

Jean Kirnan

PSY 374: Psychology of Ethics

### **1. Debates**

A list of several debate topics will be shared with the class. Each student will list their top 10 topics. Every effort will be made to assign students to a topic of their choice. Once topics are chosen, students will be randomly assigned to the "pro" or "con" position for the debate. Students must develop both points of view to be able to effectively argue, anticipate points of opponent, and answer questions from moderator/audience.

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Faculty and peers are expected to read newspaper/web articles for each debate and come prepared with questions for the debaters. Each debater **MUST** submit at least one "layperson" type article (newspaper/trade journal/website) for the class to read. Thus, we will have 2 brief readings for each debate.

The degree to which the audience is knowledgeable and prepared for the debate will be part of the participation grade. Additionally, two students will be designated moderators and 2 days before the debate must submit 3 questions for each side, "pro" and "con", for a total of 6 unique questions. These students will be expected to ask some of the submitted question(s) during the debate – effectively, they will assist with moderating the debate. Faculty and peers will evaluate the debaters using a structured form.

### **2. Paper on Debate Topic**

Students will then write a short paper on the topic, identifying both points of view and culminating in their personal perspective and why they chose that perspective. Paper must be in APA style and should be 5 to 8 pages in length.

## The Debates

Welcome to the I/O Seminar on Ethics debate series, featuring a variety of issues from corporate responsibility to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. For each debate, the format will be as follows:

1. 4 minutes, Opening Argument, 1<sup>st</sup> debater
2. 4 minutes, Opening Argument, 2<sup>nd</sup> debater
3. 2 minutes, Rebuttal, 1<sup>st</sup> debater
4. 2 minutes, Rebuttal, 2<sup>nd</sup> debater
5. 6 minutes, Questions from the audience

All time limits are strict, and cannot be changed. During the course of the debates, we will also ask you the audience to complete feedback forms on the content and presentation of arguments.

Rank order your top 10 choices with #1 being your most desired choice and #10 your least desired. All efforts will be made to assign you to a topic of interest. Once two students have been designated for each topic I will randomly assigned the "pro" and "con" positions. See syllabus for more detail. Two students will be designated moderators and 2 days before the debate must submit 3 questions for each side, "pro" and "con".

1. Should there be a ban on coastal development?
2. Should the government be allowed to exercise the right of eminent domain when the development is "for profit"?
3. Is selective abortion moral – abortion on the basis of gender or DNA characteristics?
4. Does the United States need greater restrictions on firearms - gun control?
5. Should towns that border the ocean be allowed to charge beach fees for use of the beaches?
6. Should the death penalty be abolished?
7. Should the federal government bailout financial institutions and businesses facing failure – Too big to fail?
8. Should marijuana be legalized?
9. Should employers be allowed to use internet searches as part of job selection process?
10. Is it immoral for students to purchase Adderall (thus, non-prescribed for them) and use it for studying or test taking?
11. Should high schools be allowed to drug test students?
12. Should professional/Olympic athletes be permitted to use performance enhancing drugs?
13. Is it moral for the US to export its trash to developing countries?
14. Should the drinking age be abolished in the US?
15. Should we ban all cellphone use while driving?
16. Should a hospital (or other institution) comply with client/patient requests even if doing so violates policy (Abington hospital case)?
17. Is the use of torture justified to extract information vital to national security?
18. Should casino gambling be outlawed?
19. Should companies be required to label food that is genetically modified?
20. Should advertising to children be abolished?
21. Should advertising of prescription drugs on television be abolished?
22. Sweatshops serve a greater good and thus, should be allowed to continue.
23. Bottled water should be banned.
24. Artificially extending life is unethical.
25. We should ban the use of animals for experimentation
26. We should mandate the sterilization of mentally incompetent
27. Physician assisted suicide should be legal
28. Differentially abled athletes should be allowed reasonable accommodations when competing in athletic events.

### More specifics on Debate Paper:

Because this is not a research paper, we will not adhere to APA sections in the paper. Instead, the format of the paper should reflect basic organizational structure that one would expect across any academic discipline. Proper citations of sources is expected and should be in APA format for Psychology majors; other majors may choose a format common to their discipline – but all must have consistency within their papers. Remember to cite sources even if you have re-worded the information (cite if the ideas or facts are not your own). If you are quoting someone or an article (taking what they say word for word) be sure to acknowledge this with quotations and specific page number(s). A well organized paper would have the following structure:

Introduction to the issues at hand – in the first few paragraphs the reader should know what the topic of the paper will be and how the paper will flow. So introduce your topic, let the reader know that the issue will be explored from both sides/perspectives

The body of the paper might follow one of two formats: 1) organize (might use subheadings) by presenting the pro and con positions separately and discussing subtopics under each; 2) organize around major points (might use subheadings) and present pro and con within each point. So for example, with the marijuana debate sub topics might include “effect on number of people using pot”; “economic impact of legalization”

Conclusion or summary – in addition to the traditional conclusion that we would see at the end of any well written paper, you will also include your personal position on the topic. Do let the reader know when you are doing that and why (referring to arguments raised earlier in your paper) you are taking that stand.

Also, I was asked if it would be acceptable for debate partners to share notes with each other. I’m OK with sharing resources if that is something both of you agree to. I hesitate on notes as notes reflect your interpretation and extension of ideas in the articles – and thus will be a mix of article information and your personal ideas.

### DEBATE FEEDBACK FORM

Presenter #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>Presenter #1's introductory statement was clear and comprehensive.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2's introductory statement was clear and comprehensive.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1 used the rebuttal time effectively.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2 used the rebuttal time effectively.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1 responded well to the posed questions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2 responded well to the posed questions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1 was organized and prepared.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2 was organized and prepared.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1 was persuasive.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2 was persuasive.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1's speech was clear, audible, and well-paced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2's speech was clear, audible, and well-paced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #1 used facts or statistics to support argument.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Presenter #2 used facts or statistics to support argument.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Indicate your overall evaluation of Presenter #1.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Poor    Excellent</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>
<p>Indicate your overall evaluation of Presenter #2.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1      2      3      4      5</p>

**Please describe what you liked about today's debate. Did you learn anything new? What were the most effective parts of the exchange?**

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**Please describe what you did not like about today's debate. Was anything unclear or confusing? Are there any changes in the format or topics that you would like to see?**

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