Debates

Due dates:
1. Topics: Thursday March 3, 2022 9:30AM
2. Written: Thursday April 14, 2022 9:30AM
3. Oral: April 14,19,21,26 2022

Requirement:

You are required to participate in a series of debates.

For the first part of the assignment, write a short letter to Prof. Arkin and the TAs (arkin@cc.gatech.edu and the TAs) and cc yourself with the subject line "CS4002 debates" sorting the topics below in your order of preference. NOTE: Pick topic areas for your preference lists that are NOT in the area of your term paper (or else we will pick one for you!).

1. Robotic war crimes and responsibility
2. Robots and Remuneration
3. Robots and Infidelity
4. Robotic Deception
5. Robot surgery and liability
6. Job outsourcing to robots
7. Self-driving car laws

See below!

The Setting:

It is the near future. You are experts who have been assembled to address a particular issue in debates that have been organized by the United Nations.
Your audience is composed of staff members who will be advising their bosses on policy decisions. Thus, the debates will be judged primarily on the cogency and relevance of the arguments rather than on technical debating skill. You will, in fact, be graded primarily on how well you present your argument, the quality of your research and preparation, and your presentation skills.

As in traditional debates, the affirmative side has the burden of proving its case. The negative must simply refute the resolution and need not propose any action on its own.

Mechanics:

- Debate teams consist of 5-7 students.
- All members of the debate team must participate (speak). A single member of the team should take each segment.
- A coin flip prior to the start of the debate will determine which team has the affirmative and which has the negative.
- A typical debate format is:

  1. five minute opening for the affirmative
  2. five minute opening for the negative
  3. one minute for team consultation
  4. five minute rebuttal from affirmative
  5. five minute rebuttal from negative
  6. one minute for team consultation
  7. five minute rebuttal from affirmative
  8. five minute rebuttal from negative
  9. one minute for team consultation
  10. five minute rebuttal from affirmative
  11. five minute rebuttal from negative
  12. one minute for team consultation
  13. five minute rebuttal from affirmative
  14. five minute rebuttal from negative
  15. one minute for team consultation
  16. five minute closing for the affirmative
Other submissions:

Each group must submit a three page document before the start of the debate. The first page outlines the argument for the affirmative side. The second page outlines the argument for the negative side. The final page cites the references searched. You must prepare both sides as you will not know until the debate day which side you will argue.

Schedule group meetings to get started well in advance of the debate.

Some advice:

You have to be prepared to argue both sides. This means that your team must have researched both sides extensively from in-depth and reputable sources.

Listen very carefully to your opponents. Rebuttal speakers should directly address the points made by their opponents. Rebuttals are only as strong as your ability to undermine their arguments with reputable evidence or carefully constructed counterarguments of your own.

Arguments should always be supported with supporting evidence, gathered from your research. Avoid citing sources that seem dubious or that are unsupportable unless they are personal anecdotes designed to create the foundation for a point.

You will be cut off at the end of the time limit. This means that you need to practice timing your responses to ensure that you've made your argument within the time allowed. Otherwise the audience will be left hanging.

The first and last impressions are most important. Make sure that you have good openings and closings for your debate. Make sure your closing statements address the arguments of your opponents.

Don't worry about getting every little bit of information out there. Your listeners will respond much better to clear argumentation. Speak slowly and clearly. This is very important to remember, especially under the stress of speaking in front of an audience with limited time.

Topics

1. Robotic war crimes and responsibility

   Congress mandated in 2001 that 1/3 of military vehicles be unmanned robots by 2015. In order to ensure that all military robots in the future are not used in the commission of war crimes, the mandate should be updated so that all robotic systems--autonomous or otherwise--have the Geneva convention protocols and US Military Doctrine as defined by the US ARMY Training and Doctrine Command programmed into them. As such, this might prevent creativity and productivity in the robot (for good or for ill), with the idea being that rigid boundaries would give the robot the power to refuse to work or co-operate when said doctrines were violated, thus preventing their contribution to even the incidental commission of war crimes or the conduct of an unjust war.

2. Robots and Remuneration

   In the future, robots may be able to learn about the world through experience and become inventors, devising new mechanical devices or useful artifacts, or otherwise be able to be gainfully employed and compete with human laborers, including scientists and engineers. Robots should be allowed to benefit from the fruits of their labor and to use their wages for any purposes in a manner fully consistent with human law. They should also be protected from unfair competition and infringement of intellectual property rights, as would their human counterparts.

3. Robots and Infidelity

   In some states, adultery may be provided as a reason for a "fault divorce", leading the non-guilty party to getting more alimony or assets, for instance. Sexual relations with a robot (without permission from the partner) should be considered adultery, and be allowed to bring a fault divorce against a spouse.

4. Robotic Deception

   Robots should be expressly forbidden against deceiving any human at any time. If a robot is capable of deception, the designer and user are both subject to litigation and conviction on prima facie proof that the robot is capable of deception,
even without actually having conducted a deceptive act.

5. Job outsourcing to robots

The restriction prohibiting private companies from using offshore labor when bidding for government contract work (Senate Bill 2094 "United States Workers Protection Act of 2004") should be amended to include robotic labor and then enacted into law.

6. Robot Surgery and liability

Currently, robots are being built for surgical use. For example, research by various faculty across the nation (like Howie Choset at CMU) is resulting in snake-like robots that should soon be capable of working their way through capillaries and arteries to assist in heart surgery. In order to prevent repeats of, for example, the Therac-25 incidents, laws should be passed that require shared liability between the doctors that use the new technology, and the hardware and software developers of the products. In particular, patients can sue doctors for malpractice when using one of these robots, but doctors are then allowed to receive twice the damages received by their patients if they can show that the programmers of the system introduced a bug into the system.

7. Self-driving car laws

Self-driving cars are being integrated onto highways with human drivers now. These cars must follow the laws of the road to the letter, and the manufacturer will be liable for any violation of those laws. Social norms (such as speeding in certain circumstances or not coming to a full and complete stop at a stop sign) are unacceptable as the basis for behavior for these autonomous vehicles.