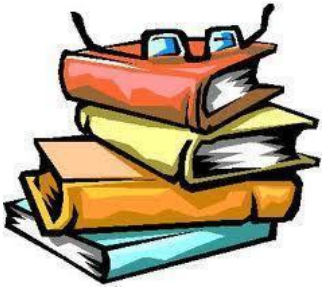


Speech & Debate 2025-2026

Mrs. Thornton



Welcome to Speech and Debate class! I look forward to getting to know you! Together we will make this the best year yet! ☺

Course Overview: This course will develop the communication abilities of each student in the following areas: vocal techniques, diction, nonverbal communication, listening skills, public speaking, organizational skills, and persuasive skills. This course will also introduce the principles of debate, with an emphasis on argument, refutation, research, and logic. Upon completion, students should be able to use research skills and logic in the presentation of ideas within the context of a formal debate.

Assessments and Grading: Students will be assessed through their presentations of informal and formal speeches, individual and team debates, impromptu speaking activities, and self reflections. Students will be given a scoring rubric for each formal speech assignment.

Classroom Expectations:

1. Arrive to class on time.
2. Bring your iPad, charger, completed assignments, and a writing utensil to class every day.
3. Be prepared to participate in class activities.
4. Do assigned classwork in class. If I give you time during class to work on an assignment, I expect you to utilize that time wisely; it is much easier to help you or talk things through in person.
5. Always put forth your best effort, and communicate with me if you are struggling. I am available during 2nd period in room 138 if you have questions or are struggling with an assignment. Also, feel free to email me at any time and I will get back to you ASAP.
6. Be respectful of me and other classmates. We will all have differing opinions, especially with issues we are all faced with at this time, but it is important that we accept the views of others and never silence someone else whose opinions may be different from our own. Hearing from all different perspectives is how we learn and make educated decisions and form our individual beliefs in the first place.
7. Be honest. Remember that old adage: "Honesty is the best policy"? Well, it's legit in this class.

Cheating and Plagiarism: In the age of technology, it has become very simple (and tempting) to use someone else's work as your own. Copying and pasting information from a website, article, blog, etc. without creating a Works Cited page and giving credit to the original author is plagiarism!

- This will not be tolerated.

- Any student found plagiarizing will receive a zero on the assignment and **WILL NOT** be permitted to redo the assignment for even partial credit.
- Cheating or copying someone else's work will result in the same consequences.
- According to the PTSD Student Handbook, cheating will result in dismissal from the National Honor Society, and multiple offenses could result in further disciplinary action at the discretion of the administration.

AI/ChatGPT: There will be times when the use of AI/ChatGPT will be permissible on assignments. When this is the case, you must indicate that you have, in fact, used it in your work. However, there will also be times when the use of AI/ChatGPT is NOT permitted to be used on assignments, as well as times when you must complete hand-written assignments, and therefore, the use of AI/ChatGPT will not be possible. With that said, it is important that you keep up with the assigned readings, engage in class discussions, take lecture notes, and participate in class activities to ensure that you perform well on all assignments.

- If it is discovered that you used AI/ChatGPT on an assignment when not permitted, it will be considered cheating/plagiarism, and the same consequences (as listed above) will be implemented.

Absences/Makeup Work: You will be allotted the number of days you were absent to make up the work that you missed. For example, if you were absent for one day, you have one day to make up the work. If you were absent for two days, you have two days to make up the work, etc.

When absent, it is your responsibility to obtain and complete any make-up work, including quizzes and exams. When you return to school after an absence:

- Go to the Penn-Trafford High School website and click on my name under the staff directory. This will direct you to the link to my lesson plans.
- Visit Google Classroom to see assignments.
- Watch any video-recorded lessons in Google Classroom.
- See me or email me about making up a missed quiz or test. You must make arrangements with me immediately. All quizzes and tests must be taken in class. It will be entered as a zero in powerschool until it is made up within the time allotted (again, one day absent = one day to make up the quiz/test).
- If you do not complete an assignment by the due date, regardless of the situation, a zero will be placed in the scoring column in powerschool until it is made up within the time allotted.

Late Work Policy: Students are expected to submit all assignments by the due date. Homework assignments submitted late will NOT be accepted. Other assignments, such as essays or projects, will be penalized 5 points for each school day that it is late. After 5 school days, the assignment will NOT be accepted.

Cell Phone Policy: The PTHS Student Handbook states:

Students are required to place their cell phones in the classroom phone caddy immediately upon entering the room and before taking their seat. Phones must remain in the caddy for the entire class period. Students are not permitted to have their phones in their possession during class or when going to the restroom during class. Phones must be off or on silent.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action as follows:

- 1st Offense: Verbal warning, confiscated and returned at the end of the period. Parent contact by the teacher.
- 2nd Offense: Confiscated, parent contact by the teacher, turned in to the office and returned at the end of the day.
- 3rd Offense: Confiscated and the parent must pick up the phone.
- 4th Offense: The phone must be turned in at the main office upon arrival and may be picked up at the end of the day for the remainder of the semester.
- Further/Other Offenses: Office Referral - Saturday Detention, In-School and Out of School Suspension.

Google Classroom: This will be the primary platform from which you will see assignment descriptions/rubrics and complete and submit assignments.

Please detach and return.

Speech & Debate
Mrs. Thornton

Please sign and detach this portion of the syllabus to show that you have read and understood it. This must be returned no later than **MONDAY, AUGUST 25**. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at thorntont@penntrafford.org. Thank you! ☺

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____