

MIT Junction Seminar

How to Question Everything and Argue with Everybody

Syllabus, Summer 2010

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Room: TBA

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Description:

In this course, we will teach you how to think logically, spot mistakes, formulate opinions and change those opinions in the event of new information. This should allow you to rationally carry on (and win) a debate or argument about any issue while avoiding common fallacies.

This isn't your politician's debate course; sounding elitist and condescending is not only acceptable but it is encouraged!

Day 1 –

- Introductions
- Deductive reasoning in popular culture
- Guided debate
Is homework harmful or helpful?

Day 2 –

- Formulating arguments
- Choosing a side
- Deductive reasoning in popular culture
Famous presidential speeches
- Debate and discussion
Are law enforcement cameras an invasion of privacy?

Day 3 –

- Logical fallacies
- Structured rebuttals
How to eliminate ambiguity by word choice and sentence structure
- Debate and discussion
Is it ethical to use animals for research?

Day 4 –

- Classical rhetoric
- Rhetoric in popular culture
- Topics to avoid
- How to lose
- SOMEONE IS WRONG ON THE INTERNET!
- Debate and Discussion
Should the alcohol drinking age be increased or decreased?