



Oral Interpretation aka. Speech and Debate

UC Visual & Performing Arts credit (“f”), College Preparatory Elective (“g”)
Analy High School Graduation Elective Credit

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Turnitin.com Class ID: 13107383 **enrollment password:** ahbdb8
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“According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.”

–Seinfeld, Jerry. “The Good Samaritan” Closing Credits. *Seinfeld*. CastleRock. 1992. Television.

Above, Seinfeld takes a humorous turn on the 1997 study from *The Book of Lists* that touted that the number #1 “[w]orst human fears was speaking before a group”¹. I imagine that today’s media focused society might suggest a different fear, but there is no doubt that public speaking creates anxiety in everyone—yet there are so many times in our professional and personal lives that we will be required to *stand and deliver*. **My hope is that you enjoy this class—have fun and learn something about speaking and listening. Of course, you will learn so much more about argumentation, interpretation, research, writing, debate, and more.**

Course Description

A performance-based course, Oral Interpretation is designed to develop the public speaking skills of students interested in debate, oration, dramatic and humorous interpretation, and spontaneous speaking.

What We Do?

Block Classes:

Research, writing, memorization will be expected throughout the year, and students will be expected to participate in daily exercises and presentations.

(Most)Mondays:

are Impromptu Mondays. Students will be expected to participate in a variety of spontaneous speaking and debate activities.

After Hours...on Saturdays, evenings & afternoons:

Students will be expected to attend competitive speaking events (**3 per semester**) and given ample opportunities to attend other local and Bay Area competitions (see attached calendar).

In the Community:

Students are required to perform at one non-competitive venue in the community per semester. They can participate in our community forum debate, a story telling session at a local school or day care center; a dramatic reading at a local nursing home or senior center, a poetry reading at an open mike or poetry slam, or another opportunity generated by them.

¹ “What are you most afraid of?” a team of market researchers asked 3000 U.S. inhabitants.

How will students be assessed?

Because this course is an elective, I attempt to minimize “homework.” The approach of the course is therefore, more a workshop format. Students are given significant time in class to prepare their work. However, some students may need time outside of class to finish their work or practice their upcoming performances.

Assessments are mostly credit/no credit. In-class speech/debate performances are given a qualitative assessment.

Daily Participation

- up to 10 pts per day (-5 for a tardy or showing up without materials)
- On-task work may be collected for participation credit or may be observed by teacher.

In-Class Performances

- 25 pts per performance. Maxson (and at times, the class) will give you specific feedback on your performance. You will know well in advance when your performance will be. **In-class performances must be done on the due date or receive a zero for the assignment.** Students who are unprepared often undermine another student’s ability to perform (such as in the case of debate). For that reason, it is imperative that students attempt to be well prepared for their performances.

External Performances: Competitive/Final Performances

- 50 pts per performance (including the “Performance Reflection” form— a written response to your ballots or critiques within a week of the competition).
- **Students are required to do THREE competitive performances per semester**
- Final Exam performances must be done on the Final Exam date.

Community Performances/Service

- 50 pts per performance (this includes a “Community Performance” form, outlining the material to be presented, and an assessment of the audience and how you will tailor your performance to suit them. This is due BEFORE the performance).

Extra Credit

- attend an extra competition/ community performance for 20pts (Max 40 pts per semester)

What Doesn’t Count?

- How well you place at a competition will NOT factor into your grade. The quality of your preparation will always be worth more than your ballots or trophies.

In Class Performances & Due dates (minor adjustments to due dates may occur)

Assignment	Due Dates
Introduce a Peer Presentation	Aug 26
Impromptu Speech	1 per quarter
Congress Debate	Sept 14
<i>Voice of Democracy</i> Oratory	Oct 7
Public Forum or LD	Nov 2
<i>MLK</i> Oratory	MON Nov 14
Poetry Outloud Competition	Dec 2
Semester Final: TBA	Final Dec 21
Congress or Public Forum or <i>Lions Club</i> Oratory	Jan 18/25
Parli or LD	Feb 1
Parliamentary Debate	Feb 8
<i>Rotary Club</i> Oratory	Mar 1
Interpretation: OI, TI, HI, DI, or Duo	Mar 15
Your Choice: OPP, Expos, Storytelling, World Schools Debate, Extemp	April 19
Your Choice: Novice Tournament Events (due date will be based on Novice)	May 10
Semester Final: Gratitude/Awards Speech	Final May 31

I heard that taking this course costs money. Is that true? What it costs:

Nearly all of the after-school competitions are free—**in fact, many of them give the students money!**

Students wishing to take part in a weekend competition will be asked to pay league tournament fees (usually \$25). **However**, thanks to a GENEROUS grant from the Analy Education Foundation, students who cannot pay the league's \$25.00 per tournament registration fee will have their fees covered. To receive this grant money, students simply need to follow the directions in the team handbook Ms. Maxson will be handing out.

What You Need to Bring to Class...

1. Yellow Legal Pad (Get 2-4 pads!)
2. Pens! (No pencil needed!)
3. Binder (To be kept in classroom!)
4. Email address
5. Highlighters (two colors)
6. Post-its Notes
7. RECOMMENDED: Earphones. (When researching, it is recommended that students plug-in to tune out other students who may be performing.)



What Do Your Parents Need to Know?

First, ask your parents/guardians to read this syllabus and to read and sign the controversial issue letter attached.

Second, please ask your parent/guardian to fill out the forms in the speech and debate team packet, so you may travel with the team to tournaments and stay for after school contests. These forms will be handed out in class (AHS Speech and Debate Team Handbook)

Third, please ask your parent/guardian if s/he is interested in helping out by driving and judging. If so, have them email Ms. Maxson at tmaxson.ahs@wscuhd.k12.ca.us.

Last, recommend that your parent/guardian add AHS Speech and Debate team calendar which includes your performance due dates. *See the header on page 1 of this syllabus for the ID.*

FAQs

“Am I (Is my kid) on the speech & debate team?” If you want to be—yes! It can't be helped; by attending two performances a semester students will earn enough competition points to become an official member of the National Speech and Debate Association (an honor society in which qualified participants are able to wear honor cords at AHS graduation ceremony) and our team. If they truly want to join the team, however, they're expected to attend Tuesday lunch meetings and some Thursday practices.

“Is it possible for me to be in Oral Interp but not on the speech & debate team?” Yes, and I guarantee you will still reap the benefits of public speaking and listening skills.

Course Norms/Expectations

As we discuss course readings, do activities, share writing, and develop academic level discourses, I encourage all class members to take a reflective stance in their participation. Dewey offered three dispositions as the undergirders of reflective action: openmindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. Zeichner and Liston (1996) unpacked these stances:

1. **Open-mindedness:** A class member who demonstrates “‘open-mindedness’ shows an active desire to listen to more sides than one, gives full attention to alternative possibilities, and recognizes the possibility of error in beliefs that are dearest to her/him.” Entering sympathetically into discussions with opposing points of view should offer nuance to previously held beliefs and critique of previously held assumptions.
2. **Responsibility:** A class member who demonstrates “‘responsibility’ carefully considers the consequences to which an action leads.” What are the personal, academic, social and political consequences of your participation or lack of participation?
3. **Wholeheartedness:** A class member who is “‘wholehearted’ regularly examines her/his own assumptions and beliefs and the results of her/his actions and approaches all situations with the attitude that she/he can

learn something new.” I would add that wholeheartedness means engaging in all educational opportunities—readings, discussions, writing, and teaching—with genuine effort and interest in learning.

To that end, students must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the Analy High School Student Handbook. Respect and politeness are required at all times. Arriving late, leaving early or other inappropriate behavior disrupts your learning and that of your classmates. Please arrive to class on time, be ready to work, be attentive, respect your classmates, and behave politely; i.e., no cell phones, texting or unauthorized computer use during class.

Late Work Policy

Because this class is a workshop style course, students should have plenty of time to prepare for the assigned performances. Community service work is due during the last week of the semester, and the competition deadlines are rolling throughout the semester. The major work is done in class on a daily basis and is awarded through participation points. Therefore:

Performances are due at the beginning of the class on the due date. Daily participation assignments are due in class at the end of the class period. I don't accept late work, as it's not fair to those who work hard to meet the deadline. In the event of a true emergency if I agree to make an exception, you need to contact me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due, so that we can discuss arrangements for adjusting the schedule and the penalty in terms of points.

Attendance

My hope is that this class will be the one you don't want to miss. But if you do, please contact another student to discuss the notes/materials from that class or me during tutorial.

Please don't miss class because you are not ready for a performance. Everyone has a rough day or two on occasion - the dog uses the speech you've worked on until 2:00 in the morning as a chew toy, and then your printer runs out of ink so you can't print a new copy; you have an argument with your parent and simply cannot focus on presenting an argument on gun control. Please come to class anyway! If you miss class, you'll fall further behind and the proverbial road to success will become elongated.

Plagiarism

In competition, students are expected to cite their sources by verbally acknowledging the author, article title, source, and year. Because it is good practice for competition and your English class, I ask that you get in the habit of citing your sources--and to create your own original speeches.

Plagiarism can be as limited as a sentence or extensive as a whole paper. Because this course involves significant research elements, you must cite your sources properly. Do not copy, steal, or buy other people's work or writing. **You will receive zero points for any plagiarized work and may receive a referral.**

Please see Analy High School's Student Handbook for more information.

Printer Policy:

If you can't print at home, plan to arrive at school 10 minutes early to print in the library or during break at the computer lab. My room is not equipped with a student computer/printer. Avoid stress and arrive prepared. *FYI--College classrooms don't even have staplers, much less printers.

Tiger OT/Thursday Afternoon Practices

I suggest that students seek out time with the English teachers available at Tiger OT for one-on-one feedback. (Tiger OT is held in the library 3-4pm MWTH) Beyond Tiger OT, we will have team practices (which may include Oral Interp students) most Thursdays after school (immediately after school -4).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me ASAP.

West Sonoma County Union High School District

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August 6, 2016

To Students of Oral Interpretation and Their Parents:

I hold it a privilege to teach your child this year. Please read over the syllabus to get a better sense of what the course entails.

Students of Oral Interpretation will be debating bills and resolutions authored by members of the California High School Speech Association, the National Speech and Debate Association and local community services clubs (ie. Lions, Rotary). Students will often be researching and debating topics assigned to them rather than chosen by them.

Both congressional style debate and team style debate will be taught and practiced in the class. Formal debate requires students to look at both sides of a controversial issue and to present convincing affirmative and negative arguments. Students may often find themselves asked to use logic and evidence to defend a position that is not their personal belief. Although awkward at first, debating issues rather than beliefs will be the primary focus of our formal debate units.

The congressional bills and resolutions for the quarter will be distributed to your student as soon as I receive them from the state--probably by the second week of instruction. Please take a look the legislation when it arrives. We can always use help with research and would greatly welcome any articles or materials that you might deem applicable to our debate topics.

If you are interested in perusing past topics, feel free to search the National Speech and Debate Association website (www.speechanddebate.org)

In addition, students who choose to, will travel with the team to weekend competitions to satisfy their external performance credit and will need the required paperwork to be done prior to going.

Lastyl, we will be viewing excerpts from three "R"-rated films in the course of the year: "Thumbsucker" a drama about high school debate champion; "Resolved" a documentary on team debate; and "Rocket Science" a drama about a teen who finds acceptance on the debate team. If you would prefer your student not view portions of these films, *simply jot a note below* and I will prepare an alternative lesson for your student.

Believe it or not, I am looking forward to a year of feisty arguments in my classroom—within the parameters of parliamentary procedure, of course.

Sincerely,

Tricia Maxson

PLEASE FILL OUT THE INFORMATION BELOW:

___ I have read both this letter and the course syllabus covering the policies and procedures of the Oral Interpretation class.

___ I would like to help out at competitions by driving/judging. Please send me more information at the following email: _____

___ I have filled out the 2016-17 speech & debate info packet and **attached the completed forms.**

___ Film excerpts are okay with me.

Signature of parent/guardian _____ Date _____

Please print your name here _____

Name of student (please print) _____