

**The Art of Persuasion:
Introduction to Debate and Public Speaking
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Disclosure Statement -- Signature Required**

Dear Student, Parent, Family and Friend,

Welcome (or welcome back!) to the Salt Lake Arts Academy. This document has been designed to prepare students for an elective course in the art of persuasion. Adjustments to this syllabus may/will occur based upon opportunities that arise during the school year such as field trips, guest presentations, and school-wide projects.

Course Content

This elective course will introduce you to basic and advanced techniques in public speaking and debating. You will also learn about the essential elements of the Middle School Public Debate Program (MSPDP) format. This format is a modified version of parliamentary debate designed specifically for middle school students. The MSPDP model is the primary format for middle-school debating in the United States.

If you are initially uncomfortable about public speaking or are not sure you have the ability to speak and debate in public, you are in very good company -- most people are very nervous about public speaking. The best way to overcome this fear is practice. With practice and dedication, you can become an accomplished speaker and debater.

**General Coursework
(Scope and Sequence)**

1. Introduction to Public Speaking and Debating

- What are the advantages to becoming a more effective public speaker?
- Introduction to verbal communication skills (volume, rate, emphasis, articulation, etc.)
- Introduction to nonverbal communication skills (body position and movement, eye contact, poise, and speech anxiety)
- Development of effective listening skills

2. Introduction to Debating

- Development of general understanding of debating
- Debating as similar to a “trial”
- Nature of debate topics
- Number of teams and debaters
- Speaking order and time limits
- Taking notes in a debate
- Preparation period
- Debate materials
- Points of Information and Heckling
- Judging and decision-making

3. Making and Answering Arguments

- Introduction to evidence
- Cause and effect reasoning
- Costs and benefits analysis
- Basic refutation
- Learning to research

4. Debating in Class and Competition

- Making arguments matter: Impacts
- Opposition strategies
- The debate competition

Policies

Student Handbook Policies apply to all students at all times. Note particularly the dress code and cellphone policy as these will be strictly enforced in my classroom.

Tardies and Absences: Tardies will be tracked and, if unexcused, will have a negative impact on the student’s Cooperation, Attitude, and Behavior (CAB) grade. If a student needs to be absent for a non-emergency appointment or a family vacation, it is the *student’s responsibility* to gather his or her homework assignments *before* leaving. In emergency or unplanned situations, the student is responsible for finding out from me what make-up work needs to be completed.

Late work will be accepted up to two weeks past the due date. Any assignments not completed within two weeks after the original due date will be marked as zero. Late work will not receive full credit. Instead, only partial credit may be earned for late assignments and in no case will a student receive above a ‘3’ on any work turned in after the due date. No late work will be accepted during the last week of the term grading period.

Grades in this class are based upon the grading rubric established by Salt Lake

