Normative Frameworks Debate
(75-90 minutes over 2 sessions)

Materials to be distributed before class
- Background reading on the policy issue (e.g., Syrian refugee crisis). The goal is for all students to start with basic context.

Instructions

SESSION 1
1. Write the policy claim on the board. For instance (obviously, this can be done for many different policy issues):

   "Over the course of the next two years, the United States should admit 100,000 additional Syrian refugees."

2. Break students up into 6 groups: 2 utilitarian groups, 2 egalitarianism groups, 2 deontological/rights-based groups.

3. Say, "within your group, please construct a collection of arguments for *and* a collection of arguments against the proposal on the board, using arguments consistent with your assigned normative framework. It may help to take notes about your ideas as you do so."

4. After about 10 minutes, interrupt groups. Say, "without revealing the actual arguments you are considering, please share the kind of issues that strike your group as relevant for thinking about this policy from the perspective of your framework."

   As groups share the issues that have come up, write key words on the board. (This helps other groups see other potential lines of argument that they might not otherwise see.)

   Give groups another 15-20 minutes to discuss.

SESSION 2

Arrange 4 chairs, facing one another.

1. Assign one group from each framework to "pro" and the other to "con". Give them 5 minutes to choose 2 spokespeople and prepare a *2 minute* opening statement.

2. Ask the spokespeople from *both* utilitarian groups to come to the front and sit in the four seats. Say, "Each group will have 2 minutes for its opening statement. Then each group will have 2 minutes to respond. We will then have another 10 minutes to debate. During those 10 minutes, any other member of the of the groups that are debating may come to the front, tap one of the members of their group to replace them in the debate. This will allow the members of your groups to fill in any arguments they think of that you are missing in the heat of debate."

   You will need to encourage team members to tag in to the debate, but once they get going it should flow easily.

3. Repeat with egalitarians and with rights-based groups.

4. Debrief the debates.

Some conceptual points to try to bring out in debrief:

- Where do disagreements within framework come from?
    - Extent of cosmopolitanism, definitions, thinking about different factors, disagreements over facts?

- In what ways do the different frameworks teach us different things about the issues?
    - Do the different frameworks push us to think about different substantive facets of the problem, different types of arguments, different types of key facts we'd like to know the answer to?