Honors 262: Argumentation and Debate

Instructor: Matt McGarrity
Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-3:20 in MGH 271
Email: mcgarrit@u.washington.edu
Office Hours: M 3:50-4:50 and W 11:50-12:50 in CMU 222

Course Website: https://faculty.washington.edu/mcgarrit/HAS262/HAS262.html

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This class focuses on written and oral argumentation. After covering some key concepts in argument theory, we will write and perform policy speeches, before ending with team policy debates. Assignments will include: quizzes, short written assignments, papers analyzing public debates, policy speeches, and team policy debates. Though the assignments focus on public policies, the argumentative skills developed in class are transferable to almost any professional realm (law, business, academics, and even science). Students should know that this class will include public speeches and presentations.

In general, students should be able to identify and describe key elements in written and oral arguments. More specifically, in debates, speakers should be able to:

- identify and respond to the most pressing issues in a debate in a clear and effective manner.
- develop clear and well reasoned arguments supported with solid evidence.
- summarize the key issues in a debate in a way that strengthens the overall argument.
- arrange and deliver cases in a clear and logical manner.

ASSIGNMENTS

This is a short summary of the assignments for the class. I will distribute much fuller assignment descriptions in class.

Policy Speech: In this speech, you must make an affirmative or negative case argument on the policy topic of your choosing. Since these speeches are modeled on debate constructives, the same time and content limitations apply. I will happily award extra credit if you present (and record) this speech again in a public venue. The speech is 6-7 minutes.

Refutation Paper: In this paper, you must identify an argument circulating in the public forum (newspaper editorials are a good place to look) and devise a refutation. These papers will vary based on the length, complexity, and format of the original argument. I will happily award extra credit if you get this refutation published (through an editor—no credit for self-publishing on your blog).

Debate Analysis: The final paper draws on all three sections of the class. In it, you will need to analyze and evaluate a debate that interests you. More specifically, you will evaluate and judge the arguments of the competing parties and contribute your argument to the debate.

Team Debate: Each student will engage in one in-class debate on a matter of public policy. These are team debates. For each topic, two students will be assigned to the affirmative case and two students will be assigned to the negative case. We will discuss the debate format in class, but the basic model involves both the affirmative and negative sides making cases, cross-examining each other, and critiquing their opponents’ case. Students will be assessed based on their ability to construct sound and compelling arguments, critique their opponents fairly, decorously, and effectively, and demonstrate a strong knowledge of policy debate. Team members will receive the same grade for the debate.

Quizzes: Periodically, there will be quizzes on the lecture material and the textbook readings. These quizzes will generally be announced ahead of time, but they also may be pop quizzes. You should always come to class prepared to take a quiz on the lecture material and recent course readings. THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES. IF YOU MISS CLASS ON A DAY OF A QUIZ, YOU RECEIVE A 0 FOR THAT QUIZ. For this reason, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped from the calculation of your final grade. In sum, there will be five quizzes, but only your best four will factor towards your final grade. Do not email me ahead of time asking if there will be a quiz in class on a particular day.

Homeworks: There are a number of very short assignments that ask you to come to class prepared with materials. We will then use these materials in the class on the day they are assigned.

1. Potential Speech Topics (1/6): It is important that you select a good speech topic that will allow us to focus on policy debate tactics. In order to assist you on that path, you need to bring to class a short list of three potential speech topics. We will then workshop these topics.

2. Stating and analyzing your resolution (1/11): On the day that we discuss the stock issues, you will need to draft up your topic in the stock issues (also identifying the status quo and the burden of proof).
3. **Speech/Case Outline (1/20):** Use the assigned reading to design your speech. Bring to class your speech outline. We will discuss the outlines as well as use them for some delivery practice.

4. **Speech Practice Presentations (1/25):** Prior to delivering your speech for a grade, you will deliver a full run through to get some practice and feedback. These speeches are full run throughs. Each student will deliver their speech for a small audience a few times and receive some feedback from that audience. You should bring your outline and/or notecards with which to practice.

5. **Debate Flow (2/8):** Flowing speeches is an acquired skill, but essential to good dynamic debate. On this day, you will need to watch and flow the debate available on the website. Bring your flows to class so that we can discuss flowing as well as identifying clash points in a debate.

6. **Peer Refutation (2/17):** After having read and practiced a bit of refutation, you will need to watch one of your classmate’s speeches and develop a refutation. Bring the refutation to class, as you will be pairing up with this classmate to perform these refutations. The refutation partners will be assigned in class.

7. **Potential Debate Resolutions (2/22):** As with the speech topics, getting a resolution that will work is essential to focused debating. You will need to bring to class a list of three potential debate resolutions. Use the assigned reading for this day to help you shape your resolution.

8. **Debate Practice Presentations (3/1):** Much like the speech practice session, the debate practice session will provide you some time in class to refine your case and get some feedback. You and your partner will to come to class prepared to debate the resolution.

All homeworks will be graded on a √/- system. The distribution system is as follows:

- 8 completed homeworks = 20 points
- 7 completed homeworks = 17 points
- 6 completed homeworks = 14 points
- 5 completed homeworks = 11 points
- 4 completed homeworks = 8 points
- 3 completed homeworks = 5 points
- 2 completed homeworks = 2 points
- 1 completed homeworks = 1 points
- 0 completed homeworks = 0 points

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of the final grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Refutation Paper</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate Analysis Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Team Debate</td>
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**GRADING SYSTEM**

Grades will be assigned based on your final number of accumulated points. For a discussion of the grade ranges, please consult your student handbook or visit: http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html

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<tr>
<th>A Range (90-100%)</th>
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<th>C Range (70-79%)</th>
<th>D Range (62-69%)</th>
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<td>Below .6 is failing</td>
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**CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES**

**Classroom Conduct:**

Each class meeting is an opportunity to participate in lectures and discussions. By being present and on time, reading the assigned material, making study notes, and participating in discussions, you’ll increase your opportunities to learn the course material. Active
participation is critical to learning; passive learning is quickly forgotten. As trite as it sounds, the more you devote to this course the more you will benefit from this course.

I will start class on time and end it on time. I realize that you have many demands on your time, but you signed up for this class at this time and I now expect you to schedule around it. You may think that arriving late/leaving early is simply a personal issue; that you can get in or out of class without disturbing class. This is false. It disturbs me in my lecture and it draws the class’s attention to your movement. Do not arrive late and do not leave early (this includes packing up). I assume that when you enter the class, you are an intellectual and will act as such. This means that you will turn off your cell phone, abstain from browsing the internet, be awake, and avoid from chatting. **If you can’t do this, please don’t come to class.**

Good debaters understand the importance of decorum. This classroom must remain a tolerant space where we reason through opposing arguments. No doubt, you will hear many opinions this quarter that are not your own (this is essential to the design of the course), but you must engage those opposing views in a respectful manner. I will not tolerate oppressive comments in the classroom that make it difficult for any student to have fair and equal access to education.

**Late Assignments:** For purposes of equity and fairness for all students, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete all assignments. An assignment is on time when it is delivered to the teacher at the beginning of the class session on the day it is due. Papers that are turned in later will receive a 10% grade reduction for each day they are late. Since reading responses are credit/no credit, late responses will not be accepted.

**Special Needs:** To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V), 543-8925 (TTY), or uwdss@u.washington.edu. Please present me with your letter from DSS indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

**Grievance Policy:** If you have any concerns about the course or me, please see me about these concerns as soon as possible. If you wish to challenge a grade you received on an assignment, you should wait 24 hours after receiving the grade. Refer back to the assignment description in order to identify areas where you and the grader apparently differed. Then, make an appointment with me to discuss the grade. “I tried really hard” is not an argument for a grade change. I grade product, not effort. You have 2 weeks after receiving a grade to challenge that grade. After which time, grade challenges will not be considered.

**Academic Integrity:** The University’s definitions of academic and personal misconduct are outlined in the *Student Conduct Code* (available in your University of Washington Student Planner pages 97-103 and online at http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html). It is your responsibility to read and understand the University’s expectations in this regard. Until you have read the *Code*, do not assume that you know what this University defines as cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism is a significant violation of the *Student Conduct Code* and will be dealt with severely in this class. It is important for you to know that plagiarism is any representation of another person’s words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, in either oral or written form. This means that you may not copy another person’s paper or speech. But it also means that you should not use another person’s unique phrases or organizational schemes without making it clear to your audience where those words or ideas originated. Your work should be entirely your own. If it becomes evident that you have collaborated with another student and/or plagiarized work, the matter will be turned over to the University’s Committee on Academic Conduct. For more on plagiarism, including a review of proper and improper paraphrasing practices, see http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
The assigned readings are to be completed by the day assigned, as they will inform our in-class discussion and your reading response.

**Week One**

1/4 M Orientation
1/6 W Elements of Argument
   • **Homework #1 due**

**Week Two**

1/11 M Stock Issues
   • **Homework #2 due**
1/13  W  Reasoning and Evidence

Week Three
1/18  M  NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
1/20  W  Arrangement
• Homework #3 due

Week Four
1/25  M  Delivery
• Homework #4 due
1/27  W  Speech Round

Week Five
2/1  M  Speech Round
2/3  W  Speech Round/Introduction to Refutation

Week Six
2/8  M  Flowing and Clash
• Homework #5 due
2/10  W  Clash and Refutation

Week Seven
2/15  M  NO CLASS: PRESIDENTS DAY
2/17  W  Refutation
• Homework #6 due

Week Eight
2/22  M  Introduction to Team Debate
• Homework #7 due
2/24  W  Summarizing the Debate and Calling for the Decision
• Refutation Essay due

Week Nine
3/1  M  Practice Team Debates
• Homework #8 due
3/3  W  Practice Team Debates

Week Ten
3/8  M  Team Debates
3/10  W  Team Debates

Finals
3/15  M  Team Debates 2:30-4:20 in MGH 271