Simulation and Debate: Alternative Tools for Learning and Engagement in Political Theory

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I. Introduction

We have developed the following annotated model syllabi for an introduction to western political theory course and "starter packs" for political theorists who are considering incorporating simulation and/or debate in their courses. While these tools may be applied to courses at all levels, we believe that they can be particularly useful to instructors in introductory courses seeking to achieve four main goals. These goals are:

1) Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills
2) Enhance understanding of concepts and ideas
3) Make political theory relatable and real for students
4) Encourage engagement and enjoyment in the study of political theory

Success on each front clearly benefits both students and faculty, especially if we take a longer view of the degree path culminating in advanced study at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, these shared aims should encourage innovation in applied learning and teaching philosophies, which is the chief aim of this instructional packet. We would stress, however, that one does not need to radically reimagine a course's focus and objectives in order to implement debates and/or simulations. With the help of this packet, instructors will be able to determine an effective 'fit', while also learning how best to implement debate and simulation exercises, designing assignment and reading structures, and promote student commitment.

The document is organized into the following major sections:
II. The Benefit of Simulations & Debates for Student Engagement
III. Sample Syllabi for Integrating Debate and Simulation in Introduction to Political Theory courses
IV. Starter Packs (more resources for instructors to adopt the provided course examples or adapt them)

II. The Benefit of Simulations & Debates for Student Engagement

There can be no doubt that student disengagement is a long-running concern in the American university setting, going back at the very least to the 19th century. In 1877, Henry Adams found his Harvard students so disengaged that he opined that they "could not be much stimulated by any inducements a teacher could suggest" (quoted in Carnes 2014 , 20). The recent move toward active and engaged pedagogies is aimed at overcoming this problem by drawing students into modes of learning that allow them to think autonomously and develop the skill sets to effectively communicate their ways of thinking. In political science, simulations and in-class debates have come to be seen as a powerful tools to increase student engagement and learning.

Within three subfields in political science, the trend toward the use of simulations and debates has caught on and the assessment of simulations using formal evidence has exploded. Lightcap (2009), for instance, has argued that simulations stimulate both learning and engagement in political science courses. Within the teaching of American politics, prior evaluations found simulations increases student learning (Frederking 2005) and promotes the understanding of complex political processes (Mariani and Glenn 2014). Fliter (2009) has described how to design a simulation for the teaching of constitutional law that is designed to foster higher order thinking. In the teaching of international relations, Shellman and Turan (2007) found that simulations enhanced student knowledge of complex international relations theories. While Giovanello, Kirk, and Kromer (2013) found that the use of a simulation increased student enthusiasm for an introductory international relations course. In comparative politics, Galatas (2006) found that a European Union simulation had positive impacts on student learning.

Given the difficulties of engaging students in the abstract ideas involved in political theory courses, as well as the historical distance involved with the study of texts in political theory, one would expect the wide usage of active pedagogies, including simulations and role-immersive debates, in the teaching of political theory. Yet, the use of simulations in political theory has lagged behind; for instance, Moore (2011) reports that only 18.2 percent of political theorists use simulations occasionally or more. Given the powerful effects that Gorton and Havecroft (2012) and Weidenfeld and Fernandez (2016) have found on student learning through the use of role-immersive simulations in political theory, this package of materials is designed to help instructors new to these strategies to incorporate them into their own courses in the history of political thought.

Debate can play a similar, but not identical, role in engaging students. Debate activities are a great pedagogic tool to incorporate into courses because the basic structure of debate is versatile and can be amended to fit a large variety of course structures, participant numbers and learning goals. At its core, debate activities require identifying a central resolution or question to which at least two respondents present differing positions. These positions are developed on the basis of and supported by evidence. Additionally, respondents are challenged to rebut counter-arguments and resolve the debate in their favor despite the objections presented.

As Gary Fine notes in a discussion of the merits of debate:

Debate involves not only the acquisition of knowledge, but a set of verbal and research skills that all persons, not only debaters, use: techniques of persuasion and reasoning. To be competent, one must acquire information processing skills: the ability to gather, organize, and present information. To induce another to ratify one's claims demands facility with words and with evidence. Those who acquire professional skills learn to put forth a line of discourse, and to counter alternate arguments. Learning how to talk—to argue, to counter, and to persuade—is such a critical skill that an explicit focus on how this skill is acquired seems valuable but, surprisingly, has been largely ignored (Fine 2001).

However, unlike simulation, debate need not be immersive. By allowing students to represent (rather than embody) the position of a given thinker, debate can provide a distance from the ideas that enables students to focus on the merits of a given argument, rather than on their personal feelings or opinions respecting that argument.

The two tools are complementary, but also separable. That is, while instructors need not use both tools in a given course, we believe that they can be productively combined (as described in the model syllabus below). Specifically, we believe that debate activities can work towards the four learning goals articulated above while also preparing students for the immersive experience of a simulation activity.

III. Sample Syllabi

The following syllabi provide examples of course structures that involve either debate or simulations. These offer suggestions with respect to assignments and scheduling so as to maximize effectiveness and ensure preparation. One size need not fit all, however, as instructors may wish to vary course content as well as the timing and frequency of debates/simulations. Furthermore, syllabi should be adapted to accommodate differences in course size and availability of instructional resources. (The sample syllabi below were originally designed for small-to-mid-sized courses.)

A. Sample Syllabus: Debate

Course Format This sample syllabus fully integrates a series of in-class debates over the course of the semester with both the course/unit themes and the analytical papers that students write on a thinker in each unit. The readings are selected in part so that major thinkers can be grouped into of sets of 3 which then serve as the basis for periodic in-class debates. Because of limited class time and the need to keep the basis of all strudents' grades the same, each students is assigned either an opening speaker or participant role in the three debates. When they serve as opening speakers, students represent the arguments of one thinker from that unit as they pertain to the course/unit themes (or whatever other prompts are provided: in this case the relevance of their chosen thinker to contemporary political issues). During the class session, each opening speaker presents their prepared remarks, works with the other students that presented on the same speaker to exchanges counter-arguments with the other two groups, and participates in the wider discussion that includes the whole class. In this way, the debates encourage students to (1) understand the arguments of the thinkers by representing and defending them, (2) compare their arguments to other thinkers, and (3) relate them to the course/unit themes, concepts, or key questions. The thinker that a student chooses (or is assigned) is then also the basis of their analytical paper that they write for each unit.

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Introduction to Political Theory

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Course Description
This course gives a general introduction to the study of political theory. The objective is to examine a representative set of texts from the history of political thought, and to discuss how they separately and collectively develop political theories and have resulted in contemporary political ideologies. To that end, this course investigates key themes in political thinking and surveys the development of those concepts in the history of Western thought. We will trace paradigmatic shifts in political ideas as they begin with the ancient Greeks and as they surface again in the 17th and 18th century European thought and make their way into the present day. Political ideas will be examined in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Marx amongst others. We will challenge these ideas with the thinking of some prominent 20th century critics, including Arendt and Foucault.

Some of the thematic questions that will be discussed include: What is the role of power in a community? What is justice and what should be the means and ends of government? What kind of government should we create, and how will power be distributed? How should we prioritize our commitments to ideas like order, justice, liberty, and equality? What role do our material realities, our economies as well as our culture and customs play in the formation of our identities and our commitments? Through close textual readings and contextual analysis, we will test our own assumptions about politics and bring these resources to bear on contemporary issues. And, in so doing, we will attempt to further our understanding of contemporary politics.

Student Learning Goals
As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:
  ● demonstrate a familiarity with main themes of the field of political theory
  ● explain the main concepts used by the thinkers covered in the course
  ● evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments employed in the theories studied and compare them to other theories
  ● apply political theories and thereby analyze contemporary political issues
  ● formulate their own interpretations of the thinkers covered via the in-class debates, papers and exams.

Required Text:
Books denoted with an asterisk * should be purchased in the specific edition listed below; others are widely available in multiple editions, all of which are acceptable.
  ● Plato / Benjamin Jowett (Translator), Six Great Dialogues: Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus, Symposium, The Republic, Edition: 1st, 2007, Publisher: Dover Thrift Editions, ISBN-13: 978-0486454658, ISBN-10: 0486454657
    If you choose to order a different edition, be sure to purchase a book that includes The Apology, Crito and The Republic and line numbers in the margins!
  ● Aristotle / Everson, Stephen (Ed.), Politics and Constitution of Athens, Edition: 2ND 1996, Publisher: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 13: 978-0-521-48400-8, ISBN 10: 0-521-48400-6
  ● Machiavelli, Niccolo, The Prince, Publisher: Penguin Random House, Edition: (REV), ISBN 13: 978-0-14-044107-9, ISBN 10: 0-14-044107-7
  ● *Hobbes, Thomas / Tuck, Richard (Ed.), Leviathan, Edition: REV 1996, Publisher: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 13: 978-0-521-56797-8, ISBN 10: 0-521-56797-1
    Locke, John / Macpherson, C.B. (Ed.), Second Treatise of Government, Edition: 1st, 1980, Publisher: Hackett Publishing Company, ISBN-13: 978-0915144860, ISBN-10: 0915144867
  ● *Rousseau, Jean-Jacques / Scott, John T. (Editor, Translator), Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edition: 2014, Publisher: University of Chicago Press, ISBN 13: 978-0-226-15131-1, ISBN 10: 0-226-15131-X
All other readings are denoted on the syllabus as (online) and will be posted as PDFs online.

Course Requirements
All students must read and actively contribute to the discussions in class. In addition to participating actively, students must complete the following assignments:

- Preparation for, participation in and wrap-up for in-class debates
- Two 3-page analysis papers (complete the first prompt and one more of two provided prompts)
- Mid-term exam consisting of concept description and short essay questions (covers first half of course content)
- Final exam consisting of concept description, short essay questions and one longer essay question (covers second half of course content)

Please note that all papers must be handed in as a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day when the assignment is due. Late papers will be penalized with a reduction of a half letter grade for every day past the deadline.

The course grade is calculated as follows:
Participation: 5%
Debates: 20%
Analysis papers: 15% (X2)
Mid-term Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

Participation: Participation is a combined measure of student engagement in the course (i.e. quality and quantity count!). The participation grade will be based on your in-class contributions that are not explicitly assigned to you: this may include voluntarily asking and answering questions or otherwise offering an opinion/example. Participation is, in part, a measure of your preparedness for class and how well that preparedness is demonstrated by verbally contributing to discussion. Attending office hours is not a substitute for other participation measures, but it is highly encouraged, especially if you are concerned about your participation grade.

Debates: Periodic in-class debates will allow students to explore course themes and allow us to test them against other thinkers. You will prepare a short written statement prior to (and directly participate in) one debate during the semester. You will be asked to write a follow-up summary after each of the three debates. More details will be shared in class.

Course Plan

Introduction: What is Political Theory?
Tuesday
Introduction to the course (no readings)
Thursday
Tinder: "Introduction" from *Political Thinking* (online)
Tinder: Chapter 1, "Why Engage in Political Thinking?," from *Political Thinking* (online)

Tuesday
Wolin: Chapter 1, "Political Philosophy and Philosophy," from *Politics and Vision* (online)

<u>**Unit I: The Polis and Justice**</u>
Thursday
Plato (Socrates): "Apology" Dialogue
Plato (Socrates): "Crito" Dialogue
First analysis paper prompt distributed

Tuesday
Jowett: "Introduction to *The Republic*" (online)
Plato: *The Republic*, Book 1-2 (specific passages to be announced)
Thursday
Plato: *The Republic*, Books 4-5, 7 (specific passages to be announced)

Tuesday
Runkle: Introduction, "Aristotle"
Aristotle: *Politics* Book 1 (Ch. 1-6 and 12-13); Book 2 (Ch. 1-5) and Book 3 (Ch. 1-6)
Thursday
Aristotle: *Politics*, Book 3 (Ch. 7-13); Book 4 (Ch. 1-4); Book 7 (Ch. 1-8, 13-14)

Tuesday
In-class debate (group 1 opening speakers; all others are participants)
First analysis paper due

<u>**Unit II: Power and The Question of Progress**</u>
Thursday
Brown et. al: "Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages" (pp. 95-110) (online)
Machiavelli: *The Prince* (Ch. 1-3, 5-6, 8-11, 14)

Tuesday
Machiavelli: *The Prince* (Ch. 15-19, 21, 24-25)
Thursday
Mid-term Exam

Tuesday
Runkle: Introduction, "Thomas Hobbes"
Hobbes: *Leviathan* (Hobbes' Introduction and Ch. 13-16)
Thursday
Hobbes: *Leviathan* (Ch. 17-22, 28- 30)

Tuesday
Runkle: Introduction, "John Locke"
Locke: *Two Treatises on Government* (Ch. 1-7)
Thursday
Locke: *Two Treatises on Government* (Ch. 8-11, 13, 18)

Tuesday
Runkle: Introduction, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau"
Rousseau: *Discourse on Inequality*
Thursday
Rousseau: *On the Social Contract* (Book 1-2)
Second analysis paper prompt distributed

Tuesday
Rousseau: *On the Social Contract* Book 3 (Ch. 1, 4, 10-16); Book 4 (Ch. 1)
Thursday

Tuesday
In-class debate (group 2 opening speakers; all others are participants)
Second analysis paper due

Unit III: Society and the Challenge of Criticism
Thursday
Mill & Mill: *On the Subjection of Women*, Ch. 1 "Introduction" (online)

Tuesday
Marx: "Alienated Labor" from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (online)
Thursday
Marx & Engels: *Communist Manifesto* (find on your own)

Tuesday
Wootton: "Nietzsche For and Against" (online)
Nietzsche: *Genealogy of Morals* (Introduction, Essay 1) (online)
Third analysis paper prompt distributed
Thursday
Arendt: *On Totalitarianism* (Chapter 9) (online)

Tuesday
In-class debate (group 3 opening speakers; all others are participants)
Third analysis paper due
Thursday
Foucault: '*Two Lectures'* (online)
Course wrap-up

Final Exam

B. Sample Syllabus: Simulations

An Introduction to Western Political Theory:

Course Format: The first two-thirds of POL120 will consist of a mix of lectures and discussion of the assigned readings. Students should attend all lectures and participate in discussions. The final third of the course will be conducted as a simulation and, therefore, the content of each class will vary. Students should attend all classes (if need be, I will take attendance). This course will rely on student participation and preparation and, like all political theory courses, it is text intensive. This means that the reading load will be difficult and, given the nature of the course material, students must prepare for each class by completing the reading assignments for that day, as well as doing a good deal of meeting and research outside of class. This class fulfills the political theory requirement for political science majors.

Course Description: This course will provide an introduction to the history of western political theory. We will spend the majority of our time focusing on the classic texts of political theory, from Socrates to Marx, which should provide students with a solid foundation to continue studies in political theory, political science, and any number of courses in the social sciences or humanities, for that matter.

The final third of the course will not proceed in the normal lecture/discussion method of learning; instead, it will rely on actually recreating and engaging with the ideas and arguments of these times. This method of learning is known as reacting to the past. "Reacting to the Past" (RTTP) consists of elaborate games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles informed by classic texts in the history of ideas. Class sessions are run entirely by students; instructors advise and guide students and grade their oral and written work. It seeks to draw students into the past, promote engagement with big ideas, and improve intellectual and academic skills. The course will be extremely hard work, but should also be intellectually engaging and, to put it simply, a good deal of fun.

Course Goals: Martin Heidegger, one of the twentieth-century's most influential philosophers, asserted

[Human Being] has grown up into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within a certain range, constantly. By this understanding, the possibilities of its Being are disclosed and regulated. *Its own past…is not something which follows along after [Human Being], but something which already goes ahead of it.*

Heidegger, whose language poses difficulties for trained political theorists – as students in an introductory course, there is no need to worry – makes a simple and compelling point; our tradition of thinking about politics in the west controls and determines, in many ways, our own self-understanding of what it means to be a member of a community, a citizen and, most important, a person. The problem we face is that this tradition largely goes unnoticed and ends up determining our self-understanding in ways we are unaware of. The task of this course is to critically engage the western tradition of political theory in a way that allows individual students to take up an autonomous and conscious relationship to that tradition; that is,

the aim of this course is to allow each student, on her or his own terms, to choose how she or he might wish to appropriate that tradition.

The canon of western political theory can and does inform our average, everyday reflections concerning what it means to live-well with others. With that in mind, we will use these historical and theoretical texts to raise issues that are both contemporary and practical; namely, we will use these texts to raise questions concerning how one should go about living-well with others in the present age. To borrow from Socrates, this course will continually return to the two fundamental questions of politics: how should we live and what should we do?

Course Readings:

Morgan, Michael. [2011] <u>Classics of Moral and Political Theory.</u> Hackett: Indianapolis. Fifth Addition. Available Here:
<u>http://www.amazon.com/Classics-Political-Theory-Michael-Morgan/dp/1603844422</u>

1) Bill Offut, *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-76.* This text will be made available via our Moodle (free of charge by the editor) in pdf format. It is your responsibility to download/print out this text.

Course Outline:

I: Introduction to the Course. What is Political Theory and For What Might it Be Useful?

A: *Course Introduction*   August 31
         Listen: The Replacements, *I Will Dare*
                  The Smiths, *Cemetery Gates*
                  Jimmy Cliff, *You Can Get It If You Really Want It*

Read: Kierkegaard, Søren. *My Aim as an Author* from <u>Concluding</u>   September 2
<u>Unscientific Postscript</u> and Gadamer, <u>Truth and Method</u> (sections).*
         Listen: Talking Heads, *Once in a Lifetime*
Tasks: Sign Up Into Six Groups of Five Students

II: Ancient Political Theory. An Openness to That Which is Early.

A: *The Historical Socrates.*
Read: Plato, *Euthyphro* in Morgan, *Classics*   September 5
         pp. 35-45
Listen: Kid Cudi, *Man on the Moon*
                  Ducktails, *Killin the Vibe*
                  Courtney Barnett, *Pedestrian at Best*

Read: *Apology* in Morgan, *Classics*   September 7
           pp. 46-63

Watch: *Gone Baby, Gone*   September 9
Assignment: **Essay One Distributed**

Discussion Leaders: Group One and Two   September 12

B: *Plato and the Dominance of a Philosophical Way of Life*.
      Read: Plato, *The Republic* in Morgan, *Classics*   September 14
           pp. 75-**95**

      Read: Plato, The Republic in Morgan, Classics   September 16
      pp. 99-105 and 127-131, 135-140,
      Listen: Carl Lewis, Going for the Gold (On you tube)
      Assignment: Essay One Due

Read: The Republic in Morgan, Classics   September 19
           pp. 147-167, 171-173
Listen: World Party, Ship of Fools

Read: Plato, The Republic in Morgan, Classics   September 23
        pp. 99-105 and 127-131, 135-140, pp. 147-167, 171-173

Read: The Republic in Morgan, Classics   September 26
           pp. 183-189 and 191-202
Listen: TV on the Radio, *Staring at the Sun*; Sturgill Simpson, *A Little Light*; Best
Coast, *The Only Place*

Discussion Leaders: Groups Three and Four   September 28

City Dionysia: September 30
      Task: Each group will present their short reimagining of Plato's Cave
      Distribute Essay Two

C: *Aristotle and the Aims of Politics*

Read: Aristotle, *The Politics* in Morgan, Classics   October 3
            pp. 361-379

Listen: Frank Ocean, Sweet Life

Read: *The Politics*
            pp. 372-379

III: Modern Political Theory: The Ascent of the Individual and the Decline of the Political.

A: *Niccolo Machiavelli: Politics Without Ethics?*
Read: *The Prince,* in Morgan, *Classics*   October 5
pp. 506-526 and 534-544
            Task: Distribute Exam Review Sheet
Listen: The Flaming Lips, *The Yeah Yeah Yeah Song;* Heems, *Sometimes**

Read: *The Prince,* in Morgan, *Classics*   October 7
 pp. 549-553
Assignment: Essay Two Due
Listen: Donnie Trumpet, *Wanna Be Cool**

Review and Oral Exam

        Oral Exams   October 10-13

NO CLASS Fall Break   October 17

B: *Thomas Hobbes: The Politics of Fear and Security.*
        Read: *Leviathan* in Morgan, *Classics*   October 19
                pp. 578-580 and **618-632**
        Listen: Michal Jackson, *Human Nature*
        Task: Distribute Essay Three

        Read: *Leviathan* in Morgan, *Classics*   October 21
                pp. **633-639**

        Read: Leviathan in Morgan, Classics   October 24
                pp. **648-658 and** 686-698
        Listen: Autre Ne Veut, *Counting;* Caribou, *Can't Do Without You*
        Essay Three Due

IV: Reacting to the American Revolution: The Intersection of Political Ideas and Practice

An Introduction to Reacting   October 26
Practice Game

Read: *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, pp. 1-70*   October 28
Listen: Rush, *Free Will*

A: The Historical Context of the Revolution and the Political Thought   October 31
Of John Locke
Read: *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, pp. 70-105*
Listen: Midlake, *Roscoe*

Tasks: Distribute Roles and explain rules.

John Locke, Continued   November 2
Read: *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City. Pp. 105-150*
Schecter, *The Battle For New York, pp. 11-45.* *
Listen: Gil Scott-Heron, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*

        NO CLASS   **November 4**

C: Begin Game   November 7-9
Game Session One
Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and
responses require

Tasks: See *Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, pp. 49-50 (or appendix A of syllabus)*

Game Session Two   November 11
 Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and
 responses require

Game Session Three	November 14
Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and responses require	
Carry-Over Day	November 16
Game Session Four	November 18
Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and responses require	
Thanksgiving: NO Class	November 21-25
Game Session Five	November 28
Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and responses require	
Carry-Over Day	November 30
Game Session Six	December 2
Read: Papers of opposing Players, primary materials as your papers and responses require	
E: Coming to Terms with the Revolution	December 5
Discuss: reasons for decisions and our views of the ideas presented so far Post Mortem	
Final Exam Review	December 7
Final Exam	December 9

IV. Starter Packs

The following section provides additional information that will aid in the preparation for and execution of debates and simulations as described in the syllabi above -- or in adapting these practices to other courses. Each starter pack is especially tailored to instructors employing debates and simulations for the first time. These techniques have been tested and refined in the classroom by the authors of this instructional guide.

A. Starter Pack: Debate
Sections III through VI below are geared toward implementing the debates described in the syllabus above. Section VII gives more general parameter for how to design and adapt debate activities to any course.

   I.   **Goals**

Students that participate in a debate activity will enhance the following skills:

- Establishing a reading/thinker's position in response to a central question or prompt
- Selecting and utilizing textual evidence to represent a reading/thinker's position
- Defending a position against counter-arguments and objections
- Presenting a position orally and in front of an audience

Depending on the choices that an instructor makes in how to formulate the debate resolution or prompt to which the students are responding, other goals can be achieved, such as:

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of a reading/thinker
- Comparing various readings/thinkers to other readings/thinkers and drawing evaluative conclusions
- Applying readings/thinkers and thereby analyzing contemporary political issues
- Exploring various modes of argumentation and appropriate evidence, including normative arguments or legal arguments

   II.   **Resources and Links**
A plethora of debate resources exist (not surprising since this technique has been practiced in various forms in different cultures and for different purposes across the millenia). Instead of providing specific resources and links here, instructors implementing debate exercises should consider what kind of supplemental debate materials they are looking for either for themselves or for their students. These choices in turn may rely on the specific learning goals that the instructor has or that the course aims to cover. Possible choices include resources on:
- The formal structures of rhetoric and argumentation (fallacies, Toulmin method etc)
- Best practices for oral presentations (verbal and non-verbal habits of good speakers)
- Content-specific guides to the structure or key questions in a particular set of texts

III.   Class Parameters/Things to consider

Debate activities are a great pedagogic tool to incorporate into courses because the basic structure of debate is versatile and can be amended to fit a large variety of course structures, participant numbers and learning goals. Debate activities work well with introductory and advanced students.

Debate activities require the following elements:
1. identifying a central resolution, question, or prompt that creates at least two reasonably balanced and divergent possibilities for response
2. assigning at least one respondent to represent each position
3. positions are developed and presented on the basis of evidence
4. respondents rebut counter-arguments and resolve the debate in their favor despite the objections presented

Within this basic framework, many variations and configurations in the content, number of students, and additional pedagogic goals can be accommodated.

Sample Introduction to Political Theory Debate Structure

Included within this document is an example Introduction to Political Theory course syllabus that adapts these basic parameters in the following way:

Debate Requirement	Specific Adaptation in Intro to Political Theory Syllabus Example
1. identifying a central resolution, question, or prompt that creates at least two reasonably balanced and divergent possibilities for response	Students are asked to respond to the following prompt: Based on <u>one</u> of the three authors/works we have read so far in this unit (Hobbes, Locke, or Rousseau): 1. Articulate on what basis the author justifies political power and authority of the state *and* formulate an argument why it is the *best* justification of authority (compared to the other two). 2. Make an argument for the author's relevance to a contemporary issue of your choice.
2. assigning at least one respondent to represent each position	Students are able to choose from the three major thinkers we had read in this unit (but an instructor

	could also assign thinkers without problem). The fact that more than one student will represent any given thinker is not a concern because each student will likely come up with unique aspects of the argument or select different textual references.
3. positions are developed and presenting on the basis of evidence	Students are asked to prepare a written "opening statement" of about 400 words that address the prompt. Opening statements should provide a clear thesis and be supported by textual evidence from the appropriate readings.
4. respondents rebut counter-arguments and resolve the debate in their favor despite the objections presented	Students formulate arguments against the other thinkers they are not representing in the course of the debate and are asked to respond to counter-arguments in turn. Students write a summative assignment of about 300 words that rearticulates their opening position, introduces and rebuts at least one counter-argument, and concludes by giving reasons why the debate should be concluded in their favor despite the objections.

Other Parameters in Sample Introduction to Political Theory Debate Structure

Format of In-class Debate:
1. Students in the participant group will read their opening statement – everyone else takes notes!
2. Short preparation time to brainstorm counter-arguments to two other groups' statements
3. Discussion based on counter-arguments to students' statements
4. Discussion based on everyone's prepared answer to second prompt question

A great degree of variation is possible here, especially once the opening speakers have established the chosen thinkers' positions. When and how to involve the whole class, on which questions, and for how long is open to the instructor to decide.

Class Size: 30 students

Student Experience Level: new to political theory, no presumption of any debate experience

Amount of time necessary:
- 20 minutes to introduce debate activity and assignments for respondents a week before the in-class debate
- 1 full class session (in this case lasting 80 minutes) to hold the in-class debate

Other notes on particular choices:
Because there are 30 students in the course, this course includes 3 debates across the semester. In each debate, 10 students prepare opening statements and are deemed 'participants' while the rest of the class acts as the audience and participates in the rebuttal stage and question/answer session at the end of the class session. This way, all 30 students will be a participant once during the semester and an audience member twice. This ensures that all students are graded on an equal set of obligations, but it allows each student a chance to formulate their own independent opening statement (instead of working in groups and having to decide who speaks for the group etc).

Because the debate is scheduled for one class session of 80 minutes (and not two sessions), the rebuttal and resolution task is done via a written homework assignment. If more time is allocated to the debate or it is held over two class sessions, the rebuttal and resolution assignment can also be done in class.

Because every student have to have a major graded assignment back by week 6 of class at this particular institution, every student has to write the first paper but the students are spread across the three debates to be opening speakers. If this were not a constraint, students would be more free to choose to write 2 of the papers and guarantee that one of those instances will also be their debate participation.

Because one of the course's learning goals is to connect political theories to contemporary political issues, the second part of the prompt to which students responded in their opening statements explicitly asks them to select a contemporary issues and analyze it via the application of their chosen theorist. This second prompt element can be eliminated entirely or amended to fit another pedagogic goal (such as asking students to evaluate the strengths/weaknesses of their thinker, asking them to relate their thinker's position to the historical context in which their thought developed, etc.)

Because the short analytical paper prompts in the course and the debate prompts were largely the same, the papers are due on the same day as the in-class debate. In this way, students' work to write the paper could double as a starting point for their debate opening statements. These two assignments can be separated as well, but if the assignments require a lot of non-overlapping work, they likely should not be due on the same day in that case.

 IV.   **Additional Elements of Debate as a Pedagogic Tool**

Before the Debate: texts and other necessary student resources
Whichever readings or thinkers are viable respondent choices for the debate should be assigned and discussed before the debate.

Instructors have a choice of how much (if any) guidance to provide on the public speaking and presentation skills that students will be using in the debates. For example, are there class discussions/exercises about verbal or physical habits that hinder the clarity of a presenter (or other such issues)? The amount of instruction might influence the degree to which students are assessed on presentation (versus content).

Debate Preparation Assignment:

For Opening Statement Speakers in the Debate:
Participant students write up to 3 paragraphs (about 400 words) stating their position on the debate
prompt questions based on your chosen thinker (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau). Bring this to class on the
day of the debate in hard copy– you will be asked to defend it and turn it in. You should choose *one*
identifiable contemporary issue to apply your chosen author's thinking. Be sure to clearly explain both
the author's position and precisely how/why it applies to the contemporary example you have chosen.

For All Other Participants in the Debate:
Based on your choice of one of the three authors/works we have read so far in this unit (Hobbes, Locke,
Rousseau), make an argument for the author's relevance to a contemporary issue of your choice.
Preparation: Audience member students write up to 2 paragraphs (about 250 words) stating their
position on the topic question. Bring this to class on the day of the debate in hard copy– you will be
asked to defend it and turn it in. You should choose "one" identifiable contemporary issue to apply your
chosen author's thinking. Be sure to clearly explain both the author's position and precisely how/why it
applies to the contemporary example you have chosen. You may draw from any class reading that we
have done so far.

For All Students (as Homework after the debate):
Homework for everyone: write 2 paragraphs that compare your own and next most compelling
student's statement, determine best answer and come to a 'resolution' that sums up your final position
on the topic question. This must make your own stance clear, engage at least one counterargument
against your position and compare your position to at least one other alternative.

Organizational Structure for Taking Notes During the Debate
In order to encourage students to take notes in the course of the debate, and to be prepared for their
post-debate homework assignment, instructors may choose to print out the note-taking form below to give
to each student.

These can be adapted to any debate prompt or number of speakers.

This particular example includes two major prompt questions that are separated on the note-taking sheet.
This allows the instructor to choose whether students present their prepared position on both items in their
opening speeches or whether to reserve the second prompt element for the wider class discussion near the
end of the session (or any other variation thereof).

IN-CLASS DEBATE #1

Topic: Ancient thinkers' notions of justice and their relevance to contemporary political issues.

	Speaker:	Speaker:	Speaker:	Speaker:	Speaker:
1. Authors' notion of justice and argument for why it is the *best* out of the three thinkers.					
2. Author's relevance to a contemp-orary political issue of your choice					
Counter-arg uments from Your Own Position toward one other group					
Notes for Final Summation Homework					

V.   Evaluation/Assessment

Debate Grading Rubric for Opening Speakers

_____   Written Opening Statement (0-3 points)
Written opening statement engages the debate topic question(s), clearly states student's position, describes key concepts or points accurately and succinctly, and provides sufficient support and evidence to bolster position.

_____   Debate Participation and Response (0-4 points)
Presentation of opening statement was clear and easy to follow.
Speaker actively participated in follow-up round of discussion, questions and answers, by brainstorming counter-arguments to other students and volunteering to share them. Students may have also addressed another student's counter-argument(s) in defense of their position.

_____   Written Debate Summation (0-3 points)
Debate summation makes student's original position and counter-argument from another student clear. Summation attempts to resolve the two positions to reach a conclusion.

Debate Grading Rubric for Other Participants

_____   Written Prepared Statement (0-2 points)
Written opening statement engages the debate topic question(s), clearly states student's position, describes key concepts or points accurately and succinctly, and provides sufficient support and evidence to bolster position.

_____   Written Debate Summation (0-3 points)
Debate summation makes student's original position and counter-argument from another student clear. Summation attempts to resolve the two positions to reach a conclusion.

VI.   Role of the Instructor

During the debate, the instructor should introduce and call up each speaker for their opening statement in turn -- it makes the most sense to do this so that the students representing one thinker are all grouped together before moving on to the next thinker. Optional: keeping time during their speech. Additionally, the instructor should help direct the students between phases of the debate:
-Opening statements
-Preparation time for rebuttals where students that represent one thinker work together to brainstorm counter-arguments against the other two groups
-Rebuttals of students (or groups) against other thinkers
- Wider discussion involving all students on second prompt question

VII.   Other Variations on Debates and How to Adapt Debate for Any Course

As mentioned above, debate activities are a great pedagogic tool to incorporate into courses because the basic structure of debate is versatile and can be amended to fit a large variety of course structures, participant numbers and learning goals. Debate activities work well with both introductory and advanced students, and a large variety of content and materials under discussion.

Debate activities require the following elements:
1. identifying a central resolution, question, or prompt that creates at least two reasonably balanced and divergent possibilities for response
2. assigning at least one respondent to represent each position
3. positions are developed and presented on the basis of evidence
4. respondents rebut counter-arguments and resolve the debate in their favor despite the objections presented

Within this basic framework, many variations and configurations in the content, number of students, and additional pedagogic goals can be accommodated.

Below are several examples of one-off debates exercises that simply require one class day. These debates are not as integrated into the course structure and thus are easier to add to existing courses, since they are not necessarily structured to:
- Rely on a certain set of thinkers or the ability to group thinkers in particular ways
- Align the debate topic with course/unit questions or themes
- Create alignment between the debate prompt and paper prompts

Additionally, one-off debates that take one class period can also be structured to involve all class members, which avoids having to have multiple debates in order to balance student work evenly. In these debates, the role of the instructor is to help the students identify the key points of agreement or disagreements between groups/positions. This is especially important to keep a debate focused around one central question that everyone has a different answer to from devolving into a discussion. Instructors have wide latitude to decide to what degree (if any) they want students to work together in groups and at what stage(s) of the debate they may want to do so.

<u>Other Examples of In-class Debates</u>

The first set of examples below are for debates where each student does their own preparation separately and participates in the debate on an individual basis to whatever extent they choose (after the opening statements are given by each student). The last example is of a one-off debate that takes one class session where students are grouped into particular schools of thought and have to work together to formulate one opening statement for their group at the beginning of the debate.

In-Class Discussion and Debate #1   **PSCI 231 (Modern Political Thought)**

Topic: What is the most important contribution of modern political thought to the present day?

Preparation for debate: All students write up to 2 paragraphs (about 300 words) stating their position on the topic question and supporting it with textual references. Bring this to class on the day of the debate – you will be asked to read it aloud, defend it, and turn it in.

In-Class Discussion and Debate #2   **PSCI 231 (Modern Political Thought)**

Topic: Which author's relevance to or criticism(s) of the contemporary world are *most* salient?

Preparation for debate: All students write up to 2 paragraphs (about 300 words) stating their position on the topic question and supporting it with textual references. Bring this to class on the day of the debate – you will be asked to read it aloud, defend it, and turn it in.

In-Class Discussion and Debate #3   **PSCI 231 (Modern Political Thought)**

Topic: Make an argument for your assigned author's superiority on one of the following criteria:
- Method of Inquiry and Analysis
- Assessment of Societal Problems
- Proposed Solutions or Remedy to Problems
- Criticisms of Enlightenment/ Prior Thinkers
- Applicability to Today's Political Issues

Preparation for debate: Prepare a 150-word opening statement which articulates why/how your assigned author (either Mill or Marx) has a *better* approach to the specific category or questions that you have been assigned *than* the other theorist. Be sure to include at least 1 direct quotation from a text. Bring this to class on the day of the debate – you will be asked to read it aloud, defend it, and turn it in.

IN-CLASS DEBATE: Political Theory in the International Arena

Each student has been assigned to a group that represents an approach to or theory of International Relations. The groups will debate each other in class on the following central question: **which theory is best at explaining the patterns of events in international relations?**

Each group will have to devise an opening statement at the beginning of class that answers these questions:
1. What are the main tenets of [this group's] approach to IR?
2. How does [this group's] approach to IR explain the patterns of events in international relations?
3. What are the advantages or benefits to approaching IR this way that make it *best (ie better than other groups)* at explaining the patterns of events in international relations?

Groups will have about 5 minutes to collectively decide on these points at the beginning of class in order to formulate an opening statement, but **EACH member of the group should come to class with answers to these questions written out.**

The debate will then proceed with each group's 3 minute opening statement given by one person in that group:

Realist group   (student names in this group listed here)
Liberal group   (student names in this group listed here)
English School group   (student names in this group listed here)
Marxist/Critical Theory group   (student names in this group listed here)
Post-colonialism group   (student names in this group listed here)
Feminism group   (student names in this group listed here)
Green group   (student names in this group listed here)

Everyone will have 2 minutes to individually brainstorm one argument against one other group that articulates a criticism of that other group's approach (ie why that other group's approach is NOT the best explanation, according to your group's standpoint). Individuals will then share these arguments with the class.

IN-CLASS DEBATE

Central Question: which theory is best at explaining the patterns of events in international relations?

	Realism	**Liberalism**	**English School**	**Marxism/ Critical Theory**	**Post-coloni alist Theory**	**Feminist Theory**	**Green Theory**
Q1: main tenets							
Q2: explanat-ion for events							
Q3: why is this theory best?							
Counter-arguments							

B. Starter Pack: Simulations

    I.   **Goals**
- A. To foster knowledge of texts in the history of political theory
- B. To place those texts into their historical context
- C. Through gameplay to foster depth understanding of the interplay between political ideology and politics
- D. To develop student enthusiasm for and engagement with the problems, complexities, and tensions posed by texts in the history of political theory

    II.   **Resources and Links**

The best way to learn to play a Reacting to the Past game is, simply, to play one in your class. Of course, playing a game requires a good deal of preparation and the fundamental differences with traditional pedagogical approaches may pose a number of barriers for first time instructors. This starter pack is designed to reduce some of these start-up costs and make the pedagogy more accessible. What one should recognize, though, is that Reacting is a plastic pedagogy; that is, the outcomes, class dynamics, and assignments used in a course will evolve according to the pedagogic aims of the instructor. What follows, then, is not a method for applying Reacting in your political theory classroom, but a general guide to help you introduce Reacting to best suit your pedagogical aims in your political theory course.

There are a number of resources available to instructors as you start out or consider introducing Reacting into a political theory course. A few are:

1. The Reacting to the Past Game Library. http://reactingconsortiumlibrary.org/sample-materials (Membership required. This is a simple process.) Here, you will find an instructor's guide, which a general overview of Reacting, sample grading rubrics, as well as access to Instructor's manuals for each game (see section V for an explanation of the Instructor's manual).
2. The Reacting to the Past Faculty Lounge on Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/groups/reactingfacultylounge/?ref=bookmarks (Membership Required). This is an excellent community of scholars who are "on call" to answer any and all questions pertaining to the running of the simulations.
3. Attend a Reacting conference. At these conferences, the panels consists of playtest of games that are already published or in progress; for instance, if you are interested in teaching *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 BCE* as a portion of your introduction to political theory course, your classical political thought course, or any other application, a conference would allow you the opportunity to experience the game as a student does and reflect on best practices with other scholars. A list of events can be found here: https://reacting.barnard.edu/upcoming-events
4. The sample syllabi included here is meant to merely provide some insights concerning how one might choose to integrate Reacting into a political theory course. It is not meant to be dispositive or to limit the number of applications. A full list of role-immersive simulations in the series,

which may fit a number of your courses or fit them differently, can be found here:
https://reacting.barnard.edu/curriculum/published-games

5. The Secondary Literature on Reacting to the Past is large and varied. Here are listed sources that offer the primary pedagogical arguments for the positive impacts of the pedagogy and others the offer assessments of its impact in the classroom:

   a. Mark Carnes. 2014. *Minds on Fire.* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA)

   b. Joyce, Kathryn E, Andy Lamey, and Noel Martin. "Teaching Philosophy Through a Role-Immersion Game: Reacting to the Past", *Teaching Philosophy,* 41:2 (June 2018), pp175-198. DOI: 10.5840/teachphil201851487

   c. Buchanan, Thomas C. and Edward Palmer. "Role immersion in a history course: Online versus face-to-face in Reacting to the Past", *Computers & Education*, Vol 108 (May 2018), pp 85-95.

   d. Albright, Christine L. "Harnessing Students' Competitive Spirit: Using Reacting to the Past to Structure the Introductory Greek Culture Class" in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (February-March 2017), pp 364-379.

   e. Weidenfeld, Matthew C. and Kenneth E. Fernandez. "Does Reacting to the Past Increase Student Engagement? An Empirical Evaluation of the Use of Historical Simulations" in *Teaching Political Theory, Journal of Political Science Education (*May 2016), DOI: 10.1080/15512169.2016.1175948.

   f. Olwell, Russell and Azibo Stevens. "'I had to double check my thoughts': How the Reacting to the Past Methodology Impacts First-Year College Student Engagement, Retention, and Historical Thinking*" in The History Teacher* 48, No. 3 (May 2015), pp 561-572.

   g. Weston, Anthony. "From Guide on the Side to Impresario with a Scenario" in *College Teaching* 63, No. 3 (June 2015), pp 99-104.

   h. Burke, Kevin R. "Roleplaying Music History: Honing General Education Skills via 'Reacting to the Past'" in Journal of Music History Pedagogy [S.I.], v. 5, n. 1, p. 1-21, apr. 2014.

   i. Lazrus, P. K. and G. K. McKay, "The *Reacting to the Past Pedagogy* and Engaging the First Year Student", in J. E. Groccia (Ed.), L. Cruz (assoc. Ed.) *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*. Colorado: POD (Professional and Organizational Development network). San Francisco: Jossey Bass 2013, pp 315-416.

   j. Henderson, David E. and Susan K. Henderson. "Challenging the Food Pyramid - A Reacting to the Past Simulation Game for Chemistry and

Nutrition Courses." in Keith Symcox, ed., *Using Food to Stimulate Interest in the Chemistry Classroom*, ACS Symposium Series, American Chemical Society, Washington, DC, 2013.

k. Gorton, William and Jonathan Havercroft. "Using Historical Simulations to Teach Political Theory." *Journal of Political Science Education* 8, No. 1 (Jan 2012): 50-68.

l. Burney, John, Richard Gid Powers, and Mark Carnes. "Reacting to the Past: A New Approach to Student Engagement and to Enhancing General Education." White Paper Report submitted to the Teagle Foundation, 2010.

m. Kelly, Kathleen A. "A Yearlong General Education Course Using "Reacting to the Past" Pedagogy to Explore Democratic Practice." *International Journal of Learning 16.11* (2009): 147-55.

n. Lightcap, Tracy. "Creating Political Order: Maintaining Student Engagement through *Reacting to the Past*." *PS: Political Science and Politics* (2009), 42: 175-179.

o. Stroessner, Steven J., Laurie Susser Beckerman, and Alexis Whittaker. "All the World's a Stage? Consequences of a Role-Playing Pedagogy on Psychological Factors and Writing and Rhetorical Skill in College Undergraduates."*Journal of Educational Psychology* 101 (2009), 605–620.

p. Anderson, Carl A. and T. Keith Dix. "'Reacting to the Past' and the Classics Curriculum: Rome in 44 BCE." *Classical Journal* 103.4 (2008), 449-55.

q. Henderson, David E. "Implementing Methodological Secularism: The Teaching and Practice of Science in Contentious Times," in *Secularism & Science in the 21st Century* (2008).

r. Higbee, Mark D. "How Reacting to the Past Games 'Made Me Want to Come to Class and Learn': An Assessment of the Reacting Pedagogy." In Jeffrey L. Bernstein, ed., *Making Learning Visible: The Scholarship of Learning at EMU.* Ypsilanti, MI: Eastern Michigan University, 2008.

s. Porter, Adam."Role-Playing and Religion: Using Games to Educate Millenials." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 11, No. 4. (2008), 230-235.

t. Davison, Ann and Sue Lantz Goldhaber. "Integration, Socialization, Collaboration: Inviting Native and Non-Native English Speakers into the Academy Through 'Reacting to the Past'", in *Reclaiming the Public University: Conversations on General & Liberal Education* (2007).

u. Hughes, Amy E., Jill Stevenson, and Mikhail Gershovich. "Community through Discourse: Reconceptualizing Introduction to Theatre." *Theatre Topics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (March 2006).

    v. Lee, Joseph Tse-Hei. "Teaching Nonviolence in Times of War." *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 240-245.

    w. Popiel, Jennifer J. Review: *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791.* *H-France Review* Volume 5 (August 2005), No. 84.

    x. Slater, Niall W. "Re-Inventing the Trivium: Debate, Dialogue--and Empathy." LiberalArtsOnline Volume 5, Number 5, May 2005.

III.   Class Parameters/Things to consider

All instructors who consider using a Reacting simulation in their course will require certain materials that make playing the game possible.

First, instructors will need to think about which text or texts will be central to their course and, in turn, the simulation they wish to run. After all, political theorists share a common concern for texts and the centrality of the ideas and arguments presented by those texts. The first consideration is what texts, authors, or ideas you hope to teach through Reacting. This choice begins a hermeneutic circle in which the choice of game may be obvious - for instance, *The Threshold of Democracy* relies on *The Republic* as its central text - or may require a more creative use of the game. This circle continues through multiple playings of a game (should you choose to use the pedagogy again, many instructors do), where you will edit the game or the texts you place at its center according to your own goals.

Second, once you have selected a game, you will need to select a student gamebook. These are available through Norton or UNC. The gamebooks introduce students to the subject matter, the historical setting, the rules of the game, and contain many primary sources that will inform the research and writing that are at the heart of Reacting.   Instructors should read these gamebooks before playing the game.

Third, instructors will new the "Instructor's Manual" for the simulation selected. These are available through the Reacting to the Past Game Library: http://reactingconsortiumlibrary.org/published-games The Instructor's manual provides the How To guide for running the simulation, secondary sources to consider to prepare, a sense of the general dynamics and expected outcome of the game, and a guide for debriefing the game.

Finally, instructors will need to obtain the roles for the game through the Game Library: http://reactingconsortiumlibrary.org/published-games These roles are the crucial factor in the game, as they assign students their character throughout the game, their individual assignments, and their victory objectives. Instructors, most likely, will not be able to read all of these roles before a game is played, but they will be important to have on hand as you consult with students throughout the module.

The next section is intended to provide some practical advice to instructors who are looking to integrate the simulation into their courses.

IV.   Additional Elements of Simulations as a Pedagogic Tool

How Much Class Time Should I Leave for Reacting Games? Each Reacting game will take approximately 3 weeks to play. Most will require with the necessary set-up, which I discuss next, and debrief about 5 weeks of class time to play adequately. Some games are can be much longer or reduced - for instance, Patrick Coby's *The Constitutional Convention* can require up to 7 weeks to play, while their are micro games intended for one class section.

The most common structure for the games are to use 2 or 3 class periods to set the game up. This means, usually, 1 or 2 sessions for the delivery of content in whatever manner you find most pedagogically effective; for instance, a class period or two is devoted in *The Threshold of Democracy* to a discussion of the *Republic*. It also means 1 class session to review the historical setting, to go over rules of the game, to distribute roles to students, and to meet with students in their factions.

These set-up classes are crucial for instructors because they allow you, as a political theorist, to place an emphasis on the modes of reading, analysis, and writing that you not only find most important to your own practice, but that you would like students to model in their written work during the simulation.

How Long can classes be and can it work for any schedule?

Reacting courses work best in time frames ranging from one hour to 75 minutes. The games work nicely on either a twice a week meeting schedule or a three time a week schedule. The thing to keep in mind is that Reacting classes present issues and ideas that shift rapidly. Students need time to digest what they've said, heard, and done before the next session. In some cases, faculty on a M/W/F schedule choose to use their Wednesday meeting to step out of the game and reflect on the ideas, issues, or texts presented in the preceding two meetings and/or use this time for faction meetings. These choices are, of course, up to you and may change as your own pedagogical aims shift.

Longer sessions than this become exhausting both intellectually and psychologically for most participants. If you have a longer class session - say, once per week - than it makes sense to provide a substantial break in between halves of the class.

How many students do I need and how many students can I fit?

Generally, a Reacting course requires at least 12 students. Courses can be run at numbers lower than this, but this requires some loss of important roles, ideas, and issues for debate. There is, it now seems, no upper-bound for how large a Reacting class can be, as some instructors have introduced the pedagogy into large (150-200 student courses), but a good heuristic for first time instructors is an upper-bound of 24 students. Given that many instructors have courses larger than this much of the time, the Reacting Facebook community is an excellent resource for strategizing ways to expand the size of a course. This is also a frequent topic at Reacting conferences with strategies discussed there.