

Sociology of Medical Systems - DEBATE GUIDANCE, TEAMS, AND RESOLUTIONS

I have arranged students into debate teams, and have created corresponding Moodle groups, based on expressed areas of interest where possible. We'll be devoting a portion of our class to discussing the expectations for the debates. Team members will need to correspond outside of class time, which you may choose to do in person, via the Moodle site, or by email, text, or phone -- whatever works best for your team's members. (The Moodle groups will give you at least an initial point of contact.)

This activity is designed to help students develop their abilities to research a topic from multiple perspectives, as well as to practice presenting and defending a position.

To each team I have assigned a 'resolution' – that is, a statement which is to be debated. Two teams of three-to-four people will be assigned to each resolution. While you will know the specific resolution you will be debating, your team will NOT know which side you will be arguing ('pro' or 'con') until about five minutes prior to the debate. This means that each team will have to research and prepare arguments both in favour and against their resolution ahead of time, and be prepared to coordinate quickly on the day of the debate.

Debate resolutions are conventionally stated as follows: “Be it resolved that [B.I.R.T.] . . .” If your team takes the 'pro' side, you are arguing for the resolution *as stated*; if your team takes the 'con' side, you are arguing for the *opposite of* the resolution.

Teams should decide in advance in what order their members will speak. The first member of the team arguing in favour ('pro') of the resolution speaks first, followed by the first member of the opposing team, and then members alternate accordingly.

In general, the first speaker of each team takes the responsibility of introducing the topic and providing an overview of the team's arguments. The subsequent speaker(s) present sets of arguments. The final speaker provides a conclusion by adding any additional material or rebuttals, highlighting key points, and/or otherwise drawing the argument to an effective close.

If there are unequal numbers of members of the two opposing teams, the group with fewer members can opt to have one member speak a second time, or one member may speak for a longer period. (I am open to suggestions re: format changes on a case-by-case basis, as long as

both teams are in agreement.)

Teams should decide in advance in what order their members will speak and how each member will contribute. Each member should be prepared to speak for about two-to-three minutes. It is fine to use written notes, but also think about how you might be flexible if members of the other team raise points with which you wish to engage. (It is not necessary for one team to respond to every point raised by the other team, but some active engagement is encouraged.)

Students will be assessed on a combination of individual input and collective performance. Constructive feedback will also be solicited from the 'audience' following each debate, so that we can gain a better sense of effective debating practices.