

# PHI1CRT CRITICAL THINKING (Semester 1)

## *Debate and Essay Guide*

### ASSESSMENT

10% 1 Debate (*teamwork*: 5 members per team, 3 of which giving a 1 – 3 minute speech)

10% 1 Follow-up essay (*teamwork*: same team together producing a 1000 – 1500 word essay following up the debate)

### CHOOSE A MOTION

**Motion A** “Australia has no more right to condemn Japanese whaling than Japan has to condemn the slaughter of kangaroos (and other animals) in Australia.”

**Motion B** “The commonwealth government should offer financial compensation to members of the Stolen Generations.”

**Motion C** “In a multi-cultural society like Australia, there should be direct legal restrictions on religious satire.”

### DEBATE FORMAT

- |                         |                       |   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| ⊙ Affirmative team      | 1st speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |
| ⊙ Negative team         | 1st speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |
| ⊙ Affirmative team      | 2nd speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |
| ⊙ Negative team         | 2nd speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |
| ⊙ Questions and Replies | Both teams & audience | (Each team has max. 3 minutes of total speaking time, which can be used for asking questions and/or giving replies) |
| ⊙ Affirmative team      | 3rd speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |
| ⊙ Negative team         | 3rd speaker           | (max. 3 minutes)  |

### DEBATE SPEECHES

- ⊙ **Affirmative team’s 1st speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Define* the motion:
    - define the key terms in the motion,
    - explain what it would mean for the motion to be *true*.
  - \* *Present* at least one argument *for* the motion:
    - spell out the premises,
    - explain why the premises should be accepted (e.g., expert opinion? common sense?),
    - explain how the premises support the motion (e.g., deductively, inductively, or abductively?).
- ⊙ **Negative team’s 1st speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Re-define* the motion:
    - re-define the key terms if advantageous,
    - explain what it would mean for the motion to be *false*.
  - \* *Present* at least one argument *against* the motion:
    - spell out the premises,
    - explain why the premises should be accepted (e.g., expert opinion? common sense?),
    - explain how the premises support the motion (e.g., deductively, inductively, or abductively?).
  - \* *Challenge* the negative team’s arguments:
    - argue that their premises are unacceptable (e.g., false? lack of evidence? counter-examples? counter-intuitive? irrelevant? mutually inconsistent?),
    - argue that their inferences are illegitimate (e.g., the premises, even true, give little/no support to the motion).

- ◎ **Affirmative team's 2nd speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Challenge* the negative team's arguments:
    - argue that their premises are unacceptable (e.g., false? lack of evidence? counter-examples? counter-intuitive? irrelevant? mutually inconsistent?),
    - argue that their inferences are illegitimate (e.g., the premises, even true, give little/no support to the motion).
  - \* *Present* one new argument *for* the motion (if any).
- ◎ **Negative team's 2nd speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Challenge* the affirmative team's arguments (given by their 1st and 2nd speakers):
    - argue that their premises are unacceptable (e.g., false? lack of evidence? counter-examples? counter-intuitive? irrelevant? mutually inconsistent?),
    - argue that their inferences are illegitimate (e.g., the premises, even true, give little/no support to the motion).
  - \* *Defend* your team's arguments
    - e.g., defend a particular premise in the argument previously presented by your team but has been disputed by the opposing team.
  - \* *Present* one new argument *for* the motion (if any).
- ◎ **QUESTIONS AND REPLIES**
  - \* Each team as a whole has max. 3 minutes of total speaking time, which can be used for asking questions and/or giving replies. Whenever a team member speaks, it will be timed and deducted from their team's 3 minutes.
  - \* Members of the audience are invited to participate in this session.
- ◎ **Affirmative team's 3rd speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Reaffirm* your team's re-interpret the motion (if any, given by your 1st speaker):
  - \* *Defend* your team's arguments against challenges mounted by the opposing team's 2nd speaker.
  - \* *Summarize* your team's *main* arguments and points (given by your 1st and 2nd speakers).
  - \* *Conclude* that the motion is unacceptable (i.e., false or more likely to be false than true).
- ◎ **Negative team's 3rd speaker** should do some/most/all of the following:
  - \* *Re-state* your team's interpretation of the motion (given by your 1st speaker).
  - \* *Defend* your team's arguments against challenges mounted by the opposing team's 2nd speaker.
  - \* *Summarize* your team's *main* arguments and points (given by your 1st and 2nd speakers).
  - \* *Conclude* that the motion is true or more likely to be true than false.

**NOTE:** Your tutor will be available during their **consultation hours** to help your debate teams prepare speeches and strategies. To secure a meeting with your tutor, your team must contact the tutor at least **three weeks prior** to the date of their debate.

## FOLLOW-UP ESSAY

Your team is required to produce a 1000 – 1500 word **follow-up essay**. In the essay, you should summarize the opposing side's arguments, analyse them, and then give reasons to reject them.

In previous years, some teams had problems summarizing the opposing side's arguments because the opposing team (they claimed) did not present any coherent or good argument at the actual debate. If this is the case, then note that in the beginning of your essay. In the rest of the essay, you should put forward the best possible arguments on behalf of the opposing side (i.e., what arguments could they have put forward had they been well organized?), and then you should give reasons to reject those better arguments which you think the opposing side could have used.

Try to summarize the opposing side's arguments in **Standard Form**. And then analyse the premises and the inferences in the arguments carefully. (See Lecture 3 for some examples of how this is done.)

Also, think about what **argument forms** the opposing side's arguments have. Did they put forward any Argument by Analogy? or Argument to the Best Explanation? Did they make any Inductive Generalization, ...etc.? If so, evaluate the arguments according to the guidelines given in Lecture 9. Are their arguments **valid**? If so, does their arguments have any specific valid argument forms (e.g., RAA, which is a common debating device)? See Lectures 6, 7, 8 for valid arguments forms.

If any of their arguments is invalid, then is it at least **nondeductively successful**? See Lecture 9 for the notion of "nondeductive success".