

CROSS EXAMINATION-STYLE DEBATE

The major group project in BIOL 411 (Senior Capstone) will be a series of in-class debates on topics to be decided by the class and instructor. Papers summarizing the two sides of the issue should be written independently. Research material can be shared as outline below. Teams will prepare to debate either side of the issue; the Affirmative and Negative teams will be determined by a coin toss one week prior to each debate.

At the beginning of the **debate each individual team member** will turn in:

1. A two-page summary of their teams' Affirmative Case.
2. A two-page summary of the major points of their teams Negative Case. This requires that the team anticipates possible Affirmative Cases to be presented by the opposition. However, some arguments are general and could be applied against any case.
3. A summary of one page or less. You may give your opinion in this section if you choose.
4. The full bibliographic source of all evidence gathered for the debate. Evidence will be presented in two sections:
 - a. Evidence that the team member uncovered for use in the debate.
 - b. Evidence uncovered by another team member that was used by you in preparation for the debate.

The evidence must display full bibliographic source citation, including the following elements: author's name, complete source information, complete date, and page numbers used for the debate preparation. Citations of online publications or from online data bases also require the publication medium (online), the Internet URL, or the name of the computer service, and the date of access.

PURPOSE OF THE DEBATE

The purpose of scholastic debate is to train the student to analyze a problem, conduct thorough and relevant research, and utilize principles of argumentation and advocacy in orally presenting the most effective case for or against a given proposition. Debate provides invaluable training in critical thinking, quick responses, defending worthy ideas and attacking invalid ideas. It teaches the student to tolerate other points of view. Debate exists only in democratic societies, and no democratic society can exist without debate.

THE PROPOSITIONS

Topics will be stated in the form of a proposition. The proposition is always stated as a change from the status quo.

Examples of propositions debated previously in this class:

- Resolved that genetically modified foods shall be unrestricted in production but labeled in sales

- Resolved that proof of adult immunizations shall be required of all health care workers, teachers, and food handlers in the US
- Resolved that fracking for oil production will be banned
- Resolved that individuals have the right to seek personal genetic information via direct-to-consumer genetic testing
- Resolved that prescription drugs should not be advertised directly to consumers

FORMAT AND TIME LIMITATIONS

Each team should be prepared to debate either the Affirmative or Negative case. Generally, a team consists of two debaters. For a two-member team, each member of a team shall deliver a constructive speech, a rebuttal speech, and conduct one cross examination. For three-member teams, each member of a team will deliver two of the three sections of the debate. In rebuttal, teams may present speakers in reverse order if desired.

Continuous speaking time and order of speeches shall be as follows:

Constructive:

Affirmative, 5 minutes

Cross-Examination by **Negative**, 2½ minutes

Negative, 5 minutes

Cross-Examination by **Affirmative**, 2½ minutes

Affirmative, 5 minutes

Cross-Examination by **Negative**, 2½ minutes

Negative, 5 minutes

Cross-Examination by **Affirmative**, 2½ minutes

Rebuttal:

Negative, 3 minutes

Affirmative, 3 minutes

Negative, 3 minutes

Affirmative, 3 minutes

A team shall take no more than 4 minutes total elapsed preparation time during a round of debate. Overtime constructive speeches or cross examination will be subtracted from the speaker's rebuttal time.

CONSTRUCTIVE ARGUEMENTS

The 1st Affirmative is responsible for several key points in the debate. As the first speaker they must define the resolution. (Whatever they fail to define the 1st Opposition is then free to define.) The 1st Affirmative is also responsible for presenting the plan. The plan is the way that the Affirmative will carry out the resolution. After this the 1st Affirmative uses the remainder of the time to outline the Affirmative case.

The 1st Negative, 2nd Affirmative, and 2nd Negative must accomplish two important things in their speeches. The first is the refutation of their opponents' case and the second is the building of their own case. It is important to note that if either team fails to either refute a point given by their opponents or refute a claim on their own case given by their opponents is considered a dropped contention and can result in the loss of the debate.

CROSS-EXAMINATION PERIOD

Each debater shall question the opponent that just spoke and only that opponent may respond. The questioner should control the use of time during the period. The questioner may only ask questions and may not comment on the answers or make any statement of his/her own views. Rudeness, sarcasm, and condescension shall not be tolerated during the debate. The purpose of the questioning period is to:

- (1) Ask for information to gain clarification and understanding.
- (2) Set up strategies to use in developing further argumentation.
- (3) Discover fallacies or inconsistencies in opponent's argumentation.

REBUTTALS

Rebuttals are the shortest speeches given in the debate but are normally the place where debates are won or lost. Each speaker is expected to sum up the important issues of the debate into what are called voters. Each voter is a point of information that a team feels best explains why they have won the debate. During a Rebuttal, the speaker is not allowed to bring up new points of information and if they do so it will not be included in the judges' decision.

DELIVERY

Debaters should remember that debate is a form of public speaking. Speech should be audible to the audience and at a speed that does not interfere with effective communication.

EVIDENCE

Quotes. Whenever a debater quotes at any length the words of another, the fact the evidence is quoted material and the source of the quote must be plainly stated.

Availability of Materials. Speakers may use notes if they wish. If charts, maps, books, or other materials are used by any debater, they shall be left before the audience and shall be available for use by the opposing debaters in refutation. Debaters may use laptop computers.

This document was based on rules for Intercollegiate Debate posted by the University of Texas at <http://www.uil.utexas.edu/academics/rules/1001.html> and Public Debate posted on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_debate.