COMM 200: CIVIL DISCOURSE: THEORY & PRACTICE

HIP Global Learning & DEI Designated

Department of Strategic Communication & Media

Instructor	Email	Student Hours (Eisenberg 213F)
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Course Description

This course focuses on the theory and practice of promoting shared understanding and the common good through civil discourse as related to the development and presentation of oral messages. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of the principles and practices of public speechmaking that constitute civil discourse, how the First Amendment enables it, its history and role in problem-solving, and the influence of mediated discourse on democracy.

Please note: This class is both *HIP Global Learning* and *DEI* designated. As such, the approach (pedagogy), contents and assignments of this class will reflect this focus. Additionally, this course will take a social action approach to civil discourse. Social action occurs when folks band together to develop power to change policy. This has been a part of the American experiment in democracy throughout our history. This course will explore power and democracy and the role of civil discourse in building power, group dynamics, strategy and tactics, and campaign planning and implementation.

Textbook (Open text):

Mapes, Meggie. Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking as Advocacy. This textbook "*fuses rhetoric, critical/cultural studies, and performance to offer an up-to-date resource for students. With a focus on advocacy, this textbook invites students to consider public speaking as a political, purposeful form of information-sharing.*"
Additional materials (readings, videos, etc.) will be posted on D2L.

Course Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate skill development in demonstrating mutual respect through language, constructing effective arguments, and engaging in disagreement effectively in a constructive manner.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and skill in the use of structure, supporting materials, and reasoning in oral argumentation.
3. Students will demonstrate understanding of the principles of Media Literacy through the analysis and evaluation of media content.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to adapt persuasive messages based on audience beliefs, attitudes, and values.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to present an idea effectively in an oral setting.
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to listen empathically and critically to evaluate the messages of other speakers.

7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical standards of civil discourse and reflect that understanding in their presentations.

Classroom Guidelines

Attendance, participation, and classroom community

- The most meaningful type of learning happens through communication and engagement with others. When you are not in class, we miss hearing your perspective and you miss sharing your voice. If you are unable to be in class, please let me know as soon as possible. You are expected to be in attendance, on time, for the full amount of time the class is scheduled. Because "life happens" sometimes, you will be allowed 2 free absences. Should you choose to use any or all these absences, please make sure to keep up with assigned readings and other work. 25 points will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence beyond the allotted two (2). An absence may be excused if you have a legitimate reason or official documentation. Please attempt to make prior arrangements if you need to miss class. Any missed assignment deadline or absence without explanation or documentation is considered unexcused.
- There is an expectation of participation for all enrolled in this course. It includes being current in readings, discussions, class exercises, etc. While there is no grade for participation, your participation will be used (at the instructor's discretion) to round up a grade.
- Communication involves both speaking and listening. I encourage you to practice active listening in this class. You might encounter ideas that challenge or contradict some of your views, attitudes, and beliefs. The goal of engaging with ideas is not to arrive at a consensus or agreement. Disagreement and argument are essential parts of the learning process. To best support and challenge each other, there needs to be an environment of mutual respect, trust and goodwill. I encourage you to express yourself and share your perspective and opinion. In sharing those, please make sure that you are not using racist, sexist or any type of language that demeans, belittles, insults, or denigrates any group of people.

Late work: If no communication was initiated with me, a late assignment will be assessed a 25 percent late penalty if received within 24 hours, and a 50 percent penalty if received with 48 hours after it is due.

Communication outside of class: E-mail and office hours are the best means of communication outside of class. Please first look for answers to your questions on the syllabus before asking via email. If you missed class and would like to discuss assignments or class content, please come to my student hours, or request a meeting (see details on first page). Also, please make sure to put "COMM 419" in the subject line of your email. **Please note:** I typically answer emails Mondays-Fridays 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Allow for at least a day for a reply, and for extra time if you email outside of these days/times.

Presentation of work: All assignments should be prepared with the utmost attention to accuracy of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. For Academic Support see https://www.sru.edu/academics/academic-services/academic-support

Academic Honesty and Integrity + AI use: Academic integrity refers to the adherence to agreed-upon moral and ethical principles when engaging in academic or scholarly pursuit. mastery of subject matter should be demonstrated in an honorable and straightforward manner. Use of AI (ChatGPT and other chatbots) to

complete assignments is unethical. For a list of examples, and more information on Slippery Rock University's policies on academic integrity, visit: https://www.sru.edu/offices/student-conduct/code-of-conduct

Title IX Policy: Slippery Rock University and its faculty are committed to ensuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the University's commitment to offering supportive measures in accordance with the new regulations issued under Title IX, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University protection of minors' policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forthat: https://www.sru.edu/offices/diversity-and-equal-opportunity/sexual-misconduct-and-victim-resources

Non-discrimination: Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religion, age, disability, or veteran status in its programs or activities in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies. www.sru.edu/offices/diversity-and-equal-opportunity/notice-of-non-discrimination

Gender inclusive language: Correct Pronouns, Names, and Inclusion: I hope to create a space where students have the opportunity to bring all aspects of their selves into the classroom in order to fully engage in this course. I support people of all gender expressions and gender identities and encourage students to use the name and set of pronouns which best reflect who they are. In this spirit, I welcome and expect all students to also use the correct name and pronouns of their classmates. I will do my best to respect and use the language you use to refer to yourself and will encourage other members of our classroom community to do the same. Please inform me if my documentation reflects a name or set of pronouns different from what you use, and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me after class, by email, or during office hours.

Disabilities: I will do whatever I can to ensure that every student has the same learning opportunities. Please come talk to me about any situation that might affect your learning. I will be happy to assist in making the necessary arrangements. You may also contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 105 University Union or Call 724.738.4877.

Basic Needs and Security: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing or personal safety and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Karla Fonner, Director of Student Support, at karla.fonner@sru.edu or 724-738-2121. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to do my part to ensure your success in this course.

Diversity & inclusivity statement: Each one of us is a unique individual, with a unique identity, body, background, culture, set of experiences, worldview, and dreams. Together we form a diverse and rich community of learners, where we can learn from each other and appreciate what each person brings to the classroom. I am committed to creating an equitable and inclusive environment for all students to feel welcome in my classroom. I will encourage all to express opinions and perspectives, except when those threaten the wellbeing or safety of other students in the classroom. Examples of those opinions include statements that stereotype or denigrate groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, ability, sex, gender identity, etc.

Land Acknowledgment: I wish to acknowledge the land our campus is situated on is part of the traditional homelands of the Seneca, Erie, Delaware, and Susquehannock peoples. Today, the Seneca Nation of Indians, part of the Hodinöhšönih — the Six Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora) is the only remaining Nation from this area to retain any land in the region, and that land is located on a few reservations in southern New York State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. A list of all university policies in detail is to be found here: https://www.sru.edu/offices/academic-affairs/syllabi-policies
2. Using Chat GPT or other AI software to generate class work without prior consultation with instructor is unethical and you will, in essence, be missing an opportunity to learn.
3. You may NOT submit work that has already received a grade in any other course (even a course you are retaking). Any attempt to do so will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in an immediate course failure.
4. Email and all correspondence with your instructor should be professional with proper greetings etc.
5. All work must be turned in to D2L by the due date.
6. Check the online student handbook/catalog for other pertinent academic information.
7. Please refer to www.sru.edu for student support services that are available to you here at SRU.
8. Review the 2023-2024 Academic Calendar for important dates/deadlines.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS*

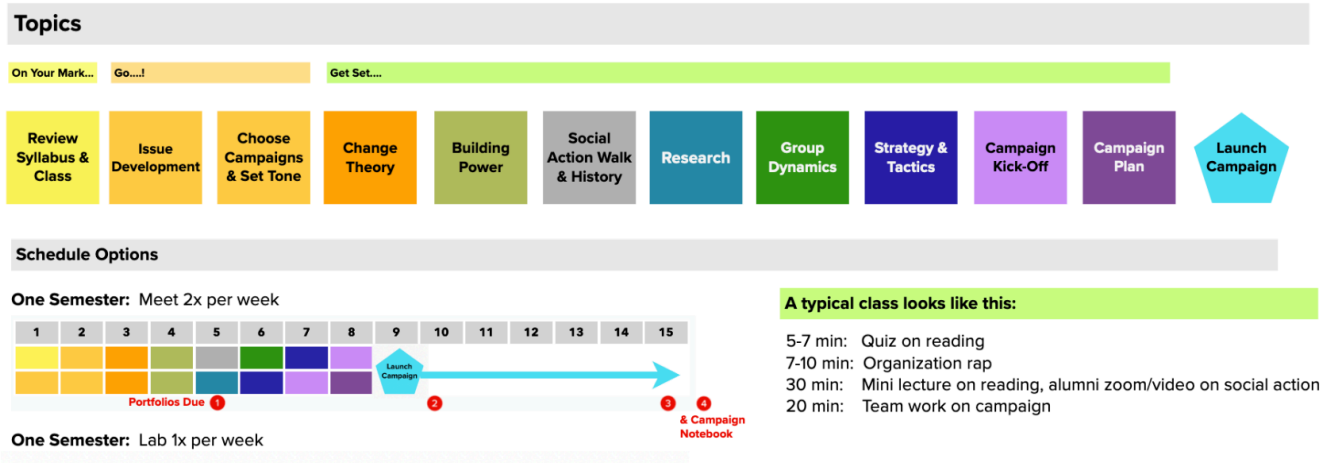
There are four course requirements. They include , a portfolio and log, participation, and a campaign presentation and binder.

In a traditional course on social action, students read about theories of social change, analyze social problems, read about campaigns, develop an abstract understand of concepts, all with the professor being the "sage on the stage". In the experiential social action model, students read about theories of social change and apply it to real world campaigns, as well as define a social problem and develop concrete, quantifiable solutions (i.e., demands). In this experiential social action model, students choose and lead campaigns and are transformed through a direct experience of democracy, all with the professor being a "guide on the side" where they are de-centered and co-creators of knowledge.

A key part of the social action model is that students have the opportunity to enact a policy (i.e., a rule, regulation, norm, or practice of an institution) on campus or in the community, with the students choosing

and developing the campaigns on their own rather than assigned by the instructor. Another exciting part of this course is that you will hear directly from previous Soci. 164 students about their social action campaigns.

Another key feature of the social action model is the topic and flow of the course. The motto of this model is "On Your Mark, Go, Get Set." In order to launch the campaigns by mid-semester, students go through the issue development process (identifying demands and targets) in the opening days of the class. By choosing the campaigns by the 4th or 5th class, students have enough time to learn about all of the necessary aspects of social change, and then to launch a campaign by the ninth week, and still have almost half a semester to do several actions.



With this model, a typical class involves the following: (a) a student doing a 1-2 minute organizational rap (i.e., who, what, why, where, and when of a campaign), (b) a mini-lecture by the professor of the reading, (c) a Zoom call with an alumni, and (d) group work on their campaigns. These activities are designed to de-center the faculty, empower students to believe that social action is possible, and to give students the opportunity to be active participants in their education.

All students will be involved in social action. This will require a <u>minimum of 1½ to 2 hours per week</u> of campaign work (25 hours minimum over 15 weeks, with about one-half of the time DOING something, that is, doing *campaign activities* (e.g., tabling, fliering, giving organization raps) or *campaign actions* (marches, rallies, street theater, etc.). If you do not do more than 25 hours a semester, you will most likely not receive a grade higher than a C on your overall portfolio grade, since it is difficult to do reflection if you are not doing campaign activities and actions. Of course, if you want to do more campaign work, that is great. In fact, you can get an extra one to three units of course credit (Soci. 181B) if you do additional community work. Please come see me if you are interested in this additional course credit. FYI: The course reading has been reduced to offset the 25 hours of campaign work.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. conduct issue development
2. build power
3. implement various strategies and tactics
4. conduct research (historical analysis, power map, target analysis)
5. work with the media
6. perform campaign implementation and evaluation plans

Portfolio and Log (40% of total grade)

At the university, you generally demonstrate that you understand the ideas from the course in an exam. This class is different. In this class, portfolios take the place of exams. Importantly, the portfolio is where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text in light of your social action experiences. Therefore, you must integrate the text with your community work throughout each portfolio. With no integration of text, you cannot receive above a C on your portfolio. You can talk to your teammates but all of the portfolios will be your own work.

In addition, you will most likely not receive higher than a C on your overall portfolio grade if you do not complete at least 25 hours of social action work (1.5 to 2 hours a week). Please use the log at this website (www.bonner.org/socialaction-docs) to keep track of your community work, and then turn it in with the portfolios. Your portfolio and log will be collected every three to four weeks. Late portfolios will be accepted, but 1/3 grade will be deducted for each class day it is late. **Also, I don't accept emailed papers**, but you can email me your late portfolio to stop the "late clock", and then bring in a hard copy to the next class.

Campaign Presentation and Binder (20% of total grade)

For the final exam, students give a group presentation on your social action campaign. In addition, your group will turn in a campaign binder, which will be evaluated. The binder will be used by future students when they choose their campaigns.

A. Speeches:

- Informal speeches:
  Speech 1 – *Your local/global identity*: The purpose of this speech is to allow us the opportunity to know you better. This speech is informal and is meant to allow us the opportunity to get to know each other and identify global aspects of our identity. Discuss elements of your identity that are local (related to your town, country, etc.) and others that are global (related to your ethnic origin, religion, hobbies, travels, etc.) Be personable, funny, and creative. Show us your personality! Time: 2-3 minutes (under 1 min will result in an automatic zero) **(Points Possible: 50 pts)**
  Speech 2—*What does DEI mean to you?* This speech allows you to reflect on diversity, equity and inclusion within your community and society. Also, it is an opportunity to discuss your connection to the world, your history, and the history of minoritized and/or oppressed communities around you. Time: 2-3 minutes (under 1 min will result in an automatic zero) **(Points Possible: 50 pts)**
- Formal speeches**:**
  Speech 3–Social Action Group Speeches
  - Social Action Issue Identification: for this speech, your group will share the issue you have chosen to pursue for your social action campaign, including the research you have conducted on the issue, the impacted community, the target of your campaign etc.
  - Social Action Campaign update: for this speech

Time: 4-6 minutes

Speech 4--DEI/Global Learning Current Event speech:
This speech will allow the class to stay current with what's going on in our world with respect to DEI and/or Global Affairs. **(Possible points: 100 pts)**

1. Media analysis report: You will research the opposite side of your issue in the media and present a rebuttal **(Total possible points: 100 pts)**

2. Reflections (3): You will have the opportunity to briefly respond to a prompt related to civil discourse and other related topics **(Total possible points: 150 pts)**

3. Quizzes & homework: you will have 4 quizzes and regular homework/assignments.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNEMENTS & POINTS

Informal speeches (Speech 1 + 2)	**100 points**
Homework/class activities	**100 points**
Comparing the news Speech (Speech 4)	**100 points**
Take a Stand Speech (Speech 3)	**200 points**
Impromptu speech	**50 points**
Media analysis report	**100 points**
Reflections (3 x 50)	**150 points**
Quizzes (4 x 50)	**200 points**
TOTAL	**1000 POINTS**

GRADING SCALE: A (100 - 90%) B (89 - 80%). C (79 - 70%) 70% or lower = NC

DATE	TOPIC
MODULE 1: **Intro to Civil Discourse and Social Action** **(Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4)** **1/16-1/30**	What is Civil Discourse? Why does civil discourse matter today? What is social action? How is it connected to civil discourse? Ethics/ The importance of listening DEI/Positioning Issue identification Group formation and dynamics Speech 1 + Speech 2
MODULE 2: Audience and Research **(Chapters 5, 6 & 7)** **1/31-2/13**	Social action walk Researching your issue: history, impacted community, stakeholders. Building power
MODULE 3: Strategy and Tactics **(Chapter 8, 9 & 10)** **2/14-2/27**	Verbal + Non-verbal Communication Campaign Strategy + Tactics
MODULE 4: Media Literacy **2/28-3/6**	Media Literacy
SPRING BREAK	
MODULE 5: Informative Speaking **(Chapter 11)** **3/20- 3/27**	Principles of Informative speaking Descriptive vs. prescriptive language
MODULE 6: Persuasive Speaking **(Chapter 12)** 3/28-4/28	Persuasive speaking Constructing an argument Toulmin's model Monroe's Motivated Sequence Fallacies of Reasoning

College of Business - Department of Strategic Communication & Media
COMM 200 Civil Discourse: Theory and Practice

Methods of Assessment: E = Exam; SP = Speech; Analysis = Oral & Written

Course Objectives	Rock Integrated Studies Program Outcomes	University-Wide Learning Outcomes
Outcome 1: To develop an understanding of the nature and role of civil discourse in a democratic society: Obj. 1. Students will demonstrate understanding that democratic societies require an atmosphere of dissent, discussion and debate. Obj. 2. Students will demonstrate understanding that civil discourse is that which seeks to promote the public good through open debate. Obj. 3. Students will demonstrate understanding that civil discourse must proceed in an environment in which democratic participants engage one another with mutual respect. Obj. 4. Students will demonstrate understanding that name-calling, threats and bullying undermine effective social deliberation through civil discourse.	1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of social sciences. 3.5 Practice civic knowledge and engagement – local and global. 4.0 Engage in integrative and applied learning.	7.1 Acquire and apply skills and knowledge based on partnership and reciprocity within and beyond the university community. 8.1 Respect the range of ethical perspectives. 8.3 Recognize the consequences and impacts of their actions on others. 9.2 Understand the ways that group and individual inequalities and interactions impact self and society.
Outcome 2: To develop an understanding of the nature and function of rhetorical/persuasive principles and processes. As such, students will develop knowledge of and skill in the use of structure, supporting materials, and reasoning in oral argumentation. Obj. 1. Students will demonstrate ability to recognize and be able to use basic reasoning. Obj. 2. Students will demonstrate ability to support arguments with relevant and adequate evidence from a variety of sources. Obj. 3. Students will demonstrate ability to identify facts, issues, and problems relevant to the topic. Obj. 4. Students will demonstrate ability to research effectively information required for message preparation. Obj. 5. Students will demonstrate ability to choose and narrow a topic, and to develop and communicate the thesis/claim in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion. Obj. 6. Students will demonstrate ability to use organizational patterns appropriate to topic, purpose and occasion. Obj. 7. Students will demonstrate ability to structure messages with an introduction, main points, useful transitions and a conclusion.	2.1 Apply the processes of inquiry and analysis. 2.2 Think critically. 2.4 Develop and express ideas in writing. 2.5 Develop and express ideas orally. 2.7 Apply information literacy skills. 2.9 Extract and make meaning from written texts. 3.1 Demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competence.	1.0 Act as effective communicators. 1.1 Communicate successfully with diverse audiences in speech and writing. 1.3 Apply analytical reading to support language use. 2.1 Gather, analyze and evaluate information and ideas. 2.2 Produce well-supported reasons and evidence. 2.3 Reach well-argued conclusions and decisions.

Course Objectives	Rock Integrated Studies Program Outcomes	University-Wide Learning Outcomes
Outcome 3: To understand the principles of Media Literacy and be able to apply those principles to the analysis of mediated content: Obj. 1. Students will demonstrate understanding that Media Literacy is a critical thinking skill that provides a means to analyze and evaluate media content. Obj. 2. Students will demonstrate understanding of the role of media in a democratic society; the right to information and free expression, and the role of governments and civil society in enforcing these rights. Obj. 3. Students will demonstrate understanding of and apply strategies with which to analyze and discuss media content. Obj. 4. Students will demonstrate discernment in identifying mediated content that supports the role of citizens engaged in informed debate and decision-making, and that which undermines the principles of a democratic society.	21. Apply the processes of inquiry and analysis. 2.2. Think critically. 2.7 Apply information literacy skills. 3.2 Engage in ethical reasoning.	1.1 Apply analytical reading to support language use. 2.0 Apply critical thinking to argument and problem solving. 2.1 Gather, analyze and evaluate information and ideas. 2.2 Produce well-supported reasons and evidence. 2.3 Reach well-argued conclusions and decisions.
Outcome 4: To develop knowledge of the principles of effective audience analysis and skill in adapting messages to various audiences: Obj.1. Student will be able to recognize and adapt messages based upon the perceptual processes of receivers. Obj. 2. Students will be able to use language appropriate to the audience. Obj. 3. Students will be able to adapt informative messages on the basis of audience knowledge and beliefs. Obj. 4. Students will be able to adapt persuasive messages on the basis of audience beliefs, attitudes and values.	2.5 Develop and express ideas orally. 3.1 Demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competence. 3.2 Engage in ethical reasoning.	1.1 Communicate successfully with diverse audiences in speech and writing. 8.1 Respect the range of ethical perspectives. 8.3 Recognize the consequences and impacts of their actions on others. 9.1 Understand the importance of diverse experiences, cultures, and identities. 9.3 Apply multiple perspectives to address local, regional, global, and cultural issues.

Course Objectives	Rock Integrated Studies Program Outcomes	University-Wide Learning Outcomes
Outcome 5: To develop the ability to present an idea in an oral setting: Obj. 1. Students will demonstrate ability to use oral language style appropriate to the audience and setting. (Sp) Obj. 2. Students will demonstrate ability to use vocal variety in rate pitch and intensity to heighten and maintain audience interest. (Sp) Obj. 3. Students will demonstrate ability to use pronunciation, grammar and articulation appropriate to the audience and the occasion. (Sp) Obj. 4. Students will demonstrate ability to use physical behaviors that support the message. (Sp) Obj. 5. Students will demonstrate ability to adapt the message to audience responses during the speech. (Sp) Obj. 6. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a variety of visual media and principles for their incorporation as aids to enhance audience responses. (Ex)	2.5 Develop and express ideas orally. 3.1 Demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competence. 3.2 Engage in ethical reasoning.	1.0 Act as effective communicators. 1.1 Communicate successfully with diverse audiences in speech and writing.
Outcome 6: To develop the ability to listen empathically and critically to evaluate the ideas, support and style of other speakers: Obj. 1. Students will be able to listen attentively. Obj. 2. Students will be able to listen with an open mind. Obj. 3. Students will be able to distinguish facts from opinions. Obj. 4. Students will be able to distinguish main points from supporting details.	2.1 Apply the processes of inquiry and analysis. 2.2 Think critically. 2.7 Apply information literacy skills. 3.2 Engage in ethical reasoning.	1.0 Act as effective communicators. 1.1 Communicate successfully with diverse audiences in speech and writing. 1.2 Demonstrate active listening skills.
Outcome 7: To develop knowledge of and the ability to adhere to ethical standards of civil discourse: Obj.1. Students will be able to speak with clear responsible goals that give listeners choices. Obj.2. Students will be able to use sound evidence and reasoning and avoid false claims and manipulation of emotion. Obj. 3. Students will demonstrate sensitivity to and acceptance of differences including awareness of language, indicating bias of gender, age, ability, ethnic, religious or sexual/affection orientation. Obj. 4. Students will avoid plagiarism and cite sources appropriately.	2.5 Develop and express ideas orally. 3.0 Practice personal and social responsibility. 3.1 Demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competence. 3.2 Engage in ethical reasoning. 3.3 Utilize foundations and skills for lifelong learning. 3.5 Practice civic knowledge and engagement – local and global. 4.0 Engage in integrative and applied learning.	1.0 Act as effective communicators. 1.1 Communicate successfully with diverse audiences in speech and writing. 2.1 Produce well-supported reasons and evidence. 2.2 Reach well-argued conclusions and decisions. 8.0 Act ethically