

# **St. Joseph's College of Commerce**

## **(Autonomous)**

#163, Brigade Road, Bangalore - 560025



## **Department of English**

B.Com/BBA/B.Sc Open Elective

Sem III

**Academic Year 2024-25**

# Open Elective Course

## Debate and Argumentation: The Art of Persuasion

### Course Objectives

- To articulate thoughts with clarity
- To engage with ideas considering multiple viewpoints
- To participate in effective evidence-based conversation

### Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate debate and argumentation skills in everyday conversations
- Articulate their views with the support of logical evidence
- Develop an understanding of any given context after considering multiple perspectives
- Showcase the skills of negotiation/compromise and agree/disagree in during discussions

Debate and argumentation are often perceived as intense exchange of ideas or thoughts aiming at justifying oneself. This reduces the scope of argumentation to winning or losing. However, it is important to understand, the skill to argue is ultimately the skill to think, think clearly, and it need not necessarily require an opponent. A thinking mind is busy with thinking and conversing with multiple sides of one's own psyche, with the society and different institutions or cultural situations. In such situations, the mind needs these skills to broaden its perspective and arrive at clarity. This course does not look at argumentation as a tool to incapacitate and dismantle opponents, but a process to effectively articulate one's thoughts through speaking and writing.

The course is comprised of the following modules:

### Module 1: Understanding the art of Argumentation

15 hrs

### Readings:

- They Had a Four-Hour Argument About Salt – Zarah Butcher-Mcgunnigle
- Dialogues (extract from Gorgias) – Plato
- Rhetoric as a Counterpart to Dialectic – Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

- Political cartoon (students will be asked to identify the argument in a given political cartoon by R.K. Laxman or Satish Acharya and justify the socio-political relevance of the argument)
- Discuss a government policy (economic, health, education etc. by switching positions) – Students will be given a list of government policies from which they need to pick anyone. Students will be asked to analyse the article by arguing in favour and against its relevance.

## **Module 2: Diverse Formats of Argumentation**

**15 hrs**

- TV Debate and TV Shows
- Panel Discussions
- Conversation Format
- Parliamentary Debate
- Arguing with the Self

In this module students will engage with different formats of television debates to develop an understanding of how debate and argumentation skills are used in each of these given formats. In “Arguing with the Self “ component, students will identify and study any argument or conflict they internally dealt with.

### **Readings:**

- The Changing Nature of TV Debates Claims Another Prime-Time Victim, Common Sense and Decency – Jawid Laiq
- How Indian TV news became a theatre of aggression fanning the flames of populism – Raksha Kumar

## **Module 3: Practical Sessions on Debate and Argumentation**

**15 hrs**

In this module students will participate in debates, discussions, and conversations as **participants and interlocutors**. The class will be divided into different groups. Demo sessions of all the formats mentioned in module II will be conducted in class. All students will have to participate in a minimum of three formats as a participant, interlocutor, and moderator.

### **Examination and Evaluation Process**

The paper carries a total of 100 marks in which 40 marks will be finalized through formative assessment. The remaining 60 marks will be assessed through End Semester Examination.

### **Internal Assessment Part I**

1. Divide the class in to different groups of three members each. Provide each group with a situation to engage in a discussion by involving basic argumentation skills. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their ability to apply the fundamental skills of argumentation in the discussion. **(10 marks)**
2. Students will be asked to be an interlocutor in a panel discussion or will be asked to converse on a select topic with a partner. Marks will be awarded based on the level of debating skills displayed. **(10 marks)**

### **Internal Assessment Part II (Midterm Test)**

The midterm test will be conducted for 20 marks. And, the test will include two writing tasks carrying 10 marks each.

3. This assignment expects students to engage with an argumentative essay. Students will be given an unseen argumentative essay and asked to complete the following tasks
  - a. Identify the central argument in the essay. Students will also have to
  - b. Write a response to the central argument in the argumentative essay writing format.**(10 marks)**
4. Students will be given a sample conversation for reference. And, they will be asked to rewrite the conversation by exchanging the given point of view of the participants. Also, students will have to justify the changed views with fresh arguments by placing them in new premises. **(10 marks)**