

PHILOSOPHY 1100 - INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Preparing for the Debate

1. Each debate will involve four speakers, two on the affirmative side, and two on the negative side.
2. The two speakers on the affirmative side in the debate, and, similarly, the two speakers on the negative side, need to get together with one another **at least twice** to discuss their approach to the debate.
3. The first meeting should take place **at least one week in advance of the debate**.
4. At that meeting, they need to decide who will be the first speaker and who will be the second speaker on the side in question.
5. They also need to discuss, in a general way, what arguments they should offer, what points are likely to be made by the other side, and how those points might best be answered.
6. Each person should then prepare his or her contribution, **and they should then meet a second time to discuss and revise those contributions**.

The Importance of Being on Time for the Debate

1. Debates will begin at the start of the class, to allow as much time for debate and discussion as possible.
2. The four students who are taking part in the debate therefore need to be present and ready to start before the beginning of class. Significant lateness will result in a partial loss of credit for the debate, the amount depending on the extent of the lateness.
3. If some emergency is going to prevent your making it to the session in which you are scheduled to take part, you must inform the teaching assistant for your recitation as soon as possible. Any unexcused failure to be present will result in a loss of all credit for the debate.

Debate Format and Instructions

The debate will be structured as follows:

1. The first persons to speak will be **the first speaker for the affirmative side**.
2. That person will be allowed **up to seven minutes** to present his or her case.
3. This, and all other times limits, will be **strictly enforced**.
4. The **main duty** of the first speaker for the affirmative side is to offer good reasons for thinking that the thesis under consideration is **true**. But, if there is sufficient time, he or she may also anticipate possible objections to the thesis being defended, and indicate why those objections are unsound.
5. When the first speaker for the affirmative side is finished, the negative side has **two minutes** to ask him or her questions about his or her opening statement.
6. The next speaker will be **the first speaker for the negative side**.

7. That person will be allowed **up to seven minutes** to present his or her case.
8. The **main duty** of the first speaker for the negative side is to offer good reasons for thinking that the thesis under consideration is **not true**. But, if there is sufficient time, he or she may also anticipate possible objections to the criticisms that he or she is advancing, and indicate why those objections are unsound.
9. The first speaker for the negative side should **not** attempt to answer the arguments advanced by the first speaker for the affirmative side. Doing that is the duty of the **second** speaker for the negative side.
10. When the first speaker for the negative side is finished, the affirmative side has **two minutes** to ask him or her questions about his or her opening statement.
11. The third person to speak is the **second speaker for the negative side**.
12. That person will be allowed **up to four minutes** to present his or her case.
13. The **main duty** of the second speaker for the negative side is to attempt to **rebut the positive case in support of the thesis that was offered by the first speaker** for the affirmative side. If time is left after this is done, the second speaker for the negative side may go on to offer **additional reasons** for thinking that the thesis is false. But the latter is not necessary.
14. The final person to speak is the **second speaker for the affirmative side**.
15. That person will be allowed **up to four minutes** to present his or her case.
16. The **main duty** of the second speaker for the affirmative side is to attempt to **rebut the objections to the thesis that have been advanced by the first speaker for the negative side**. If time is left after this is done, the second affirmative speaker may also go on to address points raised by the second speaker for the negative side. But the latter is not necessary.
17. During the remaining half of the class, all of the students in the class **can either address questions** to either the affirmative side or the negative side, **or advance objections to claims and arguments** that were advanced either by one of the speakers, or, subsequently, by other students in the class.

The reason for having the second speaker for the negative side speak before the second speaker for the affirmative side is to avoid the situation where one has to respond immediately to what the relevant speaker on the other side has said. With the above order, the second speaker for the negative side can think about the arguments advanced by the first speaker for the affirmative side while the first speaker for the negative side is advancing his or her case. Similarly, the second affirmative speaker can think about the arguments advanced by the first speaker for the negative side while the second speaker for the negative side is presenting his or her responses to the first speaker for the affirmative side.

Evaluation

1. Although the two speakers on a given side in a debate will have gotten together prior to the debate in order both to decide upon the arguments to be offered, and to coordinate the two presentations, each speaker will be evaluated only on the basis of the material that he or she presents.
2. Your grade will be based upon your performance in the debate itself, and upon a written summary that you will be handing in of the arguments that you set out, and of the critical points that you made, in the debate. **This written summary should be 200-300 words in length, and must be handed in at the next recitation following the debate.**
3. Your summary should cover only the points that you yourself made in the debate - not those that were made by your debate partner.
4. Given the brevity of the summary, it need not be written in essay style: you can set out your arguments and objections in an abbreviated 'point form', as long as there is no loss of intelligibility.
5. Your grade will be based **only** upon **the quality of your arguments** in your debate presentation, and **the clarity and accuracy of the summary submitted**. So students who are less accustomed to performing in public should not fear that they will be at a disadvantage. **Only content matters.**
6. In presenting your case, it is not necessary to use all of the time available to you – that is, seven minutes if you are the first speaker for your side, and four minutes if you are the second speaker for your side. If you can set out your arguments more concisely, that's fine.
7. As indicated on the syllabus, the debate plus the summary will count for **8% of your overall grade in the course.**