



# Understanding College Policy debate

SMU Debate guide  
2014



# Debate speech order

Constructive Speeches = 9 minutes

Rebuttal Speeches = 6 minutes

1AC

1NC

2AC

2NC

1NR

1AR

2NR

2AR

Cross Examination for 3 minutes

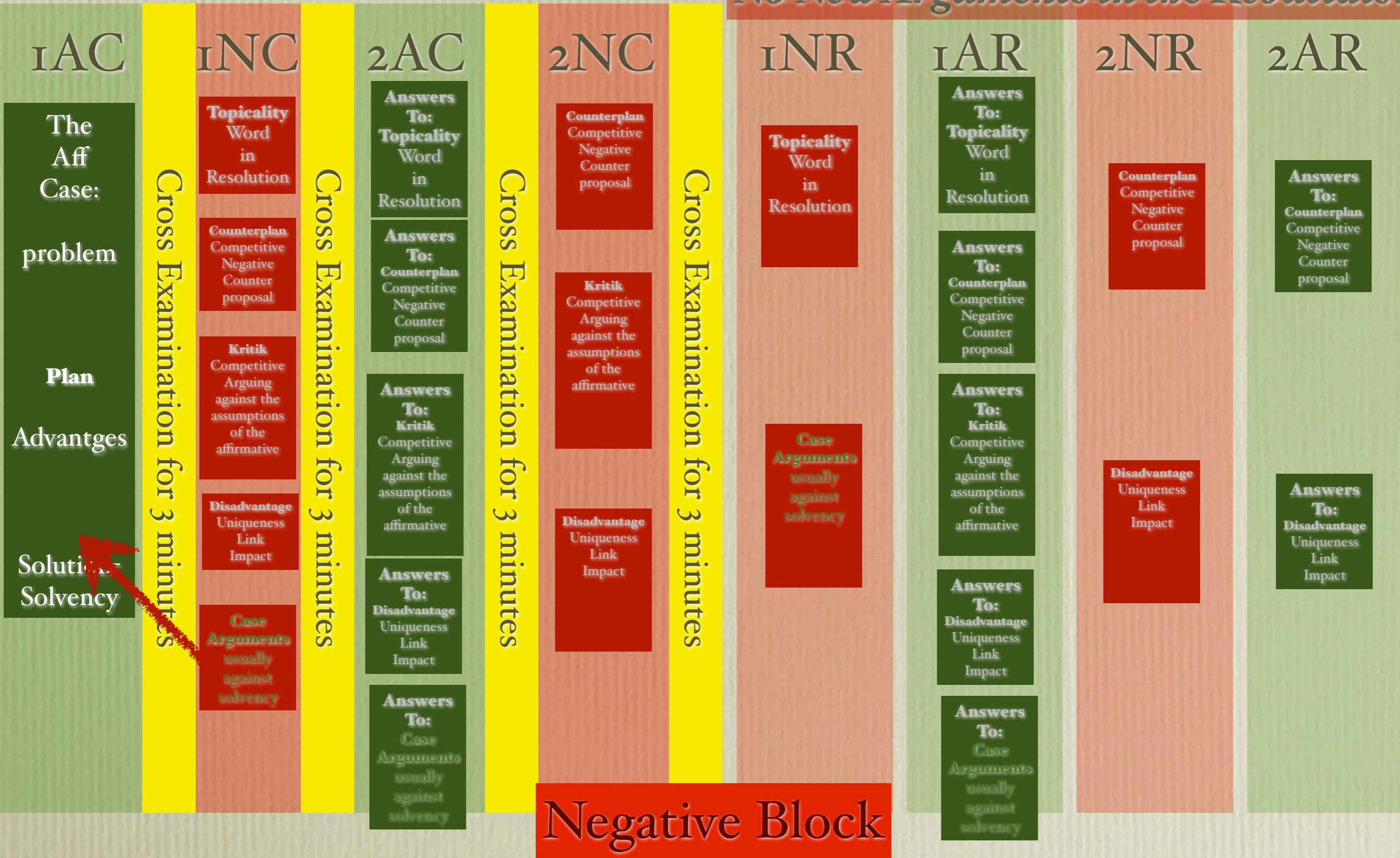


A= Affirmative N= Negative C= Constructive R = Rebuttal

*Each team gets 10 minutes preparation time for speeches.*

# Argumentation parts

*No New Arguments in the Rebuttals!*



Negative Block

# What does each argument box mean or represent?



# The Affirmative Case

The  
Aff  
Case:  
  
problem

**Plan**  
  
Advantages

Solution-  
Solvency

- This is the first speech in the debate.
- The affirmative presents about 10 pieces of evidence.
- “The Case” explains why the resolution should be affirmed by the judge.
- Typically cases outline: a problem [harm], a legislative plan, advantages to taking action, and evidence that the proposed plan will solve the problem.
- The plan will implement one of the five legalization areas: marihuana, gambling, prostitituion, euthanasia, or organ sales.

# Topicality

**Topicality**  
Word  
in  
Resolution

- Topicality is an argument about whether the affirmative plan meets required meanings in the words of the resolution. Is the plan topical?
- This argument argues that the plan is NOT topical.
- Topicality usually has three parts: 1. an interpretation/ definition of a word in the resolution, 2. explanation why the affirmative plan does not meet the definition and 3. reasons why this definition and interpretation is best for the debate.
- Example: Legalize might be a word defined as a topicality argument.

# Counterplan

**Counterplan**  
Competitive  
Negative  
Counter  
proposal

- Counterplan is a negative plan to solve the affirmative problem area.
- Counterplans usually must be proven competitive or to force a choice between the affirmative plan and the negative counterplan
- Counterplans often strongly resemble the affirmative plan with minor adjustments. This type of counterplanning is known as the plan inclusive counterplan.
- Examples include: States CP, Decriminalization counterplan

# Kritik

**Kritik**  
Competitive  
Arguing  
against the  
assumptions  
of the  
affirmative

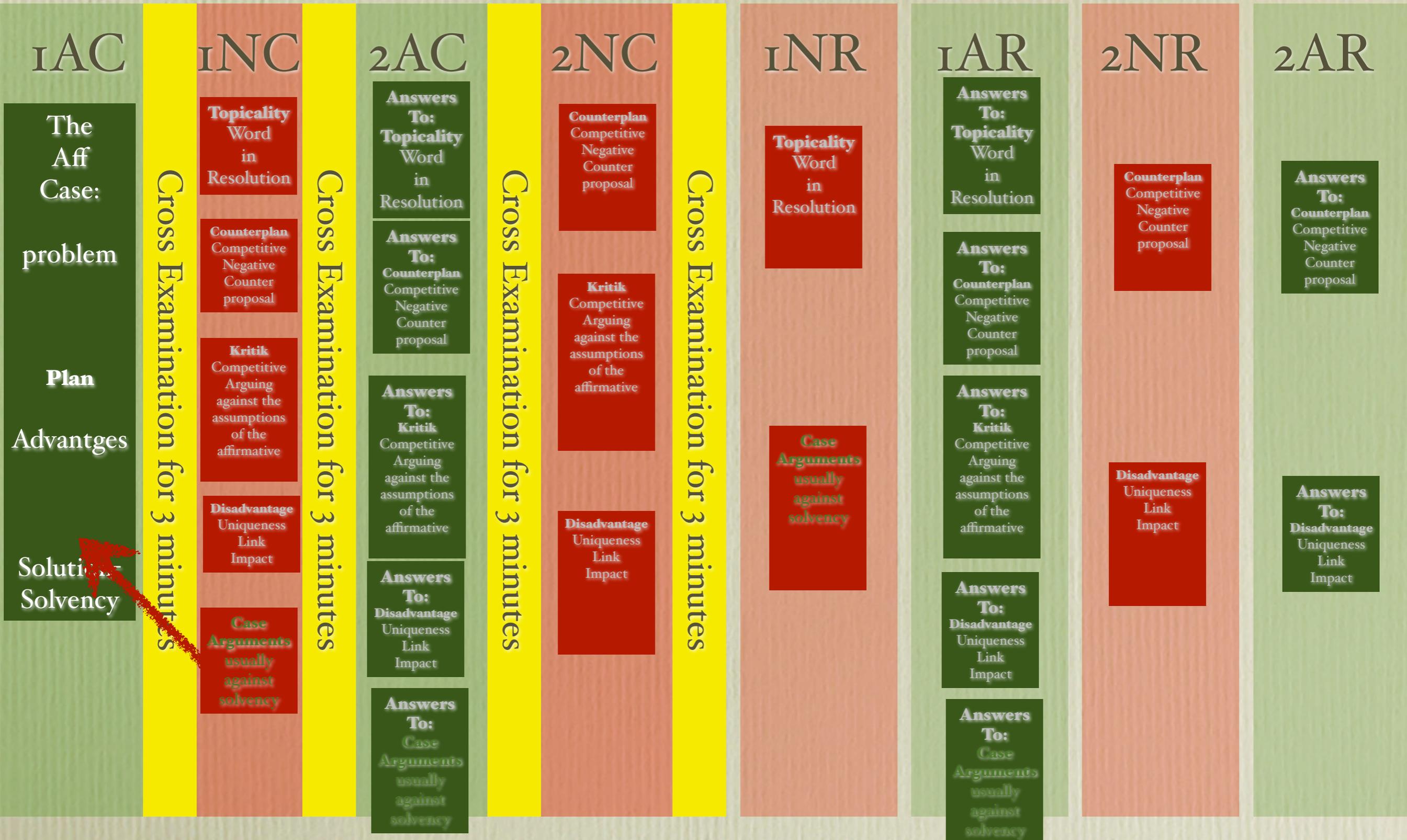
- The critique or Kritik is an argument against assumptions made by an opponent in debate.
- Kritiks typically must offer an alternative.
- Kritiks tend to be drawn from philosophical literatures.
- Examples include: Capitalism, Feminism, and Neocolonialism

# Disadvantage

**Disadvantage**  
Uniqueness  
Link  
Impact

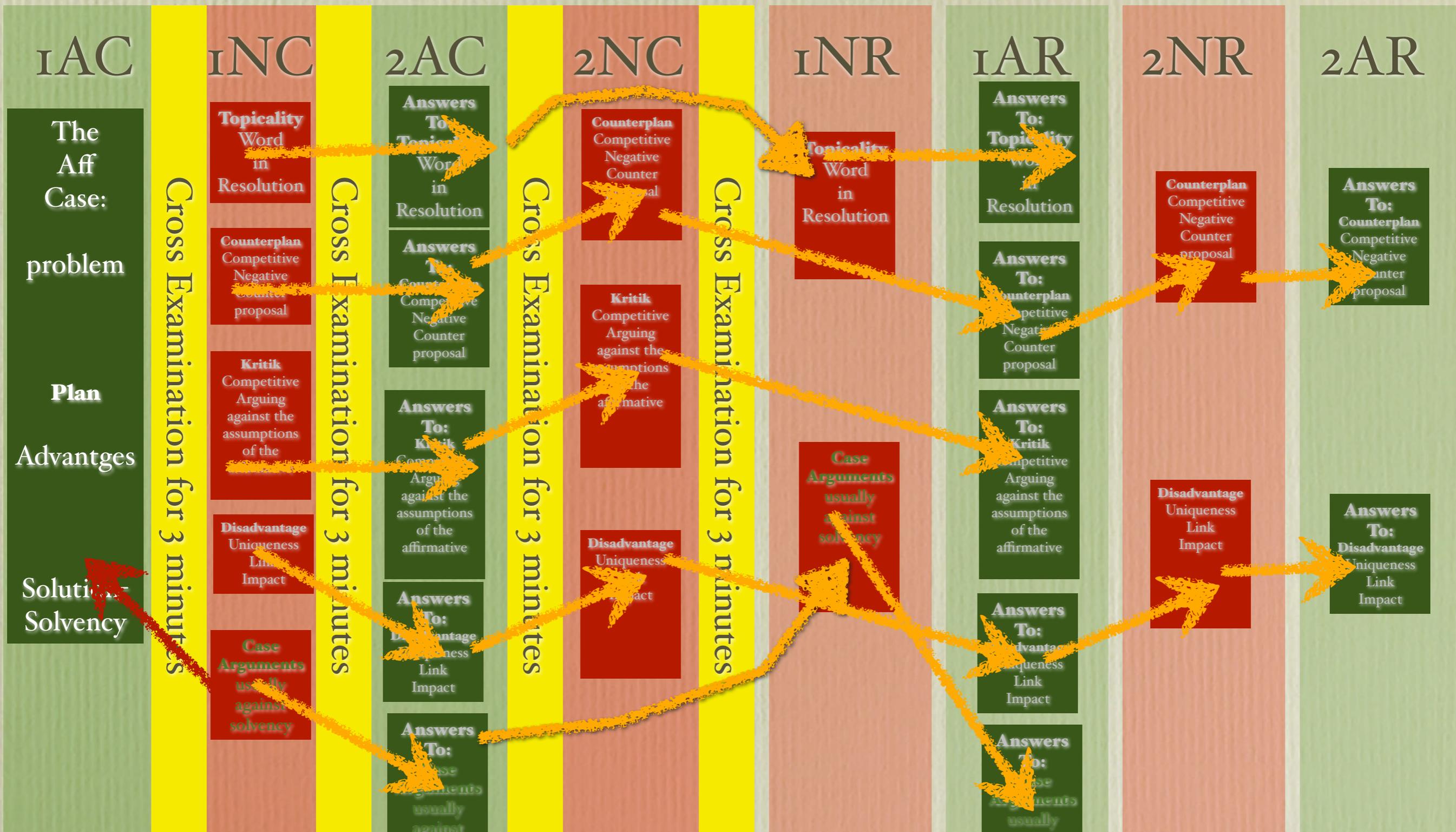
- Disadvantages explain the adverse consequences of an affirmative plan.
- Negative teams must demonstrate that the plan uniquely causes a significant and impactful problem.
- Examples include: Midterms, Federalism, Drug Cartels

# Each Red or Green box has evidence also known as "cards"



Each Red or Green box represents a major argument in the debate

# Arguments flow left to right in the assessment of arguments



Arguments are "dropped" as the debate progresses. Sometimes intentionally-- sometimes by accident.

# What arguments look like to the debater in the debate:

2014-2015 Legalization



## Topicality: Legalization

### A. Our interpretation: Legalization requires the full abolition of limits

*New Oxford American Dictionary 2011*

make (something that was previously illegal) permissible by law: *a measure legalizing gambling in Deadwood.*

### B. The Affirmative only partially removes limits to the resolitional area-- this violates our interpretation

*explain in your own words how the plan text fails to meet the expectations of the definition*

### C. Standards: Our interpretation is best

**1. A priori: Topicality precedes ALL other issues in importance including framework, critical issues, and theory. Without the plain meaning of words all other determinations are subsidiary. Voting Neg might "mean" voting Aff if words have no definitive meaning. The judge must establish standards of word meaning in order to transact a communication event like a debate.**

**2. Limits are good: We cannot expect negative teams to research anything the aff chooses-- even if there is disclosure. We should have specific discussions not dictated by aff choices.**

**3. Jurisdiction: This is a jurisdictional issue which means if they are not topical you have no basis for even evaluating the affirmative-- regardless of whether you like their arguments or not.**

*Resolved: The United States should legalize all or nearly all of one or more of the following in the United States: marijuana, online gambling, physician-assisted suicide, prostitution, the sale of human organs.*