

Debate Information for Dr. Paul Oh's Mechanical Engineering/Robotics Class. Provided by the UNLV Debate Team.

Order of speeches, etc., and times in a debate:

- (1) Affirmative Constructive speech (aff debater #1)—2 ½ minutes
- (2) Cross Examination of Affirmative Constructive speaker (4 minutes)
- (3) Negative Constructive speech (neg debater #1)—2 ½ minutes
- (4) Cross Examination of Affirmative Constructive speaker (4 minutes)
- (5) Affirmative preparation time (2 minutes)
- (6) Affirmative Rebuttal speech (aff debater #2)—1 ½ minutes
- (7) Negative preparation time (2 minutes)
- (8) Negative Rebuttal speech (neg debater #2)—1 ½ minutes
- (9) Both teams shake hands, become friends again, audience applauds, judges render their decisions, and vote/decision is announced.

How to “judge” a debate over an ethical, moral, or value proposition:

- 1) There are two sides in a debate (affirmative and negative). Those two sides debate in their speeches. Each judge must render a decision based on the arguments presented in the speeches for one side, and one side only.
- 2) Take copious notes during the debate and try to write down all of the arguments made by each side. Try to line up arguments that directly refute one another, and note where arguments remain not contested. Debates are about the interaction between arguments, so the debaters must respond to the arguments made by the other side. To track this, you must take notes
- 3) Leave your opinions at the door... Suspend your own biases, personal preferences, and predilections.
 - a. You should only evaluate the debate based on the arguments made in the debate by the debaters. The only “facts” known in the debate are what the teams bring forth.
 - b. The best arguments should win, not necessarily the best “sounding” speaker; this is a debate, not poetry reading event.
- 4) If one team makes a argument, the “burden of rejoinder” mandates that the other team must answer that argument, or it is considered to be “true” for the purposes of the debate. Don't fill in for speakers. Judges should not “fill in” what they believe a speaker was going to say, should have said, or probably meant. ALL THEY SAID IS ALL THERE IS.
- 5) You should evaluate how well each side establishes their “value criterion” or “ethical frame” for each debate, and how well they craft arguments indicating that their arguments meet that value criterion or ethical frame.

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- a. For example, in a debate over the resolution, "Resolved: a human can love a robot" both sides would make arguments to set up their own definition of what it means "to love" something. The affirmative team would probably work to set the bar low for what it means "to love" by love is defined as feelings of fondness and attraction" The negative would likely set up a very different definition that set the bar much higher by defining love as something much more complicated and involved than the affirmative did
 - b. Each side also would then argue with examples or other data how it is possible (or not possible) for a human to meet that definition vis-à-vis a robot.
- 6) Arguments should be evaluated based on the strength and credibility of the evidence that is presented to support them. It is each team's duty to argue against the evidence presented by their opponents.
- 7) No new arguments in the rebuttals. The debaters should not make new arguments in the rebuttals. A new argument is defined as an argument with no foundation in the previous speech. New examples to support existing assertions are fine. Judges should simply ignore new rebuttal arguments.
- 8) Cross-Examination is a period of time where the debaters (and in this class, the audience) can ask the previous speaker questions.
- a. The purpose of cross-examination is to allow people to asking questions that will clarify the speakers positions and allow the other team to make stronger arguments.
 - b. You do not need to take notes on cross examination. Typically, this is not a time for debaters to be making arguments, instead, it is to clarify their opponents' position's. Any important issues that emerge from cross-examination must be brought up in a speech, or they are not to be considered in a judge's decision.

For additional information, please email jacob.thompson@unlv.edu

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