

# ADVANCED DEBATE: READINGS IN THEORY, PRACTICE AND TEACHING

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The literature relevant to the field of forensics is vast and growing. Essays abound in our journals. It is often difficult to stay current in our reading. Experienced coaches can find themselves too busy putting out fires, and answering the pressing needs of the moment, to review the dozen or so journals which treat forensics, let alone to keep up with the outpouring of papers from conventions. Experienced student participants are often in a similar situation and inexperienced and beginning students usually don't know where or how to start—let alone keep up. Thus, there is a need for books such as *Advanced Debate Readings in Theory, Practice and Teaching*.

The focus of *Advanced Debate* is debate—competitive, tournament, academic debate. The book largely excludes individual events. (I say largely only because a few of the articles can be applied to certain individual events such as persuasive speaking.) Depending on the reader's perspective, this limitation can be viewed as a strength, weakness, or need for a companion volume which treats individual events. I admit to a focus which views the

aforementioned limitation to debate as a strength. At approximately 500 pages, plus preface, introduction, etc., the size of the work threatens one of its major functions—to help the reader stay current in the field.

*Advanced Debate* has a second limitation. Probably because of its date of publication, 1979, it ignores many of the recent articles and papers treating debate involving propositions of value. To this extent, the volume is already in need of revision. Some of the existing essays need to be deleted and more recent ones, especially those concerning value debate, need to be added.

Despite these limitations, *Advanced Debate* is an important work. I consider it a necessary part of every working debate coach's library. In one book, the reader can find major recent publications in debate theory, important fugitive documents, such as convention papers, and specially commissioned articles. Here is a volume of readings, written by dozens of different authors, which can be of assistance to debate coaches at all levels of expertise, but especially beginning coaches with less knowledge and experience, in helping them to stay more current in the field. *Advanced Debate* can perform the same function for debaters. Indeed, I often assign beginning student debaters, who are taking a basic debate course, readings from *Advanced Debate*, for while many of the essays are advanced, others are not. Thus, the subtitle of this book is probably a more accurate description of its contents than is the main title.

Like almost all books of readings, the content and stylistic quality varies widely from essay to essay. However, on balance, the quality is high enough to warrant the acquisition of at least one personal copy and the consideration of the adoption of *Advanced Debate*, at least as a supplemental text, in a variety of debate courses.

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