

SDS Introduction to Argumentation

Plan for Today

- Attendance
- News pieces
- Common mistakes in quiz 1
 - Missing person
- Basics of argumentation
- Argumentation mistakes
- Practice drills

Common Mistakes

- The length of prep time
- The role of CG/CO
- DLO's team
- The length of a speech
- POI time limit

Argumentation. Internal Structure SEXIC

- **S**tatement
- **E**xplanation
- **eX**ample
- **I**mpact
- + **C**omparative

Basic Logic

- If $A=B$ and $B=C$, then $A=C$
- Example:
 - Cat (A) is an animal (B)
 - Animal (B) are less smart than humans (C)
 - Cat (A) is less smart than humans (C)

Argumentation. Internal Structure SEXIC

- **Statement** is your conclusion
- **Explanation** is how you get to this conclusion from a basic “universally” accepted assumption
 - Why is this true
 - Multiple warrants -> better probability
- **Example** show that your explanation is realistic

Argumentation. Internal Structure SEXIC

- **Impact** is why anyone should care about your argument
 - Degree
 - Target
 - What groups are affected? How are they going to react?
 - Big groups vs important (most vulnerable) groups
 - Short-term vs long-term
- **Comparative** is (1) explaining that your argument is unique and (2) weighing it against the Squo or opposing arguments

Weighing

- Probability
- Importance
 - “Even if”

Argumentation. External Structure

- Separate points + subpoints
- Signposting
- Clear transitions

Argumentation mistake #1

- Self-evident conclusions do not exist in debates
- Examples
 - Narratives: “We should not have unlimited immigration, because it will lead to a backlash and more people will become racist” – what harm does this lead to?
 - Principles: “We should allow unlimited immigration, because borders are arbitrary” – why is arbitrariness bad?
 - Generic outcome: “We should make voting compulsory because it will increase democratic participation” – why is democratic participation good or important?

Argumentation mistake #1

- How to avoid this?
 - Narratives: Always explain why an argument will lead to a practical change / a shift in perceptions that leads to practical outcomes / is the only way a marginalized issue or group can get exposure.
 - Principles: Explain why that is a principle we share, something we find morally abhorrent, why is a principle worth upholding. (Alex's workshop is great!)
 - Value neutral or generic outcomes: Explanatory. Need to explain one step further - why is this bad.

Mistake #2 possibility vs probability

- Examples

- “What if the government is corrupt? They can use this policy to their advantage!” – but will they?
- “We should ban gambling because poor people lose a lot of their money and get stuck in poverty” – but do they?

Mistake #2 possibility vs probability

- How to avoid
 - Characterization!
 - Find structural explanations. Look at the words in the motion, details about your context.
 - “Might” vs “Will” vs “Likely”

Mistake #3 exaggeration and generalization

- Example
 - “This motion will end poverty / will lead to World War 3 / will end the Israel-Palestine Conflict / will end sexism” – you sure about that?
- How to avoid
 - Specificity
 - Trade off groups, pick the most important one

Mistake #4 Leaving your arguments unprotected

- You must expect the other side – and start fighting on that clash. Always ask yourself in prep time – what is the other side going to say, where is the disagreement going to happen? You can start fighting and minimize it.
- Pre-empt attacks on your argument, push yourself for more detail and one more why. If you had to attack your argument – how would you do it? That's the crucial link to develop. Ask yourself why things are true, what POI you would ask. How speaker scales work.

Mistake #5 Not thinking as a judge

- Focus on the logic. Before the debate, what sentence, if I convince the judge, means I win the debate? What is a case, rather than a list of arguments.
- Ask yourself which arguments are strongest. Track the debate: Is your argument such that it relies disproportionately on one single premise?
- How do the arguments play out? What do you need to do to win? It is a comparison: which arguments are biggest, are you only mitigating or are you defeating? Strong arguments: attack them, defeat them. Choose your extension accordingly.
- Judges are subjective humans who are happy to be swayed.
- This means: impacting matters. Tell the judges how to judge. It can also be useful to also tell judges what they can and cannot credit.
- This means: Clarity matters. Teamwork is important. Having a team line you mention often is good. In whip, don't let new material distract the judges, and win with what has been said so far.

Logical fallacies

- Addressing authorities
- Strawman argument
- False cause
- Appeal to emotions
- Ad hominem
- Because it exists, it is good
- Black or white
- Nature appeal

Practice drills

- **TH opposes the portrayal of criminal lifestyles as "cool" in popular entertainment (e.g. Narcos, Breaking Bad, Scarface)**