associated with it. These total to be worth 10%.

Weekly Quizzes (15%)

There are brief (10 question) weekly quizzes that reviews the materials covered for that week. Each week they are due on Friday at 11:59pm

Journal (10%)

Students will work in teams for several activities and presentations. Part of the coursework will be devoted to learning the skills of working successfully in team settings. In order to assess your own activity with that group, you will be required to keep a journal on Canvas. We will use the journal to do peer evaluations as well. There are a number of prompts that you will need to address during the course of the semester.

iClicker Reef - Participation (10%)

Engagement, participation and interaction are important elements of the learning process. To that end, we will be using iClicker Reef, so each student must be registered to Reef and have a device (computer, smartphone or tablet) for polling responses for this course.

Because iClicker Reef is flexible across devices, you may participate by choosing one of the two options below:

1. iClicker Reef app: You may use your own smartphone or tablet by downloading the app available for iOS and Android
2. iClicker Reef website – iclicker.com – for browser-based use

With either option, you will create an account with iClicker, select University of North Texas as your institution, and enter your EUID (your Canvas login ID) in the *Student ID (optional)* space.

To add the course to your iClicker Reef list, log into Canvas using a browser and click the link in this course. You'll be directed to your iClicker Reef account. Log in as needed and the course will appear in your personal list.

Click on the course and JOIN when we are in session. Connecting via wifi in UNT classrooms is highly recommended.

Grading: If you answer at least 75% of the questions asked, you receive participation credit for that day. Therefore, you are **receiving credit for participating**. You may not make up missed questions, regardless whether you have forgotten to bring a response device, you are late to class, or you miss class. Again, **there is no makeup for missed questions**. (If you have extenuating circumstances, please notify me so that we may work together to ensure your success in learning the material.)

Academic Integrity: **Please note that the misuse of iClicker Reef will be considered a violation of proper student conduct and will be treated as cheating. For this class, iClicker Reef is to be used as a learning tool **by you in the classroom**. Misuse would include submitting answers for a friend who is not in attendance in class, submitting answers when you are absent, having someone else submit answers for you when you are absent, or any other use of iClicker Reef by which you are not submitting your own work in class.*

Course Assignments

Assignment Name	Weight
Editorial Analysis:	(10%)
Refutation Speech	(10%)
Debate Case	(10%)
Student Debate Speech	(15%)
Recitation	(20%)
Weekly Quizzes	(15%)
Journal	(10%)
iClicker	(10%)
Total	(100%)

Grading The graded assignments are designed to allow the student to demonstrate proficiency in these areas. The following scale will be used:

A 90-100 Clearly Outstanding and exceptional work

B	80-89	Above Average Work
C	70-79	Average Work; Meets all the criteria for an assignment
D	60-69	Below Average Work
F	Below 60	Fails to Meet Minimal Expectations

Recitation instructors:

The recitation instructors for this course are truly extraordinary. Much of the time you spend on this course will be spent with them. They are all experienced instructors and specialize in rhetoric and argument. During their office hours, which they will give you, you can find them in GAB 322.

Recitation sections emails and locations

Section	Recitation instructor	Email Address	Time/Location	Office Hours	Office Hour Location
001	Brian Lain	Brian.Lain@unt.edu (mailto:Brian.Lain@unt.edu)	Tues 3:55-5:15 TH 121	Tuesday 11am-12:30pm Wednesday 2pm-3:30pm	GAB 320D
201	Ayva Cebollero	Ayva.cebollero@unt.edu (mailto:Ayva.cebollero@unt.edu)	Thurs 3:55pm-5:15pm WH 213	Tuesday 11am-12:30pm Wednesday 11:30am -1pm	GAB 322

202	Radia Islam	Radia.Islam@unt.edu (mailto:Radia.Islam@unt.edu)	Thurs 3:55-5:15pm LANG 314	Tuesday 1:30-3:00 pm Thursday 2:00-3:30 pm	GAB 322
204	Libby Dudda	Elisabeth.Dudda@unt.edu (mailto:Elisabeth.Dudda@unt.edu)	Thurs 2:20-3:40 pm LANG 212	Tuesday 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Thursday 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm	GAB 322
205	River Cain	River.Cain@unt.edu (mailto:River.Cain@unt.edu)	Thurs 2:20-3:40 pm LANG 304	Monday 4:00pm - 5:30pm Tuesday 2:00pm - 3:30pm	GAB 322

The Lecture Recitation Format:

As noted above, much of the time you spend in this class will be spent in recitation with your instructors. Some of the time we will meet in the lecture room and discuss topics together. You can find out where you are supposed to meet on which day by looking at the class schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Course Policies:

Civility in the Classroom:

The structure of this course is based upon the freedom of each student to express their personal views in an atmosphere of education, respect, and tolerance. I encourage openness in the spirit of trust and safety. Many topics in this course can be personal, sensitive, and sometimes emotionally laden. During class, you may hear/read viewpoints that differ from your own value system, and this could feel disconcerting and threatening. It is essential that you weigh the appropriateness of how you participate in this class—refer to the course objectives to remember why you are here. Although your participation and opinions are greatly valued, disrespect of other students or to the instructor will not be tolerated. You may attack an *idea*; you may not attack an *individual*. Students are not permitted to live-stream, take pictures, video, or audio record any aspect of the course. Doing so will be considered academic dishonesty and a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct. I will ask you to leave class and you will be referred to the Dean of Students. Violations may result in failure of the course. This policy does not relate to students with audio recording accommodations from UNT ODA.

Course Materials for Remote Instruction

Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a [webcam and microphone – faculty member to include what other basic equipment is needed] to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: [list specific software, supplies, equipment or system requirements needed for the course]. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn> (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>)

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend each class session, to have read and synthesized the material to be covered that day, and to be prepared to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. It is impossible to participate intelligently if one has not completed the reading assignment for the day. Class participation is an important part of your grade. Class participation includes attending class regularly, being on time, doing all assigned work outside of class as directed, and being prepared to take part in all in-class activities. These will include

informal writing and speaking exercises, as well as large and small group discussions. Note that it is important to balance speaking and listening, to direct comments constructively to the subject at hand, and to show respect to all speakers.

Attendance

Much of your success in this course depends on your active participation in the daily class discussions. Not only is the material covered in class important to your success, but also your participation as an audience member and a participant in the daily activities of the class is crucial to achieving the course objectives. Consequently, you are expected to attend every class session and to be on time.

If you accumulate more than five class absences over the course of the semester your grade will be adversely affected (This applies to both Tuesday and Thursday class sessions). Beginning with the sixth absence a student's final grade will be lowered by 5% on the final grade (the equivalent of one-half letter grade). Upon the seventh absence, the equivalent of 10% or a letter grades will be deducted from your final average. If you miss eight classes, the equivalent of four full weeks of class, you will automatically fail the course. Attendance is counted beginning with the first day of class in the semester.

Attendance is taken every class through the iClicker. If you encounter technical difficulty, you must let the instructor know within 48 hours.

The term *absence* used in this policy does not apply to "authorized absences" as defined by the university. It is not the responsibility of the instructors to keep you apprised of the number of absences you have accumulated. University policies about excused absences can be found [here. \(https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039%20Student%20Attendance%20and%20Authorized%20Absences.pdf\)](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039%20Student%20Attendance%20and%20Authorized%20Absences.pdf)

Tardiness

Many times in this class, you will be making presentations. Entering during a speech or performance is a rude distraction to the performer and the class. If you arrive after the roll has been taken it is your responsibility to inform us at the end of that class period. Absences will not be removed otherwise.

Depending on circumstances: as long as you arrive in the first 10 minutes of class, you can get credit for participation,

Assignments and Requirements

All assignments are due on the date specified. Late assignments are not accepted, and, excepting authorized absences, make-up assignments will not be scheduled. If you miss a presentation, workshop, or other schedules or informal class activities and you have a University Authorized Absence (i.e. an excused absence from the Dean of Students), we will try to reschedule you at our earliest convenience. You should be prepared to perform whenever you are called upon, certainly the next time you come to class. When a reading assignment is listed in the syllabus for a given day, you should complete the reading assignment by that day.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own. Contributions from anyone or anything else- including AI sources, **must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used** (including any AI generated material). Failure to do so constitutes an academic integrity violation, and I will follow UNT's policy in those instances. AI tools such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, Grammarly Premium have their place in helping to make our lives easier; these tools can also hurt your capacity to engage in critical thinking. Please talk with me before using any of these tools for this class to ensure that we're in agreement as to how they will affect your work.

AI Disclosure Policy

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own. Contributions from anyone or anything else- including AI sources, **must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used** (including any AI generated material). Failure to do so constitutes an academic integrity violation, and I will follow UNT's policy in those instances.

In this course, you are allowed to use Generative AI (GenAI) tools such as Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, etc. to support your learning and develop skills for a GenAI-oriented workforce. This use will help us stay technically proficient and ethically grounded. However, GenAI should complement, not replace, our course materials. If something seems unclear, feel free to ask.

AI may be used for pre-task activities such as brainstorming, outlining, and initial research. This level focuses on the effective use of AI for planning, synthesis, and ideation, but assessments should emphasize the ability to develop and refine these ideas independently. **You may use AI for planning, idea development, and research. Your final submission should show how you have developed and refined these ideas.**

AI-Assisted Assignments must include disclosure statements that cover:

- AI Tool Used: Name of AI product used
- Purpose of the Use: Briefly describe why the tool was used (e.g., assist in research, assist in editing)
- Output Produced: Identify which sections or concepts were influenced by AI.
- Modifications Made: Explain any alterations made to the AI-generated output and how it was adapted for your work.

Grammarly Exception: Because Grammarly provides recommendations as you write, you will not have to turn in the AI prompt and output. If you are using Grammarly as you write, simply complete the self-disclosure and describe what aspects of Grammarly you are using (e.g., editing suggestions).

Please note that AI results can be biased and inaccurate. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information you use from AI is accurate. Additionally, pay attention to the privacy of your data. Many AI tools will incorporate and use any content you share, so be careful not to unintentionally share copyrighted materials, original work, or personal information.

I use GenAI to enhance materials, streamline tasks, generate prompts, create scenarios, draft syllabi, build study guides, and proof eits. I will always disclose how I use GenAI, and I expect the same from you.

In line with the UNT Honor Code, all work you submit must be your own. Using GenAI tools without attribution or relying on them to complete assignments violates academic integrity and will be addressed according to our *policy*.

AI tools such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, Grammarly Premium have their place in helping to make our lives easier; these tools can also hurt your capacity to engage in critical thinking. Please talk with me before using any of these tools for this class to ensure that we're in agreement as to how they will affect your work.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing

crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their academic performance is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support (940-565-2648). UNT has both a Food Pantry and a "Seeking Options & Solutions" (SOS) team who work to help students navigate diverse concerns, including identifying resources for personal, academic, financial, and social issues.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website \(http://www.ecfr.gov/\)](http://www.ecfr.gov/) (<http://www.ecfr.gov/>). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an

on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu (<mailto:internationaladvising@unt.edu>)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002>) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002>).

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.

- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

Class Recordings & Student Likenesses

Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- **Student Health and Wellness Center** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- **Counseling and Testing Services** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- **UNT Care Team** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- **UNT Psychiatric Services** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- **Individual Counseling** (<https://itservices.cas.unt.edu/services/email/request/change-your-email-address-because-your-name-changed>)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Additional Student Support Services

- **Registrar** (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- **Financial Aid** (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- **Student Legal Services** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- **Career Center** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- **Counseling and Testing Services** (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- **UNT Food Pantry** (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- **Academic Resource Center** (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- **Academic Success Center** (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- **UNT Libraries** (<https://library.unt.edu/>) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)

- [Writing Lab http://writingcenter.unt.edu/](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)

Emergency Situations:

In case of university closure due to emergency situations, such as inclement weather or a widespread infections disease (e.g., swine flu), I will communicate with you via the email you get through Canvas.

Completing the Course

Students are expected to complete all assignments for this course during the semester. Assigning a grade of “incomplete” is rare, and in order to request an “I,” the student must meet these requirements: a) The student must have completed at least 75% of the course assignments; b) The student must be passing the course; c) There must be an unforeseen and compelling reason why the course cannot be completed on time; and d) The student must present a plan for completing the assignments within the time period specified in the catalog.

Course Evaluations:

Course evaluations are conducted online through the university’s program. Log onto my.unt.edu to access and complete the course evaluation.

Academic Dishonesty.

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy at:

<https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrity> (<https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrity>)

Access

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda> (https://webmail.unt.edu/OWA/redir.aspx?C=2-p95jp_-EWwoilbfsvlphc0yxEpdtAI_GDGEHVXx4kQVv_shUsY-8lvuU2tlikQaYuZ0Dy51Oc.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.unt.edu%2foda). You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

COMM Library Copier Use Policy

Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

Extra Credit Opportunities

Please contact Brian Lain before submitting any other event as extra credit. You can add up to 4 points to your **final grade** for the course by doing any combination of the following activities:

- Attend a debate tournament or other public performance

- Participate in one of the studies or student group meetings going on in the Department of Communication Studies.
- Other speaking and argument events may also qualify for extra credit with approval in advance.

For each of the above, please compose an extended paragraph that summarizes the event and what you did that applies to the content of Advocating in Public. There is an open assignment in Canvas to submit those. **Extra Credit**. The number of points will be awarded based on the quality of your work. Completing an assignment does not automatically guarantee that you will receive all of the available points.

- In addition, If 80% of the course participants complete the course evaluation system on my.unt.edu, the entire class will gain 1 point of extra credit.

Netiquette: An Introduction

Netiquette provides guidelines for an appropriate way to interact with others in a professional online environment. This brief summary draws from Virginia Shea's **The Core Rules of Netiquette** (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>).

Rule 1: Remember the Human

Practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Remember, your written words are read by real people, and the words you are read are written by real people-- all interactions are deserving of respectful communication.

Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life

Ask yourself would you behave rudely to someone face-to-face? Before you press "submit," ask yourself, "Would I be okay with this if I was telling this person face-to-face?"

Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace

"Netiquette varies from domain to domain." (Shea, 1994). Your context and audience matter - What you text to a friend may not be appropriate in an email to a classmate or colleague.

Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth

Electronic communication takes time: time to read and time in which to respond. Make your written communication meaningful and to the point, without extraneous text or superfluous graphics or attachments that may take forever to download.

Rule 5: Make yourself look good online

Put your best foot forward. Keep in mind that others will note the quality of your writing, so keep the following tips in mind:

- Always check for spelling and grammar errors
- Know what you're talking about and state it clearly
- Be pleasant and polite

Rule 6: Share expert knowledge

The Internet offers its users many benefits; one is the ease in which information can be shared or accessed and in fact, this "information sharing" capability is one of the reasons the Internet was founded. Remember to post resources and references about your subject matter.

Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control

What is meant by "flaming" and "flame wars?" "Flaming is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion." (Shea, 1994). Don't feed the flames; extinguish them by guiding the discussion back to a more productive direction.

Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy

Depending on what you are reading in the virtual world, be it an online class discussion forum, Facebook page, or an email, you may be exposed to some private or personal information that needs to be handled with care. Just as you expect others to respect your privacy, so should you respect the privacy of others. Be sure to err on the side of caution when deciding to discuss or not to discuss virtual communication.

Rule 9: Don't abuse your power

Just like in face-to-face situations, there are people in cyberspace who have more "power" than others. They have more expertise in technology or they have years of experience in a particular skill or subject matter. Just remember: knowing more than others do or having more power than others may have does not give you the right to take advantage of anyone. Think of Rule 1: Remember the human.

Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

Not everyone has the same amount of experience working in the virtual world. And not everyone knows the rules of netiquette. At some point, you will see a stupid question, read an unnecessarily long response, or encounter misspelled words; when this happens, practice kindness and forgiveness as you would hope someone would do if you had committed the same offense.

Adapted from **The Core Rules of Netiquette** (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>)_Shea, V. (1994). Core rules of netiquette. *Netiquette* (Online ed., pp. 32-45). San Francisco: Albion Books.

This syllabus is not a contract. It is a guide and may be changed by the professor at any time without prior notice.

Tentative Class Schedule

This schedule indicates class meeting days, items which are due on those days, and items which should be read from the texts in advance of those meetings. This schedule is subject to change.

(Tu) 8/18 Lecture: Intro to Class, Intro to Argument and Rhetoric

Discuss Major Assignments

(8/20) Recitation: Introductions. Finding an Editorial, Going over assignments

8/21 Last day to add a class

Module 1

(Tu 8/25) Lecture: History of Rhetoric,

(8/27) Recitation: Classical Rhetoric Activity

8/28 Last day to drop this course without grade of W.

Module 2

(T) 9/1 Lecture: Claims and why they are important

(9/3) Recitation: Claims Detective Activity, Editorial Speech Workshop 1 (Bring copies of your Editorial with you to Class)

Module 3

(T) 9/8 Lecture: Evidence, and Values

(9/10) Recitation: Research Escape Room

DUE: Draft of First Speech and Copy of Editorial, Can be turned in any time until Thursday at 11:59pm, multiple submissions allowed.

Module 4

(T) 9/ 15 Lecture: The Toulmin Model/Teamwork

(9/17) Recitation: DUE- Editorial Speech, All outlines uploaded by Thursday 11am

Module 5

(T) 9/22 Lecture: Misinformation in research

(9/24) Recitation: DUE- Editorial Speech

Module 6

(T) 9/29 Lecture: Refutation Speech in Detail

(10/1) Recitation: Conspiracy Theories and You!. **Refutation Speech Workshop**

Module 7

T 10/6

(10/8) Recitation: Teamwork: Beat the CEOs, Refutation Speech Workshop 2, DUE: Draft of Speech

Module 8

(T) 10/13 Lecture: Introduction to Debate

(10/15) Recitation: Due Refutation Speech

Module 9

(T) 10/20 Lecture: Ethical Reasoning

(10/22) Recitation: Due Refutation Speech

Module 10

(T) 10/27 Lecture: Case Building, Refutation

(10/29) Recitation Spar Debates

Module 11

(T) 11/3 **Lecture: Fallacies**

(11/5) Recitation: Practice Debate

11/6 Last day to drop this course with grade of W.

Module 12

(T) 11/10 Lecture: **Debate Prep**

(11/12) **Recitation: Practice Debate**

Module 13

(T 11/17) **Debate-A-Palooza Prep**

(11/19) **Recitation: Debate-A-Palooza**

Due: Debate Research (Case)

Extra Credit Opportunity: SPOT Administration:

T 12/1 Tuesday Debate-A-Palooza

(12/3) Last Day of Class **Debriefing from Debate-A-Palooza continued**

Major Assignments

Speech One: Editorial Analysis Speech

Objective:

The primary goal for this assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of the **elements of argument**. You will recognize the pieces of an argument circulating in public, place that argument within a wider context of issues and values, and draw upon the **vocabulary** you have been building this semester to explain claims and evidence.

Source Selection:

Choose from a curated pool of respected publications (*Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Dallas Morning News*). Select an editorial (not a letter to the editor) with a **clearly defined, complex argument**—one with enough depth to be an interesting object of analysis.

Through your affiliation with UNT you have access to a couple of online publications. Use the links below as well as your UNT credentials and follow the prompts to register your access to these publications:

- **New York Times** (<https://www.nytimes.com/activate-access/edu-access>)
 - **Wall Street Journal** (https://libproxy.library.unt.edu/login?url=https://partner.wsj.com/partner/universityofnorthtexas?mod=wsj_UNT1aTIWU76nk%2Fq%2FiFuxeVc4%3D&reserved=0)
-

Requirements:

- 4–5 minute **extemporaneous** speech.
- Introduction with a clearly identifiable thesis, a body, and a conclusion.
- Transitional statements to signal shifts between points.
- Delivered in an **extemporaneous style** — neither read from a page, totally memorized, nor completely off the cuff.
- Physical delivery and vocal emphasis should enhance your argument.
- Full-sentence outline with citations in standard format.
- Attach the editorial to your submission.

- Optional: Include **one-slide visual claims/evidence map** to project during your speech.
-

In-Class Workshop:

Participate in the **“Claim Detective” challenge** — classmates will attempt to identify your main and sub-claims before you reveal them.

Grading Criteria: (100 points total)

1. Editorial Selection (20 points)

- Does the editorial make a clear argument?
- Is the topic significant and interesting?
- Does the speaker show its relevance to the audience?
- Are all requisite elements of an argument present and clearly described?

2. Organization (20 points)

- Does the introduction present a clear argumentative thesis?
- Is there a logical relationship between elements of the speech?
- Does the organization strategically aim to gain audience assent?
- Does the conclusion summarize the central arguments and provide closure?

3. Analysis (20 points)

- Is the central issue or question identified?
- Are the main claim and sub-claims clearly identified and explained?
- Is the evidence analyzed and the claim-support relationship explained?
- Are enough examples from the text used?

4. Outline (20 points)

- Is the outline detailed enough to accurately illustrate all arguments?
- Is it clearly labeled, follows a tight organizational scheme, typed, and submitted on time?
- Is proper citation format used internally and in the bibliography?

5. Delivery & Language Choices (20 points)

- Was the speech delivered extemporaneously?
- Did delivery enhance the argument?
- Did vocal emphasis help present central points?
- Did language choices connect to the audience's experience and interests?
- Did physical delivery support the argument?
- Did the speaker meet the minimum time and stay within the maximum limit?

Speech Two: Refutation Speech

Objective:

After closely examining a single instance of public argument in your Editorial Analysis Speech, you will now construct your **own response and critique**. This speech requires you to **refute** the original editorial, developing counter-arguments supported by credible research, while maintaining clarity, organization, and persuasive delivery.

Requirements:

- 5–6 minute **extemporaneous** speech.
- Use the **same editorial** from your Editorial Analysis Speech.
- Identify your **central argument** and support it with **at least 5 credible sources** (APA format).

- Incorporate at least **one creative rhetorical strategy** (analogy, humor, or hypothetical scenario).
 - Introduction with a clearly identifiable thesis, a body, and a conclusion.
 - Transitional statements between points.
 - Delivered in **extemporaneous style** — neither read from a page, totally memorized, nor completely off the cuff.
 - A typed, full-sentence outline submitted on time, with all sources cited internally and in a bibliography.
 - Attach a copy of the editorial you are responding to.
 - Optional: Record a **1-minute “pre-buttl” teaser video** to post in Canvas before your speech.
-

In-Class Preparation Activity:

- **Peer “Fact Check” Exchange** — Swap outlines with a classmate to check for gaps, weak evidence, or missing counterpoints.
-

Grading Criteria: (100 points total)

1. Organization (20 points)

- Does the introduction present a clear argumentative thesis?
- Is there a logical relationship between all elements of the speech?
- Does the organization strategically aim to gain audience assent?
- Does the conclusion summarize the central arguments and provide closure?

2. Supporting Materials (20 points)

- Does the speech use **at least five reputable sources**?
- Does the research directly address the main point made in the argument?
- Is the research cited properly?

3. Critique (20 points)

- Is a main thesis identified that **disagrees** with the editorial?
- Are there 3–5 points of disagreement?
- Is each point supported with logical, relevant evidence?
- Does the critique contribute meaningfully to the larger public discussion?

4. Outline (20 points)

- Is the outline detailed enough to fully illustrate the arguments?
- Is it clearly labeled, follows a tight organizational scheme, typed, and submitted on time?
- Is proper citation format used internally and in the bibliography?

5. Delivery & Language Choices (20 points)

- Was the speech delivered extemporaneously?
- Did delivery enhance the argument?
- Did vocal emphasis assist in presenting key points?
- Did language choices connect to the audience's experience and interests?
- Did physical delivery strengthen the argument?
- Did the speaker meet the minimum time and stay within the maximum limit?

Debate Research (Case) –

Objective:

Develop a well-researched, strategically organized case for the **affirmative** or **negative** side of a policy proposition. This assignment

builds on your argumentation skills, with emphasis on **case construction**, **issue framing**, and **evidence organization** to prepare for the final Student Debate.

Requirements:

- **4–5 page written case** outlining your position.
 - Include:
 1. **Correctly phrased, appropriately constructed proposition.**
 2. Statements of potential issues based on your assigned side (affirmative or negative).
 3. Statements of major claims supporting your side.
 4. Appropriately cited grounds/evidence to prove claims.
 5. Direct quotations from research materials (with author, qualification, date, publication, page #).
 - **One-page argument map** summarizing key claims and supporting evidence for quick reference during the debate.
 - **Balanced number of potential issues** (no fewer than 4, no more than 6).
 - Citations in standard academic format (APA preferred).
 - **Participation in mini mock cross-examination** during prep week.
 - Optional: Create a **team brand** (name/logo) to use during Debate-A-Palooza.
-

Case-Building Guidelines:

- Your case should be strategic: anticipate opposing arguments and structure your own for clarity, logical flow, and persuasive impact.
- Ensure **balance** so each side of the debate has relatively equal footing.
- Write with the intent that **your case speech can be delivered directly** in the debate setting, with minimal edits.

Grading Criteria: (100 points total)**1. Proposition & Issue Framing (20 points)**

- Is the proposition phrased correctly and clearly?
- Are potential issues identified accurately for the assigned side?

2. Claims & Organization (20 points)

- Are major claims clearly stated?
- Is the organization strategic and easy to follow?
- Does the case anticipate and address likely opposition points?

3. Evidence (20 points)

- Is the evidence credible, relevant, and sufficient?
- Are sources cited properly both internally and in the bibliography?

4. Argument Map (20 points)

- Does the map clearly summarize main claims and supporting evidence?
- Is it concise and practical for in-debate use?

5. Team Collaboration & Preparation (20 points)

- Was the case completed on time with equal contributions from team members?
- Was the team prepared for and engaged in the mock cross-examination?

Speech Three: Student Debate Participation

Objective

For the final speech of this class, you will participate in a live, public debate over a question of policy. This is as much a test of cooperation as it is of competition—strong teamwork will be essential. You will apply the argumentation skills developed throughout the semester, with special emphasis on building a complete case, identifying major points of clash, listening, and strategic refutation.

Civil Discourse Objective

definition of civil discourse

UNT definition: “Civil discourse is the practice of engaged dialogue across differences, grounded in respect for the dignity of others to broaden understanding.”

This debate gives you practice in engaged dialogue across disagreement. You will advocate an assigned position while listening carefully, representing competing arguments fairly, responding to ideas and evidence rather than people, and helping the audience develop a broader and more nuanced understanding of the policy question. Your assigned side may not reflect your personal beliefs; you are assessed on responsible advocacy, intellectual honesty, and respectful engagement.

Format

- **Teams of two or four** serve as either Affirmative (proposing the policy change) or Negative (opposing the policy change).
- **Affirmative:** must meet the burden of proof by presenting a compelling case for change.
- **Negative:** must meet the burden of rejoinder by critiquing affirmative arguments and defending the status quo.

Civil Discourse Expectations

- **Use high-quality evidence.** Support claims and refutations with credible, reputable, and appropriately diverse sources; represent and cite those sources accurately.
- **Listen to understand.** Remain attentive, avoid interruptions and distractions, and respond to arguments actually made in the round rather than to assumptions or a prepared script.
- **Represent opposing arguments fairly.** Identify or summarize an opponent’s claim and reasoning accurately before or while responding to it.

- **Address ideas rather than people.** Critique claims, evidence, reasoning, and consequences—not a speaker's character, identity, intelligence, or motives. Avoid labeling, name-calling, shaming, and emotionally charged phrasing.
- **Practice self-regulation.** Maintain an appropriate tone and volume, manage discomfort, and address points of conflict without escalating them.
- **Acknowledge complexity.** Recognize relevant limits, tradeoffs, uncertainty, and common ground rather than reducing the issue to a simple either/or choice.
- **Respect is not agreement.** You may challenge an argument rigorously while preserving the dignity of the people who hold or are affected by different perspectives.

Requirements

- **Constructive Speech:** 5 minutes per speaker. Prepared in advance and presenting your side's core case.
- **Rebuttal Speech:** 3 minutes per speaker. Delivered extemporaneously in direct response to opponent arguments.

Each constructive speech must:

- Address crucial issues identified in your case brief.
- Use source materials from your team's case to ensure meaningful clash.
- State a clear advocacy or caseline and present a complete, logically organized case.
- Support central claims with credible evidence and explain the significance of that evidence.
- Acknowledge relevant complexity, tradeoffs, limitations, or uncertainty where appropriate.

All rebuttals must:

- Directly respond to opponent arguments made in the round.
- Demonstrate accurate listening by fairly representing the opponent's claim and reasoning before or while responding.
- Identify and prioritize the major points of clash between the two cases.
- Employ clear tactics of refutation to reveal weaknesses, compare competing claims, and propose counterarguments.

- Support refutations with credible evidence or reasoning and explain why the response matters to the outcome of the debate.
- Focus criticism on ideas, evidence, and reasoning rather than on the speaker or people associated with a position.
- **Audience Choice Awards:** The class and invited audience will vote for categories such as “Most Persuasive” and “Best Teamwork.”
- **Self-Reflection Video:** Within 48 hours after the debate, submit a 1–2 minute video. Keep the reflection specific and refer to moments from the debate.
- Identify one strategy that worked well and one thing you would change.
- Describe one moment when you listened to or engaged the opposing position fairly.
- Explain one way the debate broadened, complicated, or changed your understanding of the issue.
- Identify one civil discourse behavior you would strengthen in a future disagreement.

Debate Preparation Guidelines

- Know your case thoroughly and anticipate opposition arguments.
- Use cross-examination practice to refine questioning, listening, and defending skills.
- Rehearse both constructive delivery and flexible, in-the-moment rebuttal responses.
- Coordinate with your partner to maintain consistency in claims, evidence, division of responsibilities, and tone.
- Practice accurately summarizing an opposing claim before responding to it.
- Identify likely points of clash as well as relevant tradeoffs, limitations, and areas of common ground.

How the Debate Will Be Evaluated (100 points total)

The detailed performance-level rubric is provided separately. Each of the ten criteria below is worth 10 points. Evidence may come from the live debate and, where relevant, the post-debate reflection.

Civil Discourse Criteria

- 1. **Seeks high-quality evidence to support opinions** — uses credible, diverse sources accurately to support the case and refute opposition.
- 2. **Considers alternative points of view** — shows understanding of competing perspectives and addresses conflict constructively.
- 3. **Avoids oversimplification** — recognizes nuance, complexity, tradeoffs, and limitations rather than relying on binary thinking.
- 4. **Listens** — attends carefully, represents arguments accurately, and responds to what was actually said.
- 5. **Practices self-regulation and de-escalation** — maintains appropriate tone and volume and handles disagreement constructively.
- 6. **Respects diverse perspectives** — bases criticism on ideas rather than personal characteristics and preserves the dignity of others.

Debate Performance Criteria

- 7. **Delivery enhances speech** — uses clear, audience-focused, largely extemporaneous delivery to strengthen the argument.
- 8. **Presents a complete case** — states a clear advocacy and develops the necessary claims, evidence, reasoning, and significance.
- 9. **Seeks to identify major points of clash** — locates and prioritizes the key disagreements that should determine the debate.
- 10. **Clear tactics of refutation employed** — uses appropriate refutation strategies, support, comparison, and impact analysis in response to opposition arguments.

Personal Rubric Criteria

- 11. **Describes the ethical issue** — Skillfully describes the primary ethical issues in the topic of debate
- 12. **Discusses possible consequences of solution** — Skillfully discusses possible consequences of proposed solution either that it is beneficial (affirmative), or detrimental (negative).

Instructor AI Disclosure:

Some elements of this course — including assignment descriptions, rubrics, activity templates, and supplemental materials — were developed with the assistance of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to enhance clarity, organization, and accessibility. All AI-assisted content has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the instructor to ensure accuracy and alignment with course objectives.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due