

Resources

RESOURCES:

This has been the collaborative effort of many people. I would like to thank in particular Jessy Wu, April Broadbent, Vincent Chiang, Sophia Frenz and Robert James. Thankyou to everyone else who contributed ideas as well!

I hope that debaters of all skill levels will have something to learn here, I certainly did by writing it.

I have divided the resources by general topic area and purpose, rather than difficulty. That being said, any particular difficult or advanced readings are starred (*). It is recommended that as a novice you read the unstarred resources first.

The only other thing to say is that this is obviously a very long list. Pick and choose what you read, I anticipate that many people will use this to find out about one area.

Also, feel free to use this w/o acknowledgement or excerpt it, it is all public domain work and not mine with the exception of one slide presentation, which you can take anyway.

The general bias is to what debaters find hardest, so there is little to no discussion of the opposite.

GENERAL RESOURCES:

Newspapers:

- The Atlantic: <http://www.theatlantic.com/>
- I *hesitate* to recommend it, but The Economist: www.economist.com/ (I would only recommend this because other debaters read it. Or if you want to get some coverage on IR, but otherwise I find it simplistic and one-sided).
- Foreign Policy: <http://foreignpolicy.com/>
- Foreign Affairs: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>
- Guardian Australia: <http://www.theguardian.com/au>
- ABC Online: <http://www.abc.net.au/>
- NPR: <http://www.npr.org/>
- BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>
- Vox: <http://www.vox.com/> (good for short explanations, have nice flashcard explanations of concepts here: <http://www.vox.com/cardstacks>)
- Al Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>
- Project Syndicate gathers opinions by thought leaders: <http://www.project-syndicate.org/>

Podcasts:

- Planet Money is a great economics podcast: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/>
- This American Life is a great general news podcast: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/australia>
- Slate's Political Gabfests: <http://podbay.fm/show/158004641>

FIRST PRINCIPLES:

An important point to note is many debaters rely on restrictive ideological assumptions e.g. free trade is good, or rely on specific schools of thought. Learning about other ideologies is very important, so the following list is quite eclectic. A good general resource is <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>.

The following will not be an exhaustive account of moral philosophy, but rather some links and ideas to act as "intuition pumps" for your own thoughts!

It is useful to recognise the content of a philosophical argument, so the following is quite useful, especially the last page: <http://aerostudents.com/files/ethics/ethicalArgumentation.pdf> and so is: <https://ethicalrealism.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/writing-philosophical-arguments/> (*).

Exactly what is ethical is up for dispute of course. It has been broadly recognised not to confuse what is with what should be ("is/ought" distinction this is sometimes called). A simple discussion is here:

<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/whatisethics.html> and an interesting attempt at an answer is provided by Kant, summarised here: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/#GooWilMorWorDut> (*).

Probably the most useful philosopher for debating is John Rawls, see <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/>. The chief idea here is that we should do what makes people the most happy on average, which makes utilitarianism a form of ethics that focuses on consequences rather than innate goodness of an action. One criticism of the theory as a system of individual ethics is that it is simply too high a burden, as discussed in this blog post: <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2014/11/why-i-am-not-a-utilitarian/>.

This pragmatist strain of thought is taken up by the pragmatic idealists who claim that we should try and do as much good as we can, and not aim for lofty but unobtainable goals. This especially makes sense for use in *movement-based* debates. This is a particularly good summary of its main proponent, John Dewey: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dewey-political/#3>.

A perhaps more relevant criticism as applied to governments is that of the utility monster, which says that a utilitarian government might give all the resources in a society to someone who got *more* happiness out of every unit of resources they were given rather than less. A way to think about this is that normally every scoop of ice cream gives you less extra pleasure than the last one did, but if this was not true of the utility monster, they might be given a lot of resources. It is explained further here: <http://atheistethicist.blogspot.com.au/2009/01/robert-nozicks-utility-monster.html>.

Another subtler criticism of both utilitarianism and other mainstream philosophical theories is that they fail to allow for a person to use important markers of identity e.g. national or ethnic or other identities in their ethical decision-making.

A useful philosophical concept for political regulation debates is Walzer's concept of complex equality. This holds that "no citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good." This is summarized nicely here: <https://mg312.wordpress.com/2011/10/17/complex-equality/> (*).

So far I probably sound too far to the left, so now I'll discuss some more "right-wing" theories, of different stripes.

The Cato Institute has good articles on many topics from a right-wing perspective, but especially this one is a good explanation of the concept of libertarianism: <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/key-concepts-libertarianism>. Libertarianism holds that the individual is the primary unit we should be concerned about, especially enabling them to be from the government, rather than viewing the government as a provider of freedoms in the form of services.

An older approach to limited government comes from the theories of John Locke, which are detailed here: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/locke/>.

A economic criticism of government is articulated by public choice theorists, but many of their arguments are effectively moral in nature. In particular, the public choice school criticizes capture of governments by special interest groups and puts paid to the myth of a disinterested public service. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/PublicChoice.html> is a good explanation of this approach.

Other ethical debates will largely be covered in individual subject areas below e.g. in particular minorities and IR-based ethics.

Two more subjects are worth mentioning here: animals and the environment. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/> has a good coverage of the various points of view on the animal rights debate. The environment is quite a lot more difficult to read about, because many theories of environmental ethics are a bit incoherent. <https://envirethics.wordpress.com/> is a really interesting blog in this space though, and is a very good read.

Lastly, knowledge about criminal justice is fairly good in debating, so I will not cover it in as much detail in this resource guide, however one interesting and often neglected point is that crimes should only sanction conduct we actually want prohibited. A nuanced point in the drug debate might therefore draw upon law as moral ideas: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/criminal-law/#CriPubWro>.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

There are two good kinds of IR knowledge: knowledge about how to do particular debates, and generalist knowledge. Contrary to popular belief, 9/10 times the latter wins debates more than the former. So having a broad grasp of important institutions and concepts is much more important than knowing who the head of ISIS is (Kevin Andrews sadly, has neither).

General Resources

- BBC Monitoring: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/monitoring> (examines the world through the prism of world media)
- BBC Country Profiles: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
- Passport, FP's blog: <http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/passport/>
- On Asian news in particular: <http://thediomat.com/>
- The Lowy Institute: <http://www.loyyinstitute.org/>
- Theoretical discussions on this blog are very interesting (*): <https://chaosandgovernance.wordpress.com/tag/international-relations-theory/>
- Global Voices is a good aggregator: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/>
- The Restless Realist is a good centre-right account of IR and international politics (*) www.therestlessrealist.com/

Regions and Particular Conflicts

- Syria: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/syria-enters-year-bloody-civil-conflict-150315063900644.html>, Institute for the Study of War (*) give campaign updates so they are useful around tournament time <http://iswsyria.blogspot.com.au/>, <http://www.syriadeeply.org/> is a much easier and less dense summary, Interesting post here about the US' involvement and in particular its strategy to defeat ISIS (Da'ish) <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/dec/02/isis-what-us-doesnt-understand/>
- Israel-Palestine: Vox on what makes Netanyahu tick <http://www.vox.com/2015/3/16/8220035/what-does-netanyahu-think>, Synopsis of the conflict <https://mazinx.wordpress.com/a-synopsis-of-the-israel-palestine-conflict/> and <http://www.merip.org/primer-palestine-israel-arab-israeli-conflict-new> is a much more detailed synopsis, On Israeli settlements, Haaretz is a good summary (Haaretz is a moderate left-leaning Israeli newspaper, so a good source of relatively unbiased news on Israeli politics): <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.631924> and <http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2015/01/21/nicola-perugini/israel-and-the-icc/> is an interesting development regarding Israel and the ICC
- Iran: <http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-provisional-agreement-on...> gives a basic account of the recent agreement framework, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/04/the-iran-nuclear-deal-by-the-numbers/389592/> is a more detailed account, details on the Iranian economy <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-02/what-sanctions-have-done-to-iran-s-economy>
- A nice Vox series of maps on the entire Middle East: <http://www.vox.com/a/maps-explain-the-middle-east>
- Middle Eastern chart of relationships: http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_world_/2014/07/17/the_middle_east_friendship_chart.html
- Good general blogs on Africa: <http://www.africaontheblog.com/>, <http://africasacountry.com/>, African Development Group <http://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/measuring-the-pulse-of-economic-transformation-in-west-africa/>
- General sub-Saharan Africa blog here <http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/?cid=otc-Campbelluse>
- General Middle East and North Africa blog <http://www.cfr.org/region/middle-east-and-north-africa/ri165>
- Good series of resources on Egypt is here on CFR's conflict tracker: <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/?marker=12>

- Nigerian politics: <http://nigerianpolity.blogspot.com.au/> and <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>
- India general blog by the CFR: <http://www.cfr.org/region/india/ri230> and interesting discussion of Indian political campaigns here <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/indiaatlse/2014/03/17/the-obamafication-of-indian-political-campaigns/> and Indian development policy <http://www.wsj.com/articles/indias-push-for-banks-for-all-leaves-some-still-outside-1428528601?mod=e2fb> (more on development in the economics section)
- The Economist's Analects is a decent blog on China: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2014/03/chinese-politics> and an interesting recent insight into Chinese political attitudes is http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/survey-offers-rare-window-into-chinese-political-culture/?_r=0 and similarly some interesting data on censorship is at <http://harvardmagazine.com/2013/09/reverse-engineering-chinese-censorship>
- <http://www.observingjapan.com/> is an interesting perspective on Japanese politics
- <http://www.cfr.org/latin-america-and-the-caribbean/countering-criminal-violence-central-america/p27740> is an interesting overview of South American drug problems
- Argentina's debt crisis' present state is at <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2015/04/15/argentina-returns-to-capital-markets/>

In general, the best cure for a lack of knowledge about a general region is to flick through a general international newspaper, read some guides and consult the above for more detailed information.

Organisations and Issues in International Politics

- Trans-Pacific Partnership: <https://ustr.gov/tpp/Summary-of-US-objectives>, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/nov/13/wikileaks-trans-pacific-partnership-chapter-secret>, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/238473-parsing-the-trans-pacific-partnership-agreement> provide good summaries of the opinions of both sides. The TPP is a major trading agreement that not many debaters know about, which is a concern.
- Eurozone: <http://im-an-economist.blogspot.com.au/p/eurozone-sovereign-debt-crisis.html> is an excellent, easy summary of the Euro crisis
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/> is a good general blog on Europe and the EU
- Blog about the ICJ: <http://www.internationallawobserver.eu/category/icj/> (*)
- Interesting blog on justice in conflict: <http://justiceinconflict.org/>
- African Union: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/tag/african-union/> and the Arab League <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/arab-league/p25967>

US Politics

- General reference blogs and websites: <http://www.politico.com/>, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica>, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/us-politics>
- Explanation of American political structure in a nice, concise format: <http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Americanpoliticalsystem.html>, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/americas/04/us_election/govt_system/html/introduction.stm is another good summary
- Campaign finance: <http://money.howstuffworks.com/campaign-finance1.htm>, <http://theconversation.com/lawmakers-show-indifference-to-americans-needs-by-gutting-campaign-finance-caps-35455>
- Supreme Court of the United States-- most important court in the world (not even arguably): <https://sites.psu.edu/jasonmarshall/2013/02/14/the-judicial-branch-too-much-power/>, <http://billmoyers.com/2014/07/15/its-time-to-reform-the-supreme-court-here-are-five-ways-to-do-it/>

ECONOMICS

Individual Decision Making

- Slides from a presentation on this subject (note: error in Rationality II slide in ordering, see if you can spot it...) <https://www.dropbox.com/s/mdkzz9cgk91yft6/Debating%20talk.pdf?dl=0>
- Rational point of view: <http://www.becker-posner-blog.com/>
- Interesting applications of economics: <http://freakonomics.com/>

- Cognitive dissonance theory, explained nicely here (psychology in debating makes for nuanced arguments about many areas of government policy changes): <http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/f/dissonance.htm>
- Discussion of how behaviours change due to poverty: <http://www.res.org.uk/details/mediabrief/4396611/Moving-People-Out-Of-Poverty-The-Psychological-Challenge-For-Economic-Policy.html>
- Similarly interesting discussion of rich people not donating to charity <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/why-the-rich-dont-give/309254/>
- Conspicuous consumption is the practice of buying goods that obviously show off one's wealth, or status or try to make the appearance of those things. Interesting discussions in: <http://www.theatlantic.com/.../inconspicuous-consumpt.../306845/> and <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/810> and <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/.../consumption-and-its-contr...> and an interesting article on how capitalism created the concept of 'cool': <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/04/how-capitalism-created-cool/390429/>
- Behavioural economics studies departures from rational behaviour, and in particular how psychological processes shape economic decision making. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/behavioral-economics> and <http://danariely.com/category/blog/>

Growth

- Great blog about growth theory: <https://growthecon.wordpress.com/> In particular, interesting posts on transitions between poor and rich countries and growth policy.
- On a more local level, there is: <http://whatworksgrowth.org/> is the blog of What Works for Local Economic Growth
- One particularly common debate is about austerity, or slashing budgets in the hope of creating long-term growth by creating confidence in the government and economy. <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2013/09/19-austerity-growth-debate-us-europe> is an interesting podcast laying out competing arguments (note however *) and <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-tougher-austerity/#.VS-ctROUc4Q> is a simpler explanation. <http://www.voxeu.org/debates/has-austerity-gone-too-far> (*) is a more complicated debate.

Morality in Economics

- Discussion of property and ownership: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/property/>
- A Marxist perspective: <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/>
- Cato on the morality of capitalism: <http://www.cato.org/blog/morality-capitalism>
- Income inequality: <https://inequalitiesblog.wordpress.com/> (*) and <http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality-and-poverty.htm>
- Many of the other issues have been touched on before.

Cities

- Public housing: <http://www.citylab.com/.../2011-atlanta-had-demolished-.../9044/> and <http://apo.org.au/.../time-revitalised-and-vibrant-public-hou...and> http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/.../Inclusion_or_exclusion%28LSERO%2... (p. 11-13 in particular)
- <http://www.citylab.com/> is a good general resource
- <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/interactive/2014/jan/27/best-city-blogs-interactive> has both general and specific blogs for particular cities

Development

- Centre for Global Development operate an amazing blog: <http://www.cgdev.org/>
- ANU's development policy centre blog <http://devpolicy.org/>
- Microfinance: <https://hbr.org/2012/11/microfinance-is-good-for-women> and <http://www.microcreditsummit.org/about-the-project3.html>

Trade Policy

- Impacts of trade policy: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/06/global-south-has-free-trade-to-thank-obesity-diabetes-epidemic?CMP=soc_567
- <http://americatradepolicy.com/category/guest-blogs/>
- An easy summary of some trade theory: <http://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2008/10/what-is-new-tra.html> and a history of trade theory here: <http://faculty.washington.edu/jwh/349lec03.htm>
- Local food movement: <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2012/07/debating-local-food-movement/2435/>
- Returns to scale: <http://www.economicdiscussion.net/law-of-returns/laws-of-returns-to-scale-explained-with-diagram/1607>
- Should we prop up industries? <http://oecdinsights.org/2013/06/24/industrial-policies-for-development-its-more-than-you-think/> for an enlightening discussion

Environment

- UNEP Report into the value of the environment: http://www.unep.org/pdf/TEEB_D1_Summary.pdf
- Ostrom on collective resources: http://www.kuhlen.name/.../eDok/governing_the_commons1.pdf (looks long but just read the intro if you want)
- <http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com.au/>

THE PERSECUTING SOCIETY

One interesting thing about reading about minorities and other oppressed groups is good writing is often found outside traditional sources. Hence, the below will include less academic blogs. Advanced readings on these topics, compiled by Jessy Wu (* but excellent, particularly good resources on the depiction of race) can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1srdjd1x9mepwfb/AADDy4yUUreE0kFIQf6eS0bwa?dl=0>.

And also sourced by her is the first use of Myspace anyone has had in years: <https://myspace.com/ruralrainbownews/video/the-gift-a-documentary-by-louise-hogarth/60732600>.

Queer Minorities

- Trans* people in the media: <http://thoughtcatalog.com/zinnia-jones/2013/07/the-trouble-with-depicting-trans-people/>
- About being an invisible minority: <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/advice/a6323/invisible-queer-femme/>
- General blog on being queer: <http://projectqueer.tumblr.com/>
- Good list of resources: <https://werehirwerequeer.wordpress.com/queer-theory/>
- <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/homosexuality/>
- Gay misogyny: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/14/id-bottom-for-hillary-betrays-gay-cultures-struggle-for-equality-bottoming?CMP=ema_565
- Trans* acceptance: <http://www.tranarchism.com/2010/11/26/not-your-moms-trans-101/>

Mental Health

- Mental Health Australia is a good general resource: www.mhaustralia.org
- <https://confournament.wordpress.com/2014/01/30/how-to-treat-mental-health/> is a good article on the treatment of mental health
- Autism, in which there has been a debate about whether to treat autism as a medical disease and whether autistic people should lead a movement for social acceptance: <https://thecaffeinatedautistic.wordpress.com/so-what-is-the-problem-with-autism-speaks/> and <http://www.forbes.com/sites/emilywillingham/2013/11/13/why-autism-speaks-doesnt-speak-for-me/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism_Speaks
- On self-harm and suicide: <https://confournament.wordpress.com/2014/01/21/not-your-usual-post/>
- Depression: www.depressionquest.com
- Hotlines: Lifeline is 13 11 14

Disability

- Social model of disability: <http://www.pwd.org.au/student-section/the-social-model-of-disability.html>
- Economic and medical models of disability: http://travability.travel/blogs/economic_model.html
- Spoon theory: <http://www.butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>

Class

- Class Action Blog: <http://www.classism.org/blog/>
- Working Class Perspectives: <https://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/>
- America's poverty policies: http://www.salon.com/2013/12/21/how_america_abandoned_its_undeserving_poor/
- Leisure class: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/VEBLEN/chap08.html> and http://www.driehausmuseum.org/blog/view/thorstein_veblen

Gender

- What is gender?: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/>
- Gender and trans* people: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-trans/>
- Everyday sociology blog: http://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/sex_and_gender/
- Gender in the workplace: http://pwc.blogs.com/gender_agenda/
- Feminist approaches: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-approaches/>
- Feminism in China: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/17/they-are-the-best-feminist-activists-in-china-detained-why/>
- Activism in the digital age: <http://www.meta-activism.org/2011/04/digital-activism-through-the-lens-of-social-movement-theory/> (not specific to gender, but helpful in debates!)
- <http://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2012/12/the-challenge-of-closing-the-gender-gap-in-developing-countries/266617/> on gender in third world countries

Race

- Critical race theory: <https://spacrs.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/>
- Case for reparations: <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- A Case against the case for reparations: <http://www.orchestratedpulse.com/2014/05/morality-against-reparations/>
- On the myth of police reform: <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/the-myth-of-police-reform/390057/>
- Representation of race in the media: <http://www.criticalmediaproject.org/cml/topicbackground/race-ethnicity/>

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