

# Northwestern University

National High School Institute



## Debate

Summer Information Packet



National High School Institute  
617 Noyes Street  
Evanston, IL 60208-4165

Phone (847) 491-3026  
nhsi.northwestern.edu  
nhsi@northwestern.edu



NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

2026 Debate Institute  
Cherubs National High School Institute  
Northwestern University

Dear Incoming NHSI Class of 2026,

Congratulations and welcome to the Cherubs! We are thrilled that you have accepted our offer to join the Northwestern Debate Online Institute Class of 2026. Your application was selected with great care, and we are overjoyed to welcome you into this year's program; an experience that we hope will live well beyond your time with us this summer. Although it cannot mirror the on-campus experience, we plan to make it just as meaningful and special.

The National High School Institute summer program (CHERUBS) dates back to 1931, and boasts an alumni network well into the thousands (over 30,000 by last count). This truly is a program built on the transformative experience of students, in multiple disciplines, from all corners of the globe, coming together to learn new skills and create bonds that will last a lifetime. We are so happy that you will be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime summer!

In this packet you will find many answers to questions you may have right now. Please read everything very carefully and do not hesitate to contact our office directly if you have any additional questions/concerns as they arise. We are here to help, and we look forward to getting to know you.

I look forward to your participation this summer. This continues to be a unique and challenging time, and we are committed to helping you have an impactful, educational, and engaging summer.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jennifer Avery'.

Jennifer Avery  
NHSI Director  
Northwestern University

# Table of Contents

<b>Contact Information</b> .....	<b>2</b>
NHSI Main Office.....	2
<b>Debate Leadership</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Institute Dates</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Institute Check-In &amp; Orientation</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Daily Arrival</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Absences During Scheduled Programming</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Instructors</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Clothing Requirements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Identification</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Discord</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>International Students: English Language Proficiency</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Cell Phones</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Emergency</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Conclusion Of The Institute</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Technology Requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Additional Supplies</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Daily Schedule</b> .....	<b>7</b>



# 2026 Northwestern Debate Institute Student Handbook

*Parents/guardians and students: please review this document carefully. Parents/guardians and students are responsible for reading and understanding all of the information in this document.*



## Contact Information

### NHSI Main Office

**Phone:** (847) 491-3026

**Email:** [nhsi@northwestern.edu](mailto:nhsi@northwestern.edu)

**Regular Office Hours:** Monday – Friday,  
9 am – 5pm, CST (Central Standard Time)

### NHSI Director

Jennifer Avery

### NHSI Program Assistants

Corrine Glanville

Samantha Kingzette

## Debate Leadership

### Debate Institute Director

Daniel J. Fitzmier

### Associate Institute Director

Squid Monteith

### Assistant Institute Director for Curriculum

Nikola (Nik) Stamenković Diez

## Institute Dates

The 2026 Northwestern Debate Institute is **fully virtual**, and students are required to attend synchronous sessions throughout the program. More detailed schedule information is found later in this handbook, but the dates are as follows:

**4-week Program:** Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>

**6-week Program:** Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>

**Note:** There will be no synchronous programming on July 4<sup>th</sup>

## Institute Check-In & Orientation

The 2026 Institute will be fully virtual. All remote programming takes place in Central Time, and students are expected to attend synchronously. The first day of the NHSI Debate Institute is June 28<sup>th</sup> for all students, regardless of the length of program they are enrolled in. This day serves as an orientation day, ensuring students are familiar with the policies of the program and have all their technology in working order.

Orientation will begin at 9:00 AM Central Time. Curriculum begins on Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

If unforeseen circumstances arise and you decide at the last minute not to attend the Institute or you are unable to login at the top of the first day, please be sure to email the NHSI Office at [nhsi@northwestern.edu](mailto:nhsi@northwestern.edu) to explain the situation.



## Daily Arrival

Please be on time for your morning lab every day. Morning labs begin promptly at 9:00 AM Central Time. If you cannot attend the Institute on any given day due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, please be sure to notify your lab instructor.

**If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to attend labs on a given day, please follow the instructions listed below under "Absences During Scheduled Programming."**

## Absences During Scheduled Programming

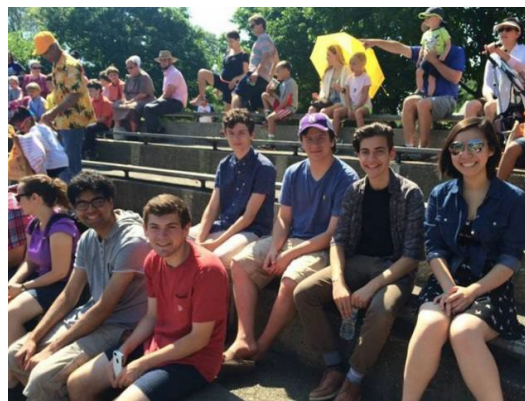
**Absences from classes are strongly discouraged.** If you know you will need to miss a day of curriculum for any reason, please get in contact with our office. Absences during the program are only allowed with prior written parental permission and approval from the Debate Institute Staff.

At least **48 hours before** a student will miss class, the student's parent/guardian must email the NHSI Office ([nhsi@northwestern.edu](mailto:nhsi@northwestern.edu)) giving permission for their student to miss programming.

### Parent/guardian emails should include:

- Students' Name and Division (Debate)
- Date & Time the student will be absent, and when they will be able to resume programming.
- Context for the absence

*The Division Director and the lab coach must approve of all student absences.*



## Instructors

NHSI faculty and staff have been selected with great care. They are friendly, energetic, experienced, and responsible. All are disciplined, enthusiastic teachers, and each is dedicated to the success of your summer, as well as the success of your 2026-2027 debate season.

## Clothing Requirements

Although dress is casual, please attend your online classes and debates in appropriate clothing. Please do not wear pajamas or other inappropriate attire. Formal wear is not required for debate rounds.

## Identification

Each student receives a NetID through the University, allows them to access all Northwestern platforms, including CAESAR for billing and Zoom for classes. Students also use their NetID to access the online University library resources.

## Discord

Discord is a free communication app that serves as the virtual “hub” for the Institute. Course materials, Zoom links, updates, and other resources will be stored in the Institute’s private Discord server for students to access. Discord also serves as a platform for students to speak with each other and with instructors. Students will be invited to join the NDI Discord in June.

## International Students: English Language Proficiency

All NHSI programs require proficiency in the English Language. Please expect all programming, instruction, and assigned reading to be conducted in English, including mock tournaments and round robins.



## Cell Phones

You are required to give a reliable phone number to the NHSI Institute as a safety precaution while you are enrolled at the Institute, so that we may reach you if you are absent from scheduled programming. When you check in you will be asked for this number in case Institute staff need to reach you during the program. Please be aware that cell phones should only be used during non-academic times. Use of cell phones is discouraged in all virtual classrooms during all curricular activity.



## Emergency

In the event of an **EMERGENCY**, please call the NHSI central office (847) 491-3026. The office is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, Central Time. If the emergency occurs after hours, please leave a message for us to respond to first thing in the morning.

## Conclusion Of The Institute

There is a mock debate tournament during the final days of the fourth week that all students participate in. The final lecture and closing ceremonies will be held on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>.

Students continuing with weeks 5 & 6 can expect programming to resume Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. The final two weeks of the Institute will be tailored to the cohort's needs. There will be a small round robin during the final days of the 6-week program, with programming finishing on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>.



# Technology Requirements

To aid our students in online learning, the NHSI has established certain minimum technology requirements for participation in the online portions of the Debate Institute. These requirements are in place to ensure that everyone can have a smooth and effective institute experience, and to minimize the amount of time during the institute devoted to technological troubleshooting. *Importantly, your registration for the Institute requires your agreement to procure the necessary technology to meet the minimum standards. The NHSI cannot provide tech nor offer tuition refunds in the event that the state of a student's technology makes their participation in the Institute infeasible. Please reach out to the NHSI immediately via email at [nhsi@northwestern.edu](mailto:nhsi@northwestern.edu) if you have any questions or concerns regarding these technology standards.*

## Minimum technology requirements include:

- High speed/broadband internet access
- A laptop computer with a webcam and microphone (ideally built-in, but external webcams and microphones will also suffice). *Chromebooks and Tablets such as iPads are not sufficient, as they do not enable the use of the full-featured versions of Microsoft Office products. Phones are also insufficient, as they lack the feature set that we will need for the institute.*
- Microsoft Word, necessary for viewing and editing debate files (we can assist with this as long as the student has a laptop that they can download the software onto)
- A quiet place at home from which to deliver practice debate speeches

## Suggested\* additional technology includes:

- Ethernet connectivity to a high-speed internet router, usually requiring an ethernet-to-USB adapter for the student's computer
- A backup method of recording speeches, such as the Voice Memos app for iPhone, or Audacity for the PC
- Over-the-ear headset. Headphones such as AirPods are sub-optimal for debate, even an inexpensive headset is a large upgrade
- A TableTote, laptop stand, or other telescoping podium on which to deliver speeches
- An external monitor, to enable simultaneously viewing multiple programs during debates
- Verbatim software, which you will be asked to do at the beginning of camp if you don't already have it. Verbatim is a program that makes using Microsoft Word more debate friendly. Download here: <https://paperlessdebate.com/verbatim/>
- Extension cord
- Power strip
- USB/flash drive

*\*Items in the "suggested" list optimize the online institute experience but are not required for participation.*

# Additional Supplies

The technology Requirements for the online Institute are mandatory. All other supplies are the choice of the student, but we highly recommend you have the following:

- Flow paper
- Pens
- A timer

# Daily Schedule

The following is an example of potential daily schedules from the different phases of the institute. The schedule is designed to be flexible, allowing us to modify the amount of daily instruction to avoid student and staff burnout, which is a particular concern in a distance learning environment. **All times listed are in Central Time, and all students are expected to conform to Central Time to participate in the institute, regardless of their location.** *This schedule is subject to change.*

## **Week 1**

9:00-10:45 AM – Topic lecture #1, live via Zoom, with time for questions & answers

11:00 AM-12:00 PM – Topic lecture #2, same format

1:30-2:30 PM – Break-out groups, each instructor delivers setup instructions for the afternoon’s activity

2:30-3:30 PM – Students prepare speeches, instructors are available to answer questions

3:30-5:00 PM – Students deliver practice speeches, instructors give feedback

5:00-5:30 PM – Lab groups discuss argument research assignments and divide labor

Evening – Students work on argument research independently, with instructors available online to answer questions from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

## **Weeks 2 & 3**

9:00 AM-12:00 PM – practice debates via Zoom

1:30-2:30 PM – students prepare and deliver reworked final speeches from practice debates and receive instructor feedback

2:30-4:00 PM – students work independently or in small groups on argument research, with instructors available online to answer questions

4:00-5:00 PM – lab groups meet via Zoom to discuss progress on research assignments and go over work-in-progress files together

Evening – students watch a pre-recorded lecture video, prepare a speech, and record themselves giving that speech. Instructors are available online to answer questions, and review speech recordings as they come in, providing written feedback

## **Week 4**

The last few days of 4-week institute will be devoted to an institute-wide tournament. The days before the tournament will be devoted to finalizing the institute’s arguments and evidence, as well as tournament preparation.

## **Weeks 5 & 6**

Students staying on for the final two weeks will resume instruction in a similar format to the first two weeks. 6-week students receive advanced curriculum in Policy Debate, one on one coaching, participate in round robins, and more.

**It is important to note that this daily schedule is effective for Monday-Friday. After the first weekend, students should expect to have Institute work on Saturdays during the afternoon session. Sundays will be a day off.**