

# The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

## Subject Description Form

*Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.*

<b>Subject Code</b>	ENGL1FN17
<b>Subject Title</b>	The Art of Debate: Mastering Arguments to Help You Defeat Your Opponent
<b>Credit Value</b>	3
<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion</b>	None.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>This subject engages students in debate as an active means through which to explore the critical thinking skills and logical structures that guide effective argumentation. As citizens of a globalized, hyper-connected world, we are exposed on a daily basis to a flood of information, misinformation, and biased reporting of diverse origins. A familiarity with the fundamentals of argumentation heightens our ability to evaluate the validity of the claims disseminated by these sources. In this course, students gain experience both constructing logically sound arguments and critically evaluating the arguments of others through a lively, motivating medium that brings friendly competition into the classroom. Applicable to a wide range of academic pursuits, the skills highlighted in this course are relevant to Poly U students enrolled in different disciplines. Moreover, acquisition of the key concepts of this course will support students' intellectual growth in their chosen field.</p>
<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b> <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. demonstrate familiarity with core principles of logic and critical thinking that shape effective arguments</li> <li>b. identify logical development of arguments and instances in which arguments have been weakened by logical fallacies</li> <li>c. apply effective argumentation strategies to a diverse range of debate topics</li> <li>d. construct compelling rebuttals to counter-arguments</li> <li>e. develop the ability to understand and respect opposing perspectives through the assignment of debate positions that deviate from students' own views</li> <li>f. apply their critical thinking and argumentation skills to their own fields of study</li> </ol>
<b>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</b> <i>(Note 2)</i>	<p>The course is split up into two primary sections</p> <p><b>Analyzing the Argument</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Modes of Proof (week 1): -<i>Ethos</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Pathos</i></li> <li>-<i>Logos</i></li> <li>• Types of Central Questions (week 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Questions of Fact</i></li> <li>- <i>Questions of Value</i></li> <li>- <i>Questions of Policy</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Toulmin Model of Argument (week 3)</li> <li>• Identifying different types of evidence (week 4)</li> <li>• Logical formulation of the argument: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enthymemes and syllogism (week 5)</li> <li>- logical fallacies (week 6)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Constructing the Argument</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing and assessing your audience (week 7)</li> <li>• Deduction and induction in debate (week 8)</li> <li>• Building an argument: the importance of coherence and relevance (week 9)</li> <li>• Using evidence in debate (week 4)</li> <li>• Arguing both sides (week 10)</li> <li>• Anticipating objections (week 10)</li> <li>• Refuting counter-arguments (week 10)</li> </ul> <p>(Weeks 11-13 are devoted to putting all of the concepts together and applying them to debates.)</p>
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<p><b>Teaching/Learning Methodology</b> (Note 3)</p>	<p>Each class meeting contains a theoretical and applied component. Based on the topics being addressed in the theoretical portion of the course, students either assess or construct relevant elements of an argument. The final forty minutes of each class is devoted to active participation in debate scenarios. Following debates, students take part in reflections in which they assess the successful and less successful aspects of their arguments. From the second week of the class onward, students are split into separate debate teams. Together with their teammates, students evaluate and formulate arguments. When they participate in full debates, they do so as part of this team.</p>
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<p><b>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</b> (Note 4)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="461 1325 805 1497" rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th data-bbox="808 1325 951 1497" rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6" data-bbox="954 1325 1474 1430">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="954 1434 1036 1497">a</th> <th data-bbox="1039 1434 1120 1497">b</th> <th data-bbox="1123 1434 1205 1497">c</th> <th data-bbox="1208 1434 1289 1497">d</th> <th data-bbox="1292 1434 1373 1497">e</th> <th data-bbox="1377 1434 1474 1497">f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1501 805 1612">Argument Analysis Paper (approximately 1500 - 2500 words)</td> <td data-bbox="808 1501 951 1612">20</td> <td data-bbox="954 1501 1036 1612">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1039 1501 1120 1612">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1123 1501 1205 1612"></td> <td data-bbox="1208 1501 1289 1612"></td> <td data-bbox="1292 1501 1373 1612"></td> <td data-bbox="1377 1501 1474 1612">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1617 805 1665">Full Debate</td> <td data-bbox="808 1617 951 1665">20</td> <td data-bbox="954 1617 1036 1665">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1039 1617 1120 1665"></td> <td data-bbox="1123 1617 1205 1665">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1208 1617 1289 1665">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1292 1617 1373 1665">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1377 1617 1474 1665">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1669 805 1717">Final Debate</td> <td data-bbox="808 1669 951 1717">25</td> <td data-bbox="954 1669 1036 1717">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1039 1669 1120 1717"></td> <td data-bbox="1123 1669 1205 1717">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1208 1669 1289 1717">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1292 1669 1373 1717">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1377 1669 1474 1717">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1722 805 1770">Test</td> <td data-bbox="808 1722 951 1770">20</td> <td data-bbox="954 1722 1036 1770">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1039 1722 1120 1770">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1123 1722 1205 1770">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1208 1722 1289 1770"></td> <td data-bbox="1292 1722 1373 1770"></td> <td data-bbox="1377 1722 1474 1770"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1774 805 1822">Class Participation</td> <td data-bbox="808 1774 951 1822">15</td> <td data-bbox="954 1774 1036 1822">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1039 1774 1120 1822">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1123 1774 1205 1822">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1208 1774 1289 1822">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1292 1774 1373 1822">✓</td> <td data-bbox="1377 1774 1474 1822">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="461 1827 805 1875">Total</td> <td data-bbox="808 1827 951 1875">100 %</td> <td colspan="6" data-bbox="954 1827 1474 1875"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>								Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e	f	Argument Analysis Paper (approximately 1500 - 2500 words)	20	✓	✓				✓	Full Debate	20	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Final Debate	25	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Test	20	✓	✓	✓				Class Participation	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Total	100 %						
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	<p>The subject is assessed through five modes: 1.) a paper (approximately 1500 - 2500 words in length) in which students analyze an argument that is presented, 2.) and 3.) two full debates in which student-teams debate with other teams about assigned topics, 4.) A test that assesses students' understanding of core theoretical concepts, and 5.) Class participation in which students reflect on their debate performance and prepare their arguments according to the topic as well as the highlighted theoretical concept. The course is designed to show direct connections between theory and its applications, and the assessments reflect this approach. Moreover, the authentic nature of the assessments allows students to simulate real-life contexts for practicing critical thinking skills; the feedback they receive from these assessments has the potential to inform the reasoning they apply to other academic and non-academic pursuits.</p>	
<p><b>Student Study Effort Expected</b></p>	<p>Class contact:</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lectures</li> </ul>	<p>26 Hrs.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seminars</li> </ul>	<p>13 Hrs.</p>
	<p>Other student study effort:</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation for lectures and seminars</li> </ul>	<p>28 Hrs.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation for assessments</li> </ul>	<p>52 Hrs.</p>
	<p>Total student study effort</p>	<p>119 Hrs.</p>
<p><b>Reading List and References</b></p>	<p><b>Students are advised to purchase</b></p> <p>Hollihan, Thomas A. &amp; Baaske, Kevin T. (2016). <i>Arguments and Arguing: The Products and Process of Human Decision-Making</i> (Third Edition). Illinois, U.S.A.: Waveland Press, Inc.</p> <p><b>Supplementary readings will be taken from the following texts:</b></p> <p>Dalton, Philip &amp; Butler, John R. (2015). <i>Public Policy Argumentation and Debate: A Practical Guide for Advocacy</i>. New York, U.S.A.: Peter Lang.</p> <p>Driscoll, William &amp; Zompetti, Joseph P. (2003). <i>Discovering the World through Debate</i>. New York, U.S.A.: International Debate Education Association.</p> <p>Freeley, Austin J. &amp; Steinberg, David L. (2014). <i>Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision-Making</i>. MA, U.S.A.: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.</p> <p>Johnson, Steven L. (2009). <i>Winning Debates: A Guide to Debating in the Style of the World Universities Debating Championships</i>. New York, U.S.A.: IDEBATE Press.</p> <p>Vancil, David L. (1993). <i>Rhetoric and Argumentation</i>. MA, U.S.A.: Simon and Schuster.</p>	

Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.