

# DEBATE SERIES

## THE RULES OF THE GAME

« *There is no conversation more boring than the one where everybody agrees.* »

Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592)

### General Information

As a tool to critically analyse arguments made on various topics encountered both in the lectures and the literature, the debate series will be a core process in your intellectual journey within The Global Economy course. Using the rhetoric tools of your choice, your goal as a team will be to build the most convincing argument in order to win the debate.

The Debate Series is divided in 2 macro-debates (*Is Capitalism Sustainable?* and *The Green Economy*) that each includes 3 subtopics (6 debates in total). Each subtopic (e.g. “*Pricing Nature is the best way to protect it*”) will be debated by two teams of 3 or 4 students – one **affirmative** in support of the statement, and one **negative** arguing against it. As a course requirement you will have to take part in only one debate. The choice of the subtopic is yours, but as the number of available spots for each debate is limited, you will choose on a first-come first-served basis. We will bring a paper sheet at one of the sessions for you to register your name in a debate team.

### Structure of the debate

Here you can find the specific rules that will frame the discussion and ensure the fairness of the debate. Students are provided with an overview of the subject prior to the task being set. Each debate, from start to finish lasts **45 minutes**, with 3 debates taking place each evening. The formal debate will last 30 minutes, with 15 minutes set aside for feedback, discussion and questions including the audience.

In each debate, there are two teams, an **Affirmative team** and a **Negative team**. The affirmative team is arguing that the topic (or *motion*) of the debate is true, and vice versa for the negative team. The Affirmative team starts the debate. Assuming your team has three members, you will have 5 minutes to talk (1A<sup>1</sup>, 1N, 2A, 2N, 3A, 3N). Each speaker has certain roles/tasks that should be followed, including defining the terms of the debate, proposing your own arguments to build your case, and also rebutting the other team’s arguments. Only the current speaker is allowed to speak (no interjections), unless it takes the form of a ‘*points of information*’ (POI). We recommend you get acquainted with those terms by reading more about the general rules of debating prior to the debate sessions.

Moderating each debate will be a **chairperson** (one of the course coordinators), who will introduce each debate, and will provide a 1-minute warning after which the speaker should wrap up their

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<sup>1</sup> 1A = first speaker of the affirmative team, 2N = second speaker of the negative team etc.

argument within the minute (at the end of the minute, the chairperson will interrupt the speaker). Each speaker must talk at least until the 1-minute warning (i.e. a minimum of 3 or 4 minutes depending on the number of speakers in your group).

**The audience** consists of everyone involved in the other debates. The Audience must remain silent during the debate, but are encouraged to ask questions during the last 15 minutes (*open floor* period). The audience will be the only judge of the debate outcome.

## General Guidelines

- “The debate is between teams, not individuals. Each team member has a specific part of the team case to present, and must also attack the other side and defend the team from attack.”
- “Each team must persuade the audience that its argument is superior. To do this it must present sound logical arguments, it must present them in an interesting and persuasive speaking style, and it must structure and prioritise its arguments. Always start your speech by addressing the arguments previously made by the opposing team. Balance your speech between rebutting the previous opposing argument and building your own argument.” Overall, a debate is not a disconnected series of mini-TED talks; it is an interactive exchange of arguments.
- “When addressing the chairperson, use ‘Mr(s) Chairperson’. When addressing the audience, use ‘ladies and gentlemen’. Begin speaking with ‘Good evening Mr(s) Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen.’... End with ‘So Mr(s) chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion...’”
- “Keep in mind your ‘*Matter, Method and Manner*’. Matter is about a strong argument, with relevant facts and strong reason. Method is about structuring your debate well, both individually and as a team. Manner is about your presentation – speak clearly, confidently and face both the opposing team and the audience.”

We hope these debates will be both fun and serious. Public speaking is never easy, but practice makes perfect. For those of you interested, there will be a workshop on *Rhetoric, Public Speaking and Debating* toward the end of Module 1. The goal of this workshop is to give you insight into the theoretical basis of rhetoric as well as tips on speech writing, public speaking and debating. More than anything, it will be the perfect opportunity to practice those skills.

Also, we intend to film the debates, and make them available for you to view and review your own (or others) performance following the debate (videos will be privately posted on The Global Economy Youtube page). If you do not want to be filmed, please let us know before the debate day.

## A note on the Literature

You are free to use any piece of literature, both from internal (Course Reader, lectures notes, Compendium and course books) or external sources. While referencing your source is not compulsory for the debate, you are more than welcome to cite your sources as way to strengthen your arguments.

## DEBATE I: Is Capitalism Sustainable? (Mon 14 Oct)

### (I.1) **[Economic Growth]** *Economic growth is needed in order to afford the transition to a sustainable and desirable future.*

The debating teams will discuss the role of economic growth as a factor of human progress using a multidimensional analysis including economic, environmental and social factors. Are there fundamental limits to growth? Is economic growth necessary for civilisation to flourish? Can economic growth reduce extreme poverty and inequality between rich and poor? Can economic growth be decoupled from its biophysical impact? How much space can efficiency improvements provide? What is the impact of population growth? These are some of the questions that could be raised in this debate.

### (I.2) **[The Value of Nature]** *Pricing Nature is the best way to protect it.*

The debating teams will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of neoclassical and ecological frameworks to solve the on-going environmental crisis. Does a price on ecosystem services help us to appreciate its value, or blind us to its intangible and inherent value? Are carbon markets our most efficient and politically feasible tool for reducing emissions? Comparing the fields of Environmental Economics and Ecological Economics as reference schools of thought, you may consider the threats and opportunities of different theoretical strategies to build a more environmentally friendly economic system.

### (I.3) **[Free Trade]** *Everyone can prosper with free trade.*

The debating teams will discuss the concept of free trade from a moral, economic and socio-political stance. Both historical implementations of the concept of free trade and theoretical arguments will be used to build your argumentation. If we benefit from trading as individuals, can we not benefit by trading as countries? Is the Swedish fika helping Colombia develop? Considering the pillars of sustainable development (economical, environmental and social), the debate will discuss if free trade – both as theoretical concept and in its diverse range of implementation in practice – is either a driver or a hindrance for collective welfare.

## DEBATE II: The Green Economy? (Wed 18 Nov)

### (II.1) [Foreign Aid] *Foreign aid is doing more harm than good.*

The debate will revolve around the concept of foreign aid and its associated practices. Is foreign aid helping poor countries to develop in a sustainable way? Is foreign aid a solution to world poverty, and inequality? Who benefits, and who should benefit from foreign aid? Are all types of foreign aid good/bad? The debating teams shall discuss conceptual definitions, as well as practical cases of successful and unsuccessful transfers of resources from one country to another.

### (II.2) [Corporate Social Responsibility] *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is key to building a green and ethical economy.*

The debating teams will question the sustainability of multinational businesses and their role in the global economy. With a more effective international framework for governing corporations, can CSR become an effective tool in a green economy? Is CSR real, or just a form of green washing and/or fair washing? Does CSR benefit the corporation, society as a whole, or both? Will consumer preferences for ethical behaviour drive the market in a democratic way towards a more sustainable equilibrium? The debate shall discuss the essence of our modern business culture and the role it has to play in the solving of sustainability issues.

### (II.3) [The Working Week] *Working less will contribute to a more sustainable and desirable society.*

The debating teams will analyse the links between work and prosperity. Can we maintain higher employment by working less (sharing the work). Will working harder move us faster towards a sustainable future? Should full employment be a goal for society? The debate aims at comparing theories with historical examples (French 35 hours, the great Depression etc.), and investigate whose responsibility it is to decide how much we work. Using concepts of sustainable development and resilience, the debate shall decide whether or not a more regulated labour market will lead to a more sustainable/resilient society.