

Extemp Topics from the California Invitational  
UC Berkeley Feb. 19-21, 2005

Final Round Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Will Bush's recent victory on class action lawsuits heal tensions and revive bipartisanship in Congress for the upcoming debate on Social Security?
2. Should the United States reevaluate its stance towards President Hugo Chavez in light of cross border tensions between Venezuela and Colombia?
3. Will Senator Norm Coleman succeed in using the "Oil for Food" scandal to bring down UN Secretary General Kofi Annan?

Speaker 2

1. How will American political leaders respond to overseas milestones in human genetic engineering?
2. How will international opponents of the National Missile Defense Shield adjust their policy towards the United States in response to the recent test failure?
3. Will the second term of President Bush see Republicans becoming the party of John McCain or Rick Santorum?

Speaker 3

1. Will Bush's social security reform hopes be crushed between the AARP's opposition to reduced benefits and Tom DeLay's opposition to any increase in payroll taxes?
2. Will President Bush be successful in shifting the focus of NASA from unpersoned scientific research instruments like Hubble to human space exploration?
3. Would the United States' offering of concessions to China make Hu Jintao more likely to secure six way talks with North Korea?

Speaker 4

1. Will moves by the Episcopal Church toward blessing same sex unions at the same time as states are defining marriages as "between a man and a woman" weaken the charge for the Federal Marriage Amendment?
2. Will the selection of Harry Reid as Senate Majority Leader while Nanci Pelosi leads House Democrats create a mixed message for Democrats?
3. Will Russia's support for Iranian nuclear power make the UN Security Council unable to address issues of Iranian nuclearization?

Speaker 5

1. Do John Negroponte's connections to Iran-Contra help or hurt his ability to promote Bush's national security agenda as National Intelligence Director?
2. How has international attention from the tsunami reshaped the nature of the conflict between the Indonesian government and Acehenese separatists?
3. Will Democrats' electoral prospects in 2006 be shaped more by outside events or by party rebuilding and messaging?

Speaker 6

1. How do recent revelations that the White House has been sponsoring journalists along with court rulings that journalists must reveal their sources affect public confidence in fair reporting?
2. Will Bush's trip to Germany help or hurt Schroder's standing in German political opinion?
3. Will the Waxman Report's findings that "abstinence-only" education programs are lying to students undermine President Bush's credibility on federal education policy?

Speaker 7

1. Should the United States change its approach to Iraq given the changed dynamics of the Israeli Palestinian conflict?
2. Will the creation of a new safety advisory board for the FDA give proponents of re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada the necessary ammunition to take on President Bush?
3. Will anti-Americanism in European public opinion prevent a lasting reconciliation between Bush and Chirac?

Semifinal Round Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Will Bush spend his political capital on the Federal Marriage Amendment?
2. Does Bush's rhetoric of freedom jeopardize America's relationship with Pakistan?
3. Will Arnold Schwarzenegger's trip to Washington yield more federal money for California or a lesson in Washington politics?

Speaker 2

1. Does the US need to join Kyoto to effectively combat climate change?
2. Is New York still in the running for the 2012 Olympics?
3. Has Vladimir Putin become a dictator?

Speaker 3

1. Do Margaret Spellings' comments about "Postcards from Buster" indicate that she will run the Department of Education from a culturally conservative perspective?
2. Can Lula continue to govern effectively in spite of his recent defeat in Brazil's Chamber of Deputies?
3. Will Michael Chertoff be able to maintain a nonpartisan role as Homeland Security Secretary?

Speaker 4

1. What do the comments by Pat Robertson about SpongeBob's video for the We Are Family Foundation tell us about the present state of the Christian Right in America?
2. Can Vicente Fox salvage his presidential legacy?
3. Does the selection of John Negroponte suggest that the office of National Intelligence Director will have real power?

Speaker 5

1. Is Amtrak really dead this time?
2. Why was the office of National Intelligence Director so undesirable that Bush's top three choices all said no?
3. Will Bush's trip to Europe mend fences or just take photos?

Speaker 6

1. How long will it take for an early warning system for Tsunami to be built in the Indian Ocean?
2. Will Gordon Brown be Britain's next Prime Minister?
3. Is America winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan?

Speaker 7

1. Should cities like New York, San Diego and Washington, DC contribute public funds to the building of new sports arenas?
2. Has Ariel Sharon transformed from a hardliner to a peacemaker?
3. Should Hubble be repaired?

Quarterfinal Round Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Is Alberto Gonzalez going to be less controversial than John Ashcroft?
2. Will ties between Turkey and the US be strained because of the elections in Iraq?
3. Will democracy be restored in Nepal in the near future?

Speaker 2

1. Should the Democrats have used their filibuster power with Gonzales?
2. Can Tony Blair achieve a third term in office?
3. Will recent direct flights between China and Taiwan help to bridge the gap between them?

Speaker 3

1. Does the discovery of a new retroviral resistant variant of AIDS pose a substantial public health threat?
2. Was Bush right to retain Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense?
3. Will the Spanish vote on the European Constitution give the document more momentum?

Speaker 4

1. Is Senator Norm Coleman a rising star in the GOP?
2. Will the new Iraqi government be stable?
3. Can the US Dollar hold its own against the Euro?

Speaker 5

1. Can the Bush administration convince the Congress to extend expiring provisions of the USA Patriot Act?
2. Will the European Constitution reach full ratification?

3. Will the Iraqi election results bring credibility to the national leadership?

Speaker 6

1. Will the Iraqi National Assembly be able to govern despite under-representation of Sunnis?
2. Has the UN lost its credibility as a result of the conflict in Darfur?
3. Will the continuing influence of Evangelical Christians force the Democrats to move to the right?

Speaker 7

1. Should California adopt Schwarzenegger's redistricting plan?
2. Can the international community end violence in Darfur?
3. What will be the impact of the recent federal court ruling regarding Guantanamo detainees?

Speaker 8

1. Can Condoleezza Rice rebuild relations with Europe?
2. Should Hubble be repaired?
3. Will efforts to curb immigration help or hurt Tony Blair in upcoming elections?

Round 4 Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Has the inaction with regard to Sudan shown that the United States is not serious about combating genocide?
2. Do Saudi elections show a real step towards democracy or just a façade?
3. Should Hezbollah be designated a terrorist organization by the EU?

Speaker 2

1. Will Bush's call for Syrian disengagement from Lebanon succeed?
2. Can Abbas tame Hamas?
3. Will the United States permit Iran to develop nuclear weapons?

Speaker 3

1. Does the assassination of Rafik Hariri signal a resurgence of civil strife in Lebanon?
2. Will the recent election results create a fundamentalist regime in Iraq?
3. Is it time for America to get tough on Israel?

Speaker 4

1. Will disputes over Hezbollah reopen the trans-Atlantic divide?
2. Will the US be able to curb drug production in Afghanistan?
3. Was John Negroponte's assignment to be National Intelligence Director a promotion or a punishment based on his job as Ambassador to Iraq?

Speaker 5

1. Did the attacks of the past two days erase the gains from Iraq's elections?

2. Should Israel go through with the Gaza pullout?
3. Can the US persuade Russia to stop supporting Iranian Nuclear projects?

Speaker 6

1. Will developments in Iraq increase turmoil in the Kurdish regions of Turkey?
2. Will Condoleeza Rice squander the present opportunity with Israel?
3. Is the time for diplomacy in Iran over?

Speaker 7

1. Will the United States invade Fallujah again?
2. Did the death of Yassir Arafat facilitate the Gaza pullout?
3. Should the US change its stance towards Saudi Arabia?

Speaker 8

1. Does Ayad Alawi have a place as a future leader in Iraq?
2. Does Ahmed Chalabi belong in the Prime Minister's office or in prison?
3. Who should replace John Negroponte as Ambassador to Iraq?

Round 3 Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Is Colombia on the brink of a much larger civil war?
2. Will Hillary Clinton actually seek reelection to the Senate in 2006?
3. Should the charge of being "anti-American" be applied to right wing commentators as it is to left wing intellectuals?

Speaker 2

1. Is the Colombian military really gaining the upper hand in the war on drugs?
2. Does Dean's selection as DNC Chairman show that Bill Clinton's "New Democrats" no longer lead the Democratic Party?
3. Should the University of Colorado dismiss Ward Churchill?

Speaker 3

1. Is time for a new approach to drug eradication in Colombia?
2. Can more government money be generated by tobacco lawsuits?
3. What does the Ward Churchill fiasco say about the state of academic freedom in America?

Speaker 4

1. Are six way talks the answer for US relations with North Korea?
2. Should Harvard faculty vote no confidence in President Larry Summers over his comments regarding women in higher education?
3. Will President Bush succeed in creating private accounts for social security, or will he be blocked by congress?

Speaker 5

1. Does the announcement by North Korea of their possession of nuclear weapons actually change the situation?
2. Does Colorado in 2004 give a viable example of how Democrats can compete in a Rocky Mountain state?
3. Does Vancouver show a good model for a city's drug policy?

Speaker 6

1. Will Condoleeza Rice have more luck with North Korea than Colin Powell did?
2. Is it appropriate for the President of Harvard to suggest that women cant cut it in sciences?
3. Is Barbara Boxer the new Wellstone?

Speaker 7

1. Will Japanese pressure bring North Korea back to the table for negotiations?
2. Is Harvard's reaction to Larry Summers causing a chilling effect on academic free speech?
3. Will Seantor Chaffe defect to the Democratic Party?

Speaker 8

1. Has China realigned against North Korea?
2. Is it time for the Federal Government to remove marijuana from the list of schedule one drugs?
3. Should California pass Schwarzenegger's redistricting plan?

Round 2 Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Will Russia's nuclear fuel deal with Iran significantly deescalate the tension between the West and Tehran?
2. Will his victory over class action lawsuits give President Bush the momentum to push forward his agenda?
3. Does Arkansas' new law sanctioning "Covenant Marriages" signify the beginning of a new national battle in the culture war?

Speaker 2

1. Should the European Union lift its arms embargo against China?
2. Has President Bush exaggerated the crisis in social security?
3. Over the past 10 years, have Americans become more conservative?

Speaker 3

1. Will Bush's most recent visit to Europe mark the end of U.S. – E.U. tension?
2. Will there soon be an independent Basque state in Spain?
3. Will President Bush actually reach his goals for deficit reduction?

Speaker 4

1. Should the European Union admit Turkey?

2. Can Bush get the GOP Congress to approve lifting the 90K cap on taxable income payroll taxes?
3. Was the fall of AT&T unavoidable?

Speaker 5

1. Will Tony Blair's government be able to get re-elected?
2. Do international examples show the way for American Social Security Reform?
3. Does the rise of Howard Dean to the DNC Chairmanship show that fundraising has shifted from the rich donors to the masses on the internet?

Speaker 6

1. Should Kosovo get its independence?
2. Will Bush's new law limiting class action lawsuits actually stop frivolous lawsuits?
3. Is the Episcopal Church going to approve the blessing of same sex unions?

Speaker 7

1. Should Russia make the necessary reforms and join the World Trade Organization?
2. Will AARP be able to spearhead opposition to Bush's Social Security Plan?
3. Is Howard Dean too beholden to left wing activists to be an effective party chairman?

Speaker 8

1. Will Russia-Georgia talks succeed in ending years of distrust?
2. Will Sinn Fein's insistence on the IRA's innocence in the bank robbery destroy peace negotiations in Northern Ireland?
3. Can Howard Dean bring the Democrats back to power?

## Round 1 Extemp Topics

Speaker 1

1. Is the AARP overreacting to Bush's Social Security proposals?
2. Will George Bush's economic policy be more "prudent" in his second term than it was in his first?
3. Will Tony Blair suffer Margaret Thatcher's fate by being removed from office by his own party?

Speaker 2

1. Will New York end up following the path of San Francisco with regard to same sex marriage?
2. Is President Bush serious about reducing the size of government?
3. Did the death of Yassir Arafat end the cycle of violence in the Middle East?

Speaker 3

1. Will Bush's second term bring more funds for faith based charities?
2. In light of congress' passage of the limitations on class action lawsuits, is a more substantive tort reform likely?

3. Is Thailand under Thaksin a model for governance in South East Asia?

Speaker 4

1. Has Gene Robinson's open homosexuality as the Episcopalian Bishop of New Hampshire created the beginnings of a schism in the Anglican Church?
2. Was Dean the right choice to lead the DNC?
3. Will the PRI return to power in Mexico's next election?

Speaker 5

1. Does the overwhelming passage of the limits on class action lawsuits indicate a collapse of discipline for senate democrats?
2. Do changing views on gay marriage, marijuana, and the death penalty indicate that Americans are becoming more liberal?
3. Should the UN commission on Darfur have identified the crisis as a genocide?

Speaker 6

1. Should Bush lift the 90K cap on taxable income payroll taxes?
2. Will "covenant marriages" make marriages stronger in reality, or just on paper?
3. Should Russia stop meddling in Georgian affairs?

Speaker 7

1. Will Howard Dean's fundraising allow Democrats to close the spending gap in American elections?
2. Is New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's response to gay marriage a responsible response or just dodging the issue?
3. Was Lula right to support tough monetary policy in Brazil?

Speaker 8

1. Has financial support for faith based charities shown what President Bush really meant by "compassionate conservatism"?
2. Should the White House pay pundits to publicize their policies?
3. Does instability in Nepal threaten its neighbors?