

LEAF Handout 1a

INTRO

- Introduction to the class
 - Perusall
 - Ethics Bowl
 - Assignments and grade documents
- Active learning blocks (speech mechanics, argumentation, content)
- Exit Cards
 - Name
 - What do you think I should know about you?

Block 1: Eye Contact

- Choose a spot directly between someone's eyes, or look at their eyebrows/low forehead.
- Establish eye contact as soon as you start speaking with someone.
 - Speakers should maintain eye contact for 40-60% of the time.
 - Listeners should maintain eye contact for 60-80% of the time.
- Try not to hold eye contact for more than 5 seconds or so.
 - When not making eye contact, you can relax your gaze so your visual field is somewhat unfocused.
 - To avoid staring directly at someone's eyes, you can look at another spot on someone's face when you break eye contact.
 - If you are wondering where to look and eye contact feels awkward,, look slightly above people's eyes (e.g. eyebrows)
- When you break eye contact, look to the side (e.g. near someone's ears).
 - Try to avoid looking at someone's body or looking at the floor.
 - Vary your facial expressions as you are talking to facilitate breaking eye contact.
 - Use gestures, including nodding or tilting your head, as a way of breaking eye contact.

Activity #1: Staring Contest (line up in two rows, facing each other)

- 10 second staring contest (no talking)
- 10 second staring contest (conversation)
 - What is your name and major/where are you from etc.
- 30 second staring contest (no talking)
- 60 second staring contest (conversation)
 - Why did you decide to take this class?
- 60 second staring contest (A speaking)
 - What did you plan to major in and what is your major now? Why did you choose this major?
- 60 second staring contest (B speaking)
 - What did you plan to major in and what is your major now? Why did you choose this major?

Block 2: Thesis Statements

- Every thesis statement should be a clear, declarative sentence. Most thesis statements should take the form of “*I argue that _____X_____ because _____Y_____ and _____Z_____.*”
- Make sure that there is a *clear relationship* between X and Y+Z.
 - Sometimes, Z is an implicit premise that doesn’t need to be explicitly stated. But if you aren’t sure what your interlocutor thinks, it’s always better to just state the whole argument.
- It should be clear from the thesis statement how the overall argument will go.

Examples:

- “*Cats are better than dogs because it’s really annoying when animals poop in your yard and cats use a litter box*”
- “*Cats should all be sterilized because they are a threat to wild bird populations and preserving wild birds is more important than letting people own cats as pets.*”

Activity #2: Group Eye Contact + Thesis Statements

- Think of something that conventional morality is wrong about. Then create a thesis statement that supports your claim.
 - Example: “*People shouldn’t watch violent movies because it’s unethical to take pleasure in depictions of human suffering.*”
- A discusses their thesis statement for 2 minutes while maintaining eye contact with the other people in the group.
- 30 seconds of feedback from B, C, and D.
- Repeat for B, C, and D.

Block 3: Verbal Reasoning

We will return to these two chapters throughout the course, but for now, let’s focus on RSL’s discussion of conventional morality.

Activity #3: Verbal Reasoning and Conventional Morality

A and B are assigned to defend one of the moral starting points that RSL describes in Chapter 1. A and B have 5 minutes to prepare an argument for their assigned claim. A will defend their claim to B for 90 seconds. Then your B will give A feedback on the delivery for another 90 seconds. Repeat for B.

1. Neither law nor tradition is immune from moral criticism.
2. Everyone is morally fallible.
3. Friendship is valuable.
4. We are not obligated to do the impossible.
5. Children bear less moral responsibility than adults.
6. People should be governed by fair procedures (justice).
7. It is presumptively wrong to hurt people.
8. Discrimination on the basis of normatively irrelevant traits is wrong.
9. Self interest is not the only ethical consideration.
10. Pain/agony is bad, in the sense that people have moral reason to avoid it if they can.
11. Informed consent prevents rights violations.
12. Might does not make right.