

COMM 380: Practicum in Communication Studies

Course Basics:

Course Name: Communication 380: Practicum in Communication Studies

Comm 380 | CRN: 24948 | Spring 2026

Meet Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm | Building: Letterman Building | Room: Forensics Room

Instructor Information:

Name: Will Reid

Department: Communication Studies

Location: Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Email: william.reid@bsu.edu

Office Phone: 765 285 1997

Office Hours: Wed 11:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Important Dates:

August 18, Monday University classes for Fall Semester begin.

September 1, Monday Labor Day – no classes

October 6 & 7, Monday-Tuesday Fall Break—no classes

November 26 - 30 Thanksgiving recess – no classes

December 1, Monday Classes resume.

December 6, Saturday Final examination day for Saturday classes

December 8, Monday Last meeting day for regular classes

December 9 - 12, Tuesday-Friday Final Examination Period

December 12, Friday Fall Semester ends.

December 13, Saturday December Commencement

December 13, 2025 - January 4, 2026 Semester break

Catalog Description:

Practical experience in intercollegiate debate, individual events, applied communication research, or alternate communication studies projects. Prerequisite: permission of the department chairperson.

Course Description:

This section of Communication 380 is serviced by competition on the intercollegiate debate team at Ball State University. This course explores the theories, principles, and practices of argumentation and debate, with an emphasis on critical thinking, sound reasoning, refutation, and effective communication in competitive settings. Students will develop skills in constructing, analyzing, and responding to arguments.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Objectives / NACE Workplace Competencies

Course Outcomes:	NACE Workplace Competencies:	Assignments:
Identify and use the Toulmin Model of Argumentation	Communication	Participation
Create and present sound arguments in an ethical and credible way.	Critical Thinking	Participation
Effectively research issues using library resources and digital technology.	Technology	Participation
Understand valid and invalid forms of reasoning.	Critical Thinking	Participation
Develop team-works skills	Teamwork	Participation
More efficiently use critical thinking.	Critical Thinking	Participation
Better understand current issues and controversies.	Critical Thinking	Participation
Identify status quo problems and provide solutions	Communication	Participation
To be a reasonable consumer of argument through decision making from arguments	Communication	Participation

Course Modality/Structure:

This course will meet in-person exclusively. There is not an option for asynchronous teaching in this section.

Course Rationale:

This course is designed to enhance the student's ability to use critical thinking skills, create and identify arguments, as well as how to present and refute arguments. Helen M. Wise, Past President, National Education Association stated, "No college freshman can project twenty-five years to decide what [they] need to learn - subject matter is easily forgotten and in today's world, the knowledge explosion makes constant learning an inevitability. But all adults today need to be able to communicate with clarity, to articulate ideas, to reason, to separate key facts from the barrage of ideas we all are

exposed to every day. No single activity can prepare one better than debating- the ability to think on one's feet, to summarize ideas are all processes which forensic activities develop and develop well."

Course Texts [Both Provided]:

1. Winning Debates: A Guide to Debating in the Style of the World Universities Debating Championships – Steven L. Johnson
2. BSU Debate Manual

Course & Instructor Evaluation:

Students will have an opportunity to participate in formal assessment of this course and the instructor's teaching performance at the end of the semester through the university's online evaluation process at the end of the semester through the university's online evaluation process.

Grades

Broad Assignment Descriptions:

- **Debate Rounds** - Students will participate in scheduled in-class and tournament rounds, delivering speeches according to British Parliamentary format. Emphasis will be placed on argument construction, engagement with clash, and adherence to time limits and role expectations.
- **Office Hours** - Students are expected to attend office hours as needed to seek feedback on speeches, clarify concepts, and discuss strategies for improvement. These sessions are designed to support personalized skill development and strengthen overall performance in debate.
- **Participation** – Students are expected to actively engage as members of the debate team by attending scheduled practices, preparing cases, writing briefs, contributing to team discussions, and participating in competitive rounds. This includes collaborating with peers, applying debate theory and strategy, and demonstrating consistent growth in speaking, research, and critical thinking skills throughout the semester.
- **Briefs** - Students will research assigned motions and produce structured debate briefs that include potential arguments, examples, and strategic considerations. Briefs should reflect clarity, depth, and accurate use of debate frameworks to support competitive preparation.

Grading Scale:

Grade	Points
A	1000 – 900
B	899 – 800
C	799 – 700
D	699 - 600
F	599 – and lower

Assignments	Point Value
Debate Rounds	250
Office Hours	250
Participation	250
Briefs	250
Total Points:	1000

Grades:

If you have any general questions or concerns about your grade, feel free to setup a meeting time to review the assignment and discuss opportunities for improvement. However, if you are looking to change a grade, I have more specific policies:

- For any grade grievances, the **“24/7” policy** is in effect. Once grades are returned, there is a **24 hour waiting period** before they will be discussed with the student. Grade issues that are not addressed within **one week** will be closed for discussion.
- Grievances must be presented in written form with an introduction, body, conclusion, and concrete supporting evidence of your claim.
- Final grades at the end of the semester are **final**. Grades will **NOT** be rounded, as each point value correlates to a percentage. Thus, rounding grades is non-negotiable. *(For example, if you have 897/1000 points, your grade will be an 89.7%)*

Final Grade Appeal:

Students who feel they received a final grade that does not reflect their performance have the option to file an appeal. A grade appeal includes any appeal of a final grade (pass-fail or letter grade) for a: course, field experience, clinical, student teaching, practicum, internship or externship. Appeals of an involuntary removal from a course in the middle of a term would be subject to departmental or program procedures, not the grade appeal process, unless a failing grade was issued. Students considering an appeal of a final grade are encouraged to submit a formal written grade appeal form to the Office of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. Please review Ball State University’s policy on grade appeals before submitting a request form.

<https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/vice-provost/student-services/grade-appeals>

University Policies & Statements

University Statement:

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services](#) office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

University Statement:

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review [Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on [Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

Attendance Policy:

In order for this class to be successful, your attendance and participation is imperative. We will conduct this class as a seminar, performing the roles of teachers and learners simultaneously. This is possible only if everyone prepares in advance for class by giving meaningful attention to the assigned content/readings and assumes a constructive role by asking questions, thoughtfully attending to the ideas of others, and sharing your own insights. Your participation is important not only to your own intellectual development, but also to the development of others in the class who might benefit from your input. Engagement points cannot be made up, unless you have a documented reason for missing those course assignments. To be successful in this course, you must engage with the course material each week. I will record attendance and report student attendance rates in accordance with BSU policy. Excused absences only will be granted for documented officially sanctioned University activities (e.g., debate or forensics tournaments, student government meetings, athletic events), documented professional academic reasons (e.g., conference attendance), documented recognized religious holidays, or emergency situations (e.g., a serious medical condition, a car accident, death of a loved one). If you have an excused absence planned on a date that an assignment is due, you are expected to submit your assignments prior to your absence. All other absences will be considered unexcused absences. Attendance makes up a tenth of your overall grade in this course, I will allot you **4 unexcused absences**. Once these absences have been utilized, I will mark you absent and Canvas will automatically deduct points.

Title IX:

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu.

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant chooses to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

University Grade Appeal Policy:

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process](#).

Ball State First Day:

Students' course materials are available via Canvas and through the [Ball State First Day](#) partnership with Barnes & Noble. This program ensures students obtain all their course materials the first day of classes. Students are automatically enrolled in the program and charged the flat course material fee on their BSU eBill. Students can opt out of the program by the deadline listed on the "Course Materials" page in Canvas. Please review the program details to make the most informed decision regarding your course materials and participation in this program: [Ball State First Day](#)

Student Academic Ethics Policy:

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the

VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI Statement:

In this course, I value your authentic voice and the development of your speaking skills. Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly may be used to support your learning—but with clear limits.

Permitted Uses:

- Brainstorming content ideas
- Generating outlines or structure suggestions
- Practicing delivery with AI speech coaches (e.g., Microsoft Presenter Coach, Ovation VR)
- Clarifying grammar or revising drafts of your outline

Prohibited Uses:

- Submitting speeches, outlines, peer evaluations, or assignments written entirely or mostly by AI.

- Using AI to generate citations, personal stories, or persuasive appeals you present as your own
- Uploading course materials or other students' work to public AI tools

All work you submit should reflect your original thinking, your voice, and your preparation as a speaker. If you use an AI tool during the planning process, you must note this in your speech outline (e.g., "Used ChatGPT to brainstorm topic ideas"). Improper or undisclosed use of AI tools will be treated as a potential academic integrity violation. If you're unsure whether a use of AI is appropriate, just ask!

Student Support Services

The Speaking Center:

The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message. The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

The Learning Center:

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center. Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: BallStateLC.

The Writing Center:

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-

person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub:

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center:

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide. At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found here

Canvas and Student Privacy

Canvas Accessibility:

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting [the Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#).

FERPA and Privacy:

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file.

You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

Video Conferencing Recording:

No electronic recording or broadcast of any portion of this class is permitted without permission; posting audio or video recordings of any portion of this class online is not permitted without permission.

Plagiarism Detection:

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

Course Expectations and Policies

Course Participation Expectations:

This course is designed with weekly activities, discussion, and other forms of regular collaboration and communication.

- It is recommended that you log into your Canvas course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.
- Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

Feedback Policy:

I will try to return e-mails from your official BSU e-mail address within 24 hours during the business week and within 48 hours on the weekend. If you haven't heard from me within that timeframe, please feel free to nicely follow up. Sometimes e-mails become buried. If discussion boards are assigned in this class, I will read every discussion post, but I won't personally comment on all posts. I will make every effort to grade assignments within 5 business days of submission. End of semester assignments may take longer. Please feel free to e-mail me before that time if you have any questions or concerns about your performance in the course.

Assignment Submission Policy:

All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description. Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module.

Grading Policy:

It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of

your learning experience. In the absence of mistakes, fraud, bad faith or incompetence, I will be the key decision-maker on the assignment of grades.

Engagement Expectations:

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- Respect different perspectives. Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- Challenge ideas, not people. Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- Listen to understand. Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- Assume good intentions. Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- Keep it private. What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
- Be respectful. Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others.
- Keep feedback constructive.

Course Schedule: The course schedule is tentative and, based on our progress, may be revised at my discretion. You will be informed of any pertinent scheduling changes

Semester Schedule

Week #, Day #	Date	Plan	Assignment Submission Times
W1,D1	Jan. 6	Practice	
W1,D2	Jan. 8	Practice	
W2,D1	Jan. 13	Practice	
W2,D2	Jan. 15	Practice	
	Jan. 16 - 17	YODL 3	
W3,D1	Jan. 20	Practice	
W3,D2	Jan. 22	Practice	
W4,D1	Jan. 27	Practice	
W4,D2	Jan. 29	Practice	
	Jan 31- Feb1	Vanderbilt IV	
W5,D1	Feb. 3	No Practice	
W5,D2	Feb. 5	Practice	
W6,D1	Feb. 10	Practice	
W6,D2	Feb. 12	Practice	
W7,D1	Feb. 17	Practice	
W7,D2	Feb. 19	Practice	
	Feb. 21 - 22	YODL 4	
	Feb. 23	Indiana State	

W8,D1	Feb. 24	No Practice	
W8,D2	Feb. 26	Practice	
W9	Mar. 1-8	Spring Break	
W10,D1	Mar. 10	Practice	
W10,D2	Mar. 12	Practice	
W11,D1	Mar. 17	Practice	
W11,D2	Mar. 19	Practice	
W12,D1	Mar. 24	Practice	
W12,D2	Mar. 26	No Practice	
	Mar. 27-29	YODL Nats	
W13,D1	Mar. 31	No Practice	
W13,D2	Apr. 2	Practice	
W14,D1	Apr. 7	Practice	
W14,D2	Apr. 9	Practice	
W15,D1	Apr. 14	Practice	
W15,D2	Apr. 16	Practice	
W16,D1	Apr. 21	Practice	
W16,D2	Apr. 23	Practice	
W17	<i>Apr. 28-May 1</i>	<i>Finals Week</i>	