LEARNING ACTIVITY DESIGN
The class was divided into three teams, with a fixed membership for the 15-week long semester in order to conduct the debate tournament, with each team participation in each of the 12 debates in one of the rotating roles (4 times as a judge panel, 4 times presenting proposition, and 4 times in opposition).
When acting as a judge (audience), a team was not required to prepare for the debate. A team was assigned to argue in the debate had to prepare for both side arguments, as only on the day of the debate the decision was made by the moderator, which team of the two preparing for the debate was to be FOR and which was to argue AGAINST the motion.
Debating teams had to prepare a research write-up paper to be submitted before the debate to the instructor with detailed theoretical arguments and empirical research findings to be covered in the debate, both supporting proposition and opposition, supplementing the extemporaneous speaking during the debate with depth and density of the arguments.
Each debate was scheduled to last 40 minutes (only a part of the class-time) with the presentation of both affirmative and negative sides of the argument interchangeably.
The debates had a formal structure and a role-play form, with more flexible format than a typical Oxford-style debate, allowing for a less rigid protocol for timing and order, favoring instead more intense and dynamic exchange of arguments, cross-examination and rebuttal. The debates were still conducted as a contest with explicit rules (for a smooth professional flow, with rather short opening statements and impactful closing arguments, additionally permitting comments, supporting arguments, questions from the audience, presentation of points for immediate refutation against statements made in the course of the debate.
The instructor acting as a moderator had a crucial role to maintain the balance and the order of the debate following the etiquette, making sure that each panelist has an opportunity to speak, and steering the debate to thoroughly deliberate all relevant merits of the issues.
The debates were based on a sharply framed motion of an interesting and relevant topic – a specific question or statement to moot easily for both sides with a variety of valid arguments both for and against. The objective was not necessary to look for a solution but to offer two choices only – proposition (for) or opposition (against), with the purpose to convince (win) the audience (judges) by insisting (supporting and defending) own position, and not yielding to the opponent (questioning and countering) arguments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
These debates:
- Provided students with a distinguishable enriching experience from similar courses offered.
- Covered the course contents in a comprehensive fashion.
- Achieved many learning outcomes of the course.
- Provided enjoyable experience for students.
- Supported student’s engagement.
- Provided experiential learning opportunity.
- Fostered competitive team spirit.
- Created fun and thrill in the classroom.

RATIONALITY OF THE STUDY
Debated were additionally motivated by the following objectives:

To polarize opinions to let the audience understand both extremes, to prove that the truth is somewhere in between, with no easy solution.
To engage the audience in voting, so they have skin in the game, not just listening.
To have a “conclusion” everyone wants to continue with the discussion further on, outside the class.
To initiate the interest in the topics everyone can relate to.
To create a long-lasting memorable experience.

THE DEBATES TOPICS AND THE SEQUENCE FOLLOWED
1. Non-tariff trade barriers and trade wars.
2. OPEC policies and international implications.
4. NAFTA – benefits and costs.
5. US current account deficit.
6. Chinese policy of undervalued domestic currency – an internal issue?
7. US debt ceiling increase or not?
11. IMF role in the recent country bailouts.
12. Debt reduction and debt forgiveness.
12. Deleveraging and economic policies (present & past).

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
- Each debate concluded with the anonymous ballot taken individually by the members of the audience casting the vote (the judging panel team) with the results pronounced officially by the moderator.
- The judgment was based on the overall ability of the team to convince the judges to their side of the argument (in favor – pro or against – con).
- No personal opinions, neither personal attitudes were permitted.
- The judgment was influenced by the following criteria of assessment:
  - quality and strength of arguments
  - presentation of evidence
  - rhetoric
  - charisma
  - humor
  - timing
  - framing
  - analytical and supporting skills
  - entertainment

The academic rigor was enforced by selecting specific and current debates issues, corresponding to the course topics to be recognized and covered by students, requiring vital required texts by mentors. Students were expected to make connections to the concepts, to the real data, and to the current events.

REFERENCES
1. An Introduction to Academic Debate. https://www.google.com/search?q=an+introduction+to+academic+debate
citation in: Oxford Style Guide
- A Discussion-Graded in depth and informed by Reasoned Analysis
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pedia.org/wiki/Oxford_Style
- Rules of Conduct Not Applicable to Contests EXCEPT OXFORD – OREGON DEBATE HTML.

Oxford-style inspired academic competitive debates with a twist on hot topics of international economics and finance
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