

Debate Assignment Instruction Sheet

Each debate will last 2 weeks. Wednesday and Friday are the important due dates each week. There will be two more debates this semester.

Important Due Dates

Week 1

- Wednesday
 - [4 initial arguments.](#)
- Friday
 - [3 follow up arguments](#)

Week 2

- Wednesday:
 - [Revisions](#)
- Friday
 - [Strengthened arguments](#)

Learning Outcomes Associated with this Assignment:

- *Defend a view using reasons appropriate for public discussion*
- *Provide clear reasons for and against holding a view*
- *Communicate respectfully with others while discussing controversial issues*
- *Consolidate understanding of content covered in recent classes*
- *Revise initial draft for clarity, strength, and organization*
- *Collaborate with others*
- *Adopt and consider multiple perspectives*

Assessment:

The debate will be assessed according to how well the learning outcomes are met, the criteria immediately below, as well as the rubric and questions listed on the syllabus.

The purpose of this assignment is not to “win” the debate. The purpose of the assignment is to make the best argument that you can for both sides. Additionally, you are not being graded in competition with your classmates. It is possible for everyone to do well on an assignment, and it is possible for everyone to do poorly. You will be graded on both the debate process and the final product.

The final grade will generally be assigned to both groups in the debate. However, if one or more members showed particular leadership, and contributed to the content I may grade them more highly (thus, even if a particular group does not meet the expectations of the assignment, it is still possible for you to get full credit if you did everything you could to make the group successful). By the same token, if one or more members created particular obstacles to the group (e.g. initial claims that were misrepresented the material, sloppy grammar and mechanics, unclear claims

that the group needed to spend time fixing), I reserve the right to lower their grade relative to the rest of the group.

Student Instructions

In this assignment, you will be creating a Kialo debate with your classmates. Four groups will participate in two debates: two groups in each debate.

In each debate, one group will be assigned to the Pro starting side, and one will be assigned to the Con starting side.

First Week

Initial Arguments due Wednesday of the first week

You will be invited to the Kialo discussion set up for the debate your group has been assigned.

You will be assigned the role of editor. As an editor you can create, edit, move, and delete claims in a discussion as well as mark for review.

Your first step will be to start making arguments. You should create **at least four claims** that support your side of the argument. Pay attention to the arguments that your classmates are making. **If someone has made a claim that you were planning on making, you can provide additional evidence or support for that point in the form of a Pro beneath their claim.**

Textual evidence from the class readings and links to outside research should both be used to make effective arguments.

Each participant in the debate is expected to **cite at least one outside source.**

Follow-Up Arguments due Friday of the first week.

Once your classmates have added their initial claims, you should start to respond to the arguments on the other side. Read through what the opposing side has posted and write **at least two Cons** to those claims. Then write **at least one Con** to a claim on your own side. As long as you meet this minimum, you are now free to add as many claims to both sides as are appropriate.

Second Week

Revisions due Wednesday of the second week

In this step, your group will work collaboratively to improve the entire argument, not just their own points. Part of improving the argument includes minimizing duplicated content.

Use the comments, voting, and chat features to facilitate this revision process.

Strengthened Arguments due Friday of the second week

Now that you and your classmates have made good arguments on both sides, your goal is to make the whole debate as strong as you can. You should go through **all claims**, not just your own, and suggest any improvements that will help them be as on-topic, clearly stated, and well-supported as possible. Use the comments and chat features, not additional sub-claims, to facilitate this process

At this point, it does not matter what side you were initially on. You should now work as a group to make the best case for both sides. You should use the voting, comments, and chat features in Kialo to coordinate your work.

Instructor Feedback

Over the weekend after the week 1, I will go through and post brief comments on most of the posts. You should use the feedback as you revise and strengthen your arguments.

In the days following the completion of the debate, I will post general feedback for the teams on your channel and your grade on Moodle.

Learning Outcome	Advanced Proficiency	Baseline Proficiency	Emergent	Not Proficient
Clarity of Expression	Claims are on-topic and explicitly connected, the connection to parent claims is clearly communicated in a way that facilitates comprehension.	Claims are on-topic and explicitly stated.	Claims are mostly on-topic, but the main point is often implicit.	Claims are not clearly on-topic; it is difficult to determine the main point of claims.
Engagement with Material	Source material from class, as well as outside material when appropriate, is explicitly woven into the discussion at multiple levels. Additional sources are used to support claims without redundancy.	Source material from class is used consistently throughout the discussion, although sometimes implicitly. All major branches of a discussion have some support but there may be some redundancy. Claims at lower levels of a discussion may be less well sourced.	Source material is referenced, but generally only at the higher levels of a discussion. Some branches of a discussion may not have source material referenced. Ideas and concepts from source material may be mentioned, but connection to specific source materials not clearly stated, relying instead on context to	Source material is not directly engaged with at all, or only engaged with at points where it is irrelevant. There may be some implicit references to the source material, but the context provides insufficient background to clarify this reference.

			determine relevance.	
Mastery of Material	Usage of source material is accurate and insightful, demonstrating consistent knowledge of meaning and nuance of source material.	Usage of source material is accurate, but may fail to go beyond redescribing ideas and information contained in text. There may be small inaccuracies in usage of source material, but not in a way that seriously impedes demonstration of comprehension.	Usage of source material is mostly accurate. Ideas are presented in ways that are simplistic or that fail to go beyond restatement. There may be a few significant inaccuracies, but they do not seriously change the overall significance of material	Source material is not directly used at all, or is used in a way that demonstrates serious misunderstandings.
Ability to Construct a Thesis	Thesis is clearly and concisely stated. Top level claims provide clear, comprehensive and concise coverage of main strategies to defend or attack thesis.	Thesis is clearly stated. Top level claims identify main strategies to defend or attack the thesis. While there may be some gaps in the comprehensive nature of these strategies, claims presented cover sufficient ground to either accept or reject the thesis.	Thesis is stated in a way that is generally accurate but may not be clear or precise. The topic is stated, but the argument is not made clear by the thesis. Top level claims for the most part identify strategies to defend or attack the thesis, but do so in a non-comprehensive way. Connection between top-level claims and the thesis is only present implicitly, and not clearly communicated.	What is presented as the thesis does not qualify as a thesis. The general topic is either not identified or identified too vaguely to convey the topic being approached. There is no explicit relation between top-level claims and the thesis.

<p>Logical Structure of Kialo Claims</p>	<p>Arguments are clearly organized, and organization is explicitly communicated. Pros, cons and comments at all levels follow from a thesis claim. Claims become progressively more specific and detailed moving down the tree from the thesis. Arguments are easy to understand and respond to at every location.</p>	<p>Arguments are well organized, particularly at top levels. Specific claims are brought in at the relevant thread, and grouped together with related claims</p>	<p>Arguments are somewhat organized, but contain some problems that impede clarity. These may include: some duplicate claims, posts that contain more than one claim, or claims that don't clearly fit within the Pro/Con structure.</p>	<p>The discussion contains claims, but the argument requires additional work to locate and understand. Claims are often too long, misplaced, or do not follow from a central thesis.</p>
<p>Constructive Interaction</p>	<p>Substantial contributions provide feedback, comments, or sub-claims to promote further discussion. This work is done in such a way as to expand upon and clarify the texts and sources used in the discussion. Interactions include a mixture of questions and suggestions. Suggestions are made to facilitate the quality of the discussion as a whole.</p>	<p>Contributions added timely, informative, and respectful comments to the work of other contributors. There are a mixture of questions and clarifications.</p>	<p>Contributions demonstrate a willingness to help others but sometimes make unclear or untimely comments. There is a greater emphasis on "reactive" contributions (responding to someone else) then on proactive contributions.</p>	<p>Contributions either fail to respond to comments or respond in such a way that hinders further discussion.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Ability to Present Both Sides</p>	<p>There are meaningful claims and comments that have been added to both sides of the discussion. Contributions have demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the negatives and positives on both sides of the discussion. The strongest versions of claims on both sides are presented, irrespective of the student's own position.</p>	<p>There are claims on both the pro and con sides that are relevant to the discussion. Straw man arguments are avoided.</p>	<p>The student has attempted to add claims on both sides of the discussion, but some may be unclear or unrelated. Positions on one side may sometimes be overly simplistic straw man arguments.</p>	<p>The student has either failed to add claims or comments on one side of the discussion, or has added claims that are not relevant. One side or the other may be presented in an extreme way, with clear straw man arguments.</p>
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Scheduled Responsibilities for Groups

	#4	#5
G1	DA -	DB+
G2	DA +	DA -
G3	DB +	DB -
G4	DB -	DA +

- DA + The group debating the pro side in debate 1
- DA – The group debating the con side in debate 1
- DB + The group debating the pro side in debate 2
- DB – The group debating the con side in debate 2

Example Structure of Debate

The con side initial arguments and follow up

The screenshot shows a debate interface with the following components:

- Hierarchy Diagram:** A small tree diagram at the top with a white root node, two green child nodes, and two red child nodes.
- Instructor's Claim:** A post by 'oakonomicus' with the text: "Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim."
- Initial Arguments Section:** A post by 'oakonomicus' with the text: "Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Oppose the instructors claim here by adding your con. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the con side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday." Below this text are two buttons: a green one labeled "Pros" and a yellow one labeled "Cons".
- Follow-up Arguments Section:** Two posts by 'oakonomicus'. The left one explains that initial arguments can be posted here as sub-claims to support or oppose a parent claim. The right one explains that follow-up arguments are posted as sub-claims to the initial arguments to strengthen or oppose them.

Handwritten red annotations include:

- A red arrow pointing from the text "Click here to add claims" to the "Cons" button in the initial arguments section.
- A red arrow pointing from the text "Click here to add claims" to the "Cons" button in the follow-up arguments section.

The pro side initial arguments and follow up

The screenshot shows a debate interface with a hierarchy of claims. At the top is a tree diagram with a root node and three child nodes. Below it is a post from 'oakonomicus' with the text 'Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim.' Below that is another post from 'oakonomicus' with the text: 'Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday.' Below this text are two buttons: a green '+ Pros' button and a red '+ Cons' button. Below these are two columns of text. The left column explains that initial arguments can be posted here as sub-claims to provide additional evidence or support. The right column explains that follow-up arguments are posted here as sub-claims to oppose the initial argument. A red arrow points from the 'Click here to add sub-claims' text to the '+ Cons' button.

oakonomicus

Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim.

oakonomicus

Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday.

Pros

Cons

oakonomicus

Initial arguments can also be posted here if someone has made a claim that you were planning on making. You use this pro sub-claim to provide additional evidence or support for the initial argument made your teammate. Your teammates initial argument is the parent claim to this sub-claim. The pro sub-claim supports the claim immediately above it: it supports its parent claim, regardless of the fact that it may oppose claims higher up the hierarchy.

oakonomicus

Follow up arguments are posted here as a sub-claim to the initial arguments. Oppose the initial argument made above. Remember you are all working together, this the first opportunity to start strengthening the entire argument. The initial responses are the parent of this sub-claim. The con sub-claim opposes the claim immediately above it: it opposes its parent claim, regardless of the fact that it may support claims higher up the hierarchy.

Click here to add sub-claims

Evaluators comments

oakonomicus

Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim.

oakonomicus

Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday.

Show older... Show Comments

Created

Created this pro:
"Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday."
underneath [Instructors debate prompt...](#)

You (3) · 34m

@all As an evaluator you need to comment on two different initial arguments in each debate. Each member is responsible for four comments in total, two in each debate. Use these comments as an opportunity to help your classmates strengthen their arguments. Make sure to let them know you commented by starting with the @all which notifies everybody in the discussion. Note that you can also use @reply to notify everyone who has commented or modified the claim in some way.

Click here to comment

Voting Feature

oakonomicus

Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim.

RATE CLAIM'S IMPACT ON PARENT

0 1 2 3 4

Impact - Click to rate claim's impact

Initial arguments posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday.

Pros + Cons +

oakonomicus

Initial arguments can also be posted here if someone has made a claim that you were planning on making. You use this pro sub-claim to provide additional evidence or support for the initial argument made your teammate. Your teammates initial argument is the parent claim to this sub-claim. The pro sub-claim supports the claim immediately above it: it supports its parent claim, regardless of the fact that it may oppose claims higher up the hierarchy.

oakonomicus

Follow up arguments are posted here as a sub-claim to the initial arguments. Oppose the initial argument made above. Remember you are all working together, this the first opportunity to start strengthening the entire argument. The initial responses are the parent of this sub-claim. The con sub-claim opposes the claim immediately above it: it opposes its parent claim, regardless of the fact that it may support claims higher up the hierarchy.

Click here to vote



Chat feature

Click here to chat

The screenshot shows a web interface for a debate. At the top, it says "Debate 1 Week 3". Below this, there are "Following" and "Share" buttons. The main content area features a tree diagram and a post from "oakonomicus" with the text "Instructors debate prompt. This is the instructors claim." Below this is a "RATE CLAIM'S IMPACT ON PARENT" section with a progress bar from 0 to 4. A second post from "oakonomicus" follows, containing detailed instructions: "Initial argument posted here as sub-claim to the instructors claim. Support the instructors claim here by adding your pro. Remember to keep it to just one concise claim. This is where the group which is assigned the pro side will post their initial arguments. You must post 4 claims by the first Wednesday. The instructors claim is the parent to this sub-claim. And this claim will become the parent to the follow up arguments made on Friday." At the bottom, there are "Pros" and "Cons" buttons with plus signs. On the right side, a chat window is open, showing a message: "Wow, these instructions are awesome, just like this assignment!". A red box highlights the chat icon in the top right, with a red arrow pointing to it and the handwritten text "Click here to chat".