



## **Douglass Debates 2022 Resolution**

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### *Save the date for Spring tournament:*

This year's annual Spring debate tournament will be held virtually. Dates will be released to coaches and FDI Directors as soon as they are finalized.

### *Background on Douglass Debates*

All PASSHE undergraduates are eligible to participate in the Douglass Debates. Douglass Debates is now in its eighth year. The culminating activity for debaters is competing in the statewide Spring tournament.

### *The debate topic for Spring 2022 is:*

### **Resolved:**

**Universities should encourage instruction in critical race theory across the curriculum.**

### *Background on the topic*

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a topic that has generated a significant amount of attention and controversy across a wide range of social and political contexts. Delgado & Stefancic (2017) define CRT as a movement consisting of "activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" by calling into question "the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (p. 2). Although the movement originally focused on the operation of racism in legal and regulatory contexts, contemporary interest in CRT has expanded across all areas of social and political life. Unsurprisingly, CRT has become yet another front in the seemingly never-ending culture wars over the direction of racial progress in society (Edsall, 2021). Recent controversies have centered on curriculum design in K-12 schools, and debaters will be asked to consider the role that instruction in CRT should play in higher education.

There are several lines of inquiry that debaters may want to peruse as they develop their cases on the topic. A key theme developed in CRT is that racism is produced and reproduced through mundane institutional practices that give shape to and are shaped by the everyday experiences of people of color. One such practice is the bureaucratic process of curriculum design. A considerable degree of institutional power is enacted through the curricular process,

and debaters will want to consider the legal, regulatory, and ideological barriers that prevent teaching and learning about CRT across all programs of study.

All debaters will want to consider the taken for granted institutional practices that shape their educational experiences. Those interested in the education field may want to dive into the nuts and bolts of the curricular process to advocate best practices of teaching and learning in CRT. Debaters will need to justify why instruction in CRT should or should not be embedded in all classes. The topic also raises issues of academic freedom, and debaters will likely need to weigh the benefits of instruction in CRT against real and perceived concerns with “cancel culture” and the apparent demise of free discussion on campus.

Debaters may also want to conduct research on CRT itself to test key assumptions made by the resolution. Given the complexity of the topic, debaters will need to define and justify their interpretation of CRT. The topic itself presumes that CRT is appropriate for the context of higher education—a presumption that debaters should be prepared to test and defend. Debaters may also ask if CRT is the best approach to take in the struggle against racism, and they also may want to consider the extent to which CRT may hinder efforts towards the development of intersectionality with feminist and/or LGBTQ+ causes.

Debaters may also want to consider what it means for universities to *encourage* instruction in CRT. You can do so by substituting the verb *encourage* with stronger alternatives like *prohibit* or *require*. How do these substitutions change the meaning and significance of the resolution? This exercise should provide rudimentary insight into the power of institutions to define reality—the experiences of teachers and learners in a university that mandates instruction in CRT would differ substantially from those that prohibit or encourage it. Consideration of such differences may provide insights that can be developed in affirmative and opposition cases.

Given the extent of social, political, and economic power at stake, debaters may want to apply the interest convergence thesis to the topic itself. According to the interest convergence thesis, “the interests of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (Bell, 1980, p. 523). Discourses of diversity, equity, and inclusion have arguably been colonized and corporatized by elite predominantly white institutions to appear concerned with the struggle against racism while the exploitative power structures behind such discourses remain intact and unchanged (Shih, 2017). In a world where instruction in CRT is embedded across the curriculum and touted in multi-million-dollar advertising campaigns, Bell’s incisive analysis compels us to contemplate the following question—who benefits?

### *Brief Bibliography*

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## **Tournament Guidelines Spring 2022**

### **Format**

Two-person team debate. Each competing university may register up to seven (7) teams.

### **Assigning Affirmative and Opposition**

Assignments for the preliminary rounds will be announced prior to the beginning of the tournament. In prelims, teams alternate between arguing the Affirmative side in some rounds and the Opposition side in other rounds, depending on random assignment or power matching procedures. Most teams will have two Aff prelim rounds and two Opp prelim rounds. For elimination rounds, a coin toss will determine Aff/Opp assignments unless teams have debated earlier in the tournament at which case their sides will switch.

### **Topic**

Resolved: Universities should encourage instruction in critical race theory across the curriculum.

### **Research Prize**

Each year, a prize is awarded for the squad that provides the best research. To be eligible for the prize, the coach must email a research packet to the tournament director at the beginning of the tournament (date to be announced). Squads may use any style for their bibliography (Chicago, MLA, APA, etc), as long as the format is consistent and complete citations for all sources are provided.

### **Judges**

Each school is asked to provide at least one judge per round. Please send an email to RJ Green with the names, email addresses, and availability during the tournament dates of possible judges. Assignments will be finalized and communicated by email before the tournament.

### **Role of the Judge**

A judge determines the winner and loser of each round. Judges are usually college professors or community members with debate experience. Judges assign points (0-2) in each of ten area for a maximum score of 20 points. The team with the highest point value wins.

## **Team Score Sheet**

Immediately after each round, debaters are shown the judge's "Team Score Sheet." The score sheet details the judge's decision. Debaters can use this feedback to prepare for their next rounds.

## **Use of Evidence and Academic Integrity**

Debaters are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Upon request, debaters must be prepared to provide full citations for all evidence read in a round. Debaters may request to see the evidence of opposing teams. If a judge determines that a team has falsified or misused evidence, the team loses the round. To maintain competitive integrity, *during the course of the round debaters should not consult with others or with outside sources of information not prepared prior to the debate.*

## **Electronic Devices**

Debaters may use devices such as laptops and tablets during the tournament. Debaters should make every attempt to participate in their debate from a location with a stable, reliable internet connection with a computer capable of using Zoom or similar platform.

## **SPEAKING ORDER**

- Affirmative opening speech (6 minutes)
- Cross examination (3 minutes)
- Opposition opening speech (6 minutes)
- Cross examination (3 minutes)
- Affirmative rebuttal speech (4 minutes)
- Opposition rebuttal speech (4 minutes)

**Cross Examination:** There are two cross-ex periods. Cross-ex always follows an opening speech. Teams can decide which member will conduct cross ex, but only one team member is permitted to cross examine during that period. The person delivering the opening speech must also answer questions during cross examination.

**Timing Speeches:** Judges are the official time keepers of each round. However, debaters should time themselves. Debaters also have the right to time their opponents and to make a point of order to the judge, should the opponents go significantly over time.

**Preparation time:** Each team has a grand total of five minutes of preparation time, which they can use throughout the debate round. The judge is the official time keeper for preparation time, although teams should also time themselves.