

# 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>	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.
<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 rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Argument Analysis Paper (approximately 1500 - 2500 words)</td> <td>20</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Full Debate</td> <td>20</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Final Debate</td> <td>25</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Test</td> <td>20</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class Participation</td> <td>15</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></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.