

PHIL 40/140-W: The Human Person

Holy Names University

Instructor: David A. Sylvester

Debate Guidelines

Topic: Before the day of the debate, we will prepare by discussing and choosing a topic. This will be in the form of a clear assertion, such as: Resolved: That colleges should offer their classes to all students for free.

Teams: Each debate will be divided into four teams of 4 to 6 students each, depending on class size. Two teams will debate on the affirmative and negative side, and two will be the audience, listening, asking questions and deciding which side is more convincing. Affirmative Team argues that the resolution is true; the Negative Team argues that the resolution is false.

Rules: During the formal debate, when a spokesperson is speaking, he or she speaks alone for the allotted time without interruptions by anyone. The teams will have a chance to confer twice during the debate. However, after the opening statements, no new information can be introduced. All argumentation must focus on what has already been said, challenging, debunking, supporting and amplifying the arguments put forward.

Spokespersons: During the closing period, each team must have one spokesperson sum up their team's case. During the opening and rebuttal periods, there are two options:

- 1) A team may have one spokesperson speak for the allotted time.
- 2) A team can decide to present its case as a "tag-team" where one speaker opens, speaks for one minute, and then tags the next speaker on the team who has put a hand up.

If you use the tag team approach, each member must go once before any one speaks again.

You must indicate your presentation approach at the beginning of the debate and not change it.

Debate Format

I. Opening statements: (10 minutes)

Affirmative Team Opening Statement: (5 min)

Negative Team Opening Statement by Neg. Opening Spokesperson: (5 min)

(Break for team huddle: 2 min.)

II. Rebuttals (10 min.) – no new information allowed.

Negative team rebuttal by Neg. Rebuttal Spokesperson: (5 min)

(Show that affirmative arguments are wrong and negative arguments correct.)

Affirmative team rebuttal by Affirmative Rebuttal Spokesperson: (5 min)

(Show that negative arguments are wrong and affirmative arguments correct.)

(Break for team huddle: 2 min.)

III. Closing statements (6 min.)

Negative team closing statement by negative closing spokesperson. (3 min.)

Affirmative team closing statement by affirmative closing spokesperson. (3 min.)

-End of formal debate –

Questions from audience and filling out of votes, evaluations: 5 min.

- End –

Class discussion (10 min.)