

# ADVANCED PUBLIC FORUM

**Sheryl Kaczmarek**

Humanities Building, Room 171/173

[skaczmarek@lexingtonma.org](mailto:skaczmarek@lexingtonma.org)

SherylKaz.com

## Course Description

Advanced Public Forum debate stresses thinking skills, current events, research, organization and oral expression. Students work closely with partners and in small groups, and regularly do in-class speaking activities. Public Forum students debate the official NSDA topics throughout the year. Public Forum is designed to appeal to judges with limited debate experience. Prerequisite: Introduction to Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas or Policy Debate.

**Note: All parents are encouraged to join BOLD, our active parents organization, and to assist the team in fundraising (and maybe judging).**

## Course Units, Goals, and/or Essential Questions

- Units 1-6 are built around the NSDA Topics. The first two topics last for two months, and the remaining four last one month.
- Unit 1 will examine the topic: **Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its military presence in the Arctic.**
- The other topics will be announced throughout the school year.
- If we have teams attending any of the National tournaments, Unit 7 will focus on a Nationals Topic. If not, Unit 7 will explore some other type of debate, typically Student Congress, World Schools or Big Questions.
- As a result of their participation in this class, students should improve their skill and confidence when speaking in public, their ability to do quality research and their ability to organize facts and expert opinions into persuasive written and spoken arguments.

## Classroom Experience

Debate classes are meant to be interactive. Students do research, construct arguments, engage in group discussions, participate in debates and serve as mentors. Since students regularly evaluate one another, teaching everyone how to deliver appropriate feedback to their peers, and how to receive that feedback, is critical to the classroom experience. We will do in class practice debates, presentations on our research and collaborate on arguments.

## Materials

At least two Different Colored Pens to Flow With/Paper to Flow on During Debates/Timer/Laptop or Chromebook/Headsets/Wifi Connections

## Homework

Some research, case and block writing must be done at home, along with preparation for practice debates and tournaments. There are no officially designated "Homework Assignments." Instead, homework is linked to the completion of work begun in class, or to work needed for upcoming debates.

## Assessments and Grades

All assignments are given point values and quarter grades are calculated based on the percentage of total points earned. Although the assignments are grouped into different categories on Aspen, those categories are not weighted. Since writing a case, or participating in an in-class debate are the ultimate tests of mastery of the skills of debate, we have relatively few tests/quizzes. All varsity students are required to participate in a minimum of four interscholastic tournaments, at least two in the first semester, and also to assist at, or compete in, the two tournaments we host (11/18/2023 and 1/13-15/2024 this year). Juniors and seniors are also expected to judge. JUNIORS are required to judge 1 weekend-long tournament or 2 one-day tournaments. SENIORS are required to judge either: 1 weekend-long tournament AND a one-day tournament or 3 one-day tournaments. Judging and competing both count as tournament participation, but competing cannot replace the judging requirement. Final exam grades are based on the number of tournaments each student actively participates in.

## Extra-Help/ Support Available

I am available after school most days of the week when I am not in a required meeting or at a debate tournament. I am also available to help students at debate tournaments in the Zoom Zone, by e-mail or on Slack. I encourage older students to assist/mentor younger students in the varsity classes.

## Teacher Information

This is my tenth year in Lexington and my 42nd as a teacher and debate coach. I have previously taught numerous Social Studies and English classes

and am a member of the board of several state and national speech and debate organizations.

## **Additional Information**

All students are expected to follow classroom and tournament rules and to contribute to a positive team and classroom climate. Classroom discussions about the Lexington Public Schools Core Values and how they apply to both our classroom and team environment have taken and will continue to take place. Students are not permitted to work with private coaches, or in external evidence collectives.