Group Project 2 – Group Debate

Why? Classroom debates are exercises designed to develop or strengthen students' skills in leadership, interpersonal influence, teambuilding, group problem solving, oral presentation, life-long learning, and topic mastery.

How? The debate topics are the same as the Group Anthology topics and will be chosen in class on a date announced by the instructor. All group members are expected to participate in the research, development, and presentation of your debate position.

Each participating member will receive an instructor grade that will reflect the overall grade of the group. At the end of the project, team members will evaluate each other (peer evaluation). The peer evaluations will consist of 10 points in the overall project, and **the individual's peer evaluation grade will be an average of all the group members' grades to the student**. When you submit your peer evaluations, you must include the complete name of the student you are evaluating, **grade penalty for non-compliance is 5%**. **Incomplete or missing peer evaluations receive a grade penalty of 20%.** Peer evaluations are used for accountability purposes and should reflect a student's contribution to the group work.

Debate Format

10 minute Formal Position Presentation – Pro/Yes
10 minute Formal Position Presentation – Con/No

4 minute Work Period

4 minute Rebuttal – Pro/Yes
4 minute Rebuttal – Con/No

3 minute Work Period

4 minute Response – Pro/Yes
4 minute Response – Con/No

3 minute Work Period

3 minute Position Summary – Pro/Yes
3 minute Position Summary – Con/No

10 minutes Tallying of Ballots/Announcement of Winner/Debrief

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Debate Procedure

The debate will take the form of timed group presentations and responses separated by timed group work periods. When questions arise, the judgment of the instructor will provide the definitive ruling.

Audiovisuals are recommended and may be used at any time, including, but not limited to: handouts, powerpoint slides, audio, etc. While a team is not required to use all of the time allocated to each debate component, speakers must stop immediately when the allocated time runs out. Team members are prohibited from speaking to the audience or opposing team except at the times specifically allocated to them. Thus, there can be no immediate, reciprocal interchange of comments between the teams.

The team with the PRO/YES position will be the first to present, rebutte, respond, and summarize their position. Note that no new information may be introduced during the summary. Doing so may result in disqualification of the offending group. If either team feels that their opponents are introducing new information during the summary, they may challenge them immediately and request a ruling from the instructor.

Tips for an Excellent Debate

- You can include as many sources as you want to prepare for the debate. You are not limited to the sources used in the anthology project.
- You MUST not read your initial presentation! Written language flows differently than spoken language and it is very hard to keep the audience engaged when reading a presentation.
- If you prepare a PowerPoint presentation and include graphs in it, make sure they are big enough that the audience can actually see it.
- If you include graphs in your initial presentation and/or during the debate, make sure you explain the graph. What are the axis? What do they represent? What can be concluded from the data presented? Don't use graphs as just images, use them to back up your arguments.

Selection of Winner(s) and Allocation of Points

Debate "Winners" will be selected in two ways, as follows:

Audience Vote: Class members in the audience will vote by ballot for a debate winner. Votes are to be based upon presentation quality only, and not upon personal agreement or disagreement with the position advocated. After all ballots are collected, the number of votes for each team will be announced. Whichever team has more votes will be the winner, and the team will receive one bonus point. In the event of a tie, the instructor will decide the winner.

Instructors' Evaluation: The instructor will evaluate both teams according to the rubric made available to the students.

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Review of Ballots

Each debating team will have the opportunity to review all of the ballots to become aware of the feedback on their performance. The loosing team will review the ballots first followed by the winning team. Once both teams have reviewed them, they are to be returned to the instructor.

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