

**POSC 20123: Introduction to American Politics**  
***Debate Assignment***

**Purpose:** This assignment will give you practice trying to persuade your colleagues, and it will also give you a chance to learn about an issue in greater detail.

**Debates topics:**

1. *Resolved:* Increased gun control will curb gun violence.
2. *Resolved:* The United States is becoming increasingly unequal.
3. *Resolved:* Affirmative action advances racial equality.
4. *Resolved:* Marijuana should be legalized.

**Instructions:** Each team is comprised of four people. Three people give speeches and the fourth person is the cross-examiner. *The first speech that each team makes is prepared in advance.* After that, speeches should include direct refutation of some of the arguments made by the other side.

Here is how each debate will be structured:

- First Affirmative Speech (3 minutes)
- Negative cross-examination specialist questions the speaker (2 minutes)
- First Negative Speech (3 minutes)
- Affirmative cross-examination specialist questions the speaker (2 minutes)
- TWO MINUTE PREP TIME
- Second Affirmative Speech (3 minutes)
- Negative cross-examination specialist questions the speaker (2 minutes)
- TWO MINUTE PREP TIME
- Second Negative Speech (3 minutes)
- Affirmative cross-examination specialist questions the speaker (2 minutes)
- TWO MINUTE PREP TIME
- Third Affirmative Speech (3 minutes)
- Third Negative Speech (3 minutes)

**Evidence:** In order to do well, you must do your research and have your evidence well-organized. This means that your team must walk through the following steps to prepare for your debate.

- What is the issue?
- What is your position?
- What is the evidence in support of your position (well organized into categories)
- How will the other team try to rebut your evidence and what is your response to each of these rebuttals?
- What is the counter-position?
- What is the evidence in support of the counter-position?
- How can you rebuttal each piece of evidence that supports the counter-position?

In preparing for the debates, you should use readings assigned in class, but in order to really crush the opponents, you will need to do outside research, as well. You need to use actual evidence (either qualitative or quantitative), as well as clear logical reasoning. Be sure to define your terms clearly up front.

**The Jury:** Students not participating in the debate will be serving in the “jury.” Each member of the jury will be asked to write down on a piece of paper who they believe won the debate and briefly justify the decision. Ballots will counted and the winner announced.