In-class debates (07/07/03 to 07/10/03): Format, Rules, and Topics

General Rules
1. These debates will account for 15% of your total grade for this class.
2. Please note that attendance is compulsory for everyone during all four days. I will be taking attendance each day, and an absence that is not university excused will cost you 3% per absence. If you are not present on the day your team is presenting, you will receive no credit for this part of the course.
3. Please contact your fellow group members and work as a team. In order that every member of a group contributes to the team effort, if a majority of the team members together complain to me that any particular member(s) has/have not contributed at all to the team effort, I will assign that person zero. I trust that such complaints will not be made lightly, but only if any team member neglects his/her duties such that it affects the performance of the team.

How to contact your team members: The teams for the debates have already been posted on the web page. The best place to contact your fellow team members would be in class itself. If that is not possible, then you may initiate contact via e-mail. University rules forbid me from circulating the e-mails of students without their expressed permission. However, since you know the names of your teammates, you might want to search for their e-mails on the public web directory available on the ISU web page, and initiate contact.

Format of the debates (Teams 1 through 6)
1. I shall be assigning a debate topic, and two teams will debate it: one for and the other against.
2. Each team needs to choose 3 speakers from among their 5 members. Each speaker must speak for a minimum of 6 minutes, and up to a maximum of 8 minutes. Each team must, as a whole, speak for a minimum of 20 minutes. I shall be enforcing the timing rules strictly.
3. There will be no interruptions during the time a debate is going on, but after it ends there will be an ‘open floor’ of 5 minutes during which any member of the audience (other than the debaters) might address questions to either of the teams.
Format of the debate (Team 7)

As team 7 consists of six members, they will be a stand-alone group. They need to choose 4 speakers from within their group. Each speaker must speak for a minimum of 6 minutes, and up to a maximum of 8 minutes. I will assign a topic to team 7 that is not of the ‘for or against’ type. There will be an ‘open floor’ of 5 minutes after this team has finished presenting, during which any member of the audience might address questions to the team members.

Some clarifications & tips

1. I understand that some persons may be better public speakers than others. So choose the best speakers in your teams for the debates: there will be no extra credit for the speakers, but their performance will affect the team as a whole. I sincerely hope, though, that everyone’s contribution to the team effort will roughly be equal. The non-speakers need to contribute their share to the research and formative processes of the speeches.

2. These debates are not adversarial. Hence, I will not be assessing the performance of each team on the basis of ‘winning’ or ‘losing’. I will, however, make comparative judgment across all teams with respect to the visible level of effort they have put into their presentations, and the effectiveness of their arguments.

3. A method of increasing the effectiveness of your presentations may be to use overhead transparencies. You may also write down some of the key concepts you are discussing on the backboard (though overdoing this might hamper the flow of your presentation). Of course, these are only suggestions: you need to figure out yourself what works best for you.

4. I would advise you to get together the day before your presentation and do a dry run. I assure you that will improve your actual performance dramatically.

5. For a better performance, the speakers from a team need to divide their presentation into parts, with each speaker concentrating on a particular part (or parts) of the topic. Everyone should not try to cover everything: this will cause repetition. You will increase the total amount of points you will be able to raise by dividing the topic effectively & each concentrating on a certain aspect. Having done this, you will also need to preserve a certain connection between the speeches, so that each fits into a coherent whole. It might be useful if the first speaker spends some time introducing the topic (telling the audience
what it is all about, from his/her team’s point of view), and the third speaker devotes a little while to summing up the team’s arguments.

6. You need to have facts & figures to support your arguments. Make full use of the various resource links on the class web page for that purpose.

7. Always try to specify an economic ‘environment’ or ‘model’ for your arguments. For example, you might say: “While policy X would work in the 1930s in the US because we had a Keynesian situation of underemployment, with the unemployment rate being y%, in 1995 such a policy would not work as we had an economy which was operating close to full employment. With the unemployment rate being just z% in 1995, we may contend that we were basically in a Classical-type economy”.

8. Connect your arguments with some analysis you have seen in class. For example, you might say: “Though at first glance it might seem that policy Y adopted by President Bush would be successful in raising consumer spending, in the end we think it was largely ineffective in raising the aggregate demand level, as the price index rose between the months of January & April by x points. So, we believe there was a crowding-out effect going on in the economy. We can further validate this argument when we see that private investment spending fell between January & April by $ z billion”.

**Topics & Teams**

*Debate 1: 07/07/03: Will the Bush tax cut boost the economy?* : Team 1 (speaks for) & Team 2 (speaks against)

Go to: [www.econ.aplia.com](http://www.econ.aplia.com)

Go to: The ‘Assignments’ link, then scroll down to click on the ‘All Assignments’ link.

**Scroll down to ‘Week 8’**. The two articles posted there (‘The macroeconomic effects of changes in taxes & spending’ & ‘Tax cuts: Long vs. short run impacts’) shall help you prepare for the debate. The article ‘The macroeconomic effects of changes in taxes & spending’ also contains links (click on the first ‘info’ link under the article) to another article, as well as the report of the Congressional Budget Office on the Bush tax cut. You might also look at the resource links on the class web page for additional information. A web search on Google.com will also yield a wealth of information.

Team 1 will try to justify that the Bush tax cut will boost the economy. Team 2 will speak against the proposition.
Debate 2: 07/08/03: Is there a New Economy? : Team 3 (for) & Team 4 (against)
Click on the following link: Economic policy debates
Scroll down to find the topic: Is there a new economy?
You will find a lot of material there to help you prepare for the debate. You might also look at the resource links on the class web page for additional information. A web search on Google.com will also yield information.
Team 3 will try to justify that there is, in fact, a new economy. Team 4 will try to justify that it is not so.

Debate 3: 07/09/03: Should the Fed pursue a fixed policy rule? : Team 5 (for) & Team 6 (against)
Click on the following link: Economic policy debates
Scroll down to find the topic: Should the Fed pursue a fixed policy rule?
You will find a lot of material there to help you prepare for the debate. You might also look at the resource links on the class web page for additional information. A web search on Google.com will also yield a lot of information.
Team 5 will try to justify that the Fed should pursue a fixed rule. Team 6 will try to justify that it should not.

Debate 4: 07/10/03: How should the budget surplus be used? : Team 7 will speak on this topic
Click on the following link: Economic policy debates
Scroll down to find the topic: How should the budget surplus be used?
You will find a lot of material there to help you prepare. You might also look at the resource links on the class web page for additional information. A web search on Google.com will also provide information.