

Class Description:

Debate is a form of public speaking which combines many useful skills, such as argumentation, precision of language, passionate speech, clarity, and succinct expression of ideas while also forcing students to speak spontaneously within a structured process. By engaging in debates, it is expected that students will better develop their public speaking skills and develop a different approach to preparing for speaking in highly-focused contexts.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. be able to deconstruct arguments for and against their own stance.
2. be able to engage in measured, logical debate with their peers in front of an audience.
3. be able to work within a group sharing responsibilities for arguing a single, shared stance.
4. be more comfortable speaking spontaneously and responding unprepared to others' ideas
5. be better equipped with a routine and skills for preparing for public speaking in English

Class Activities:

Discussion of how a formal debate is conducted; preparations for debates; frequent engagement in actual debates, including debates in front of audiences including invited guests; group work; possibly occasional writing assignments; research and debate preparation; and debate refereeing work within the class during others' debates.

Assessment:

- 20% - In-class participation
- 40% - Homework & Debates
- 20% - Midterm Debate (Exam)
- 20% - Final Debate (Exam)

Please note that grades will not necessarily be determined by who "wins" a given debate, but rather on performance. The winner of a debate will not necessarily get a higher grade than his or her opponent.

Textbook

We will not use a textbook for this course. Instead, occasional readings and exercises will be photocopied, and handouts will be occasionally prepared. The majority of handouts will be available on the class website (see below).

My contact information:

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Class Website: <http://gordsclass.com>

Course Plan:

This is an extremely tentative outline for the course. Expect some changes.

Week 1: Welcome & Preparations

Week 2: Your First Debate

Week 3: Teamwork & Preparations

Week 4: Argumentation & Logic: Tough Talk and Clear Thought

Week 5: The Emotional Appeal: Charm and Respect

Week 6: Dos and Don'ts and Big No-Nos

Week 7: Review 1: Putting It All Together

Week 8: Midterm Debate

Week 9: Tough Issues 1

Week 10: Tough Issues 2

Week 11: Tough Issues 3

Week 12: Tough Issues 4

Week 13: Tough Issues 5

Week 14: Tough Issues 6

Week 15: Take a Big Breath

Week 16: Final Debate