Propose your Tuesday Times Roundtable session online at 
http://goglobal.fiu.edu/TTR/Pages/Be-a-Moderator.aspx

Overview

The Tuesday Times Roundtable (TTR) is a weekly series of open, multi-perspective discussions of 
The New York Times articles on global current events. Sessions are held from 12:30-1:30pm on 
Tuesdays, in GC 150 at MMC and WUC 159 at BBC. Free lunch is provided to participants at each 
session, and no RSVP is required to attend. Video of MMC sessions is posted online at 
http://youtube.com/goglobalfiu.

PART 1: Proposing & Preparing Your Session

Choosing an Topic

The two things to consider when choosing your topic are global context and timeliness. Most topics 
can be framed in a global context, so do not let this limit your range of potential topics, but rather 
ensure that our Global Learning Outcomes (Global Awareness, Perspective, and Engagement) are 
applied to the topic you choose. Read more on our Global Learning Outcomes at 
http://goglobal.fiu.edu/About/Pages/Learning-Outcomes.aspx

Since your topic will be chosen weeks or months prior to your session, you will want to consider how 
to remain broad enough so that it will still be timely and relevant during your session.

Choosing a Title

Second to recognizing your name, your title is what will draw people into the session. It should be 
catchy but not cheesy, descriptive but not lengthy, and should make students think about the issue 
before they arrive (such as by including a provocative question).

Choosing an Article

You may choose any The New York Times article (including blogs, editorials, book reviews, and 
archival material). Your article should reflect the spirit of your session, represent the variety of 
perspectives on the topic, and serve as a general introduction to participants who may be mostly 
unfamiliar with the issue. Articles of 1-2 printed pages are ideal; longer articles will be 
condensed into 1-2 page Facts & Perspectives issue guide.
PART 2: Moderating Your Session

Basic Strategies

- **Facilitate the process of students speaking to one another.** Ask students to introduce themselves the first time they speak. Students will be responding to each other’s comments, and it will make for a more personal conversation when they can do so by name. Be strategic when calling on participants by ensuring that the current line of conversation is either exhausted or has gone on long enough before comments on a separate thought or question are introduced. Feel free to connect what one student has said back to a previous comment from another participant, or to engage students in a dialogue with each other, so long as the exchange is appropriate to reach an understanding of tensions on the issue, and rest of the group does not become disengaged.

- **Foster an inviting atmosphere for varying viewpoints.** As the moderator, it is important that you remain impartial about the subject of the session. Participants will be hesitant to go against the discussion leader. Note that this does not mean you should be disengaged – passion for the subject and the discussion process are absolutely encouraged. Thank participants for contributing rather than reinforcing them with “good point.”

- **Get students on the same page about the facts and background.** Copies of your selected article, or a summarized Facts and Perspectives issue guide, will be provided to all participants. Most students will have not had a chance to read the article beforehand. Some options are devoting a few minutes to reading the material, asking a student who has read already to summarize the article, or using the K-W-L method: asking students to share what they know and want to know about the subject, and what they learned from the article.

- **Ask the right questions.** Ask questions that encourage students to examine their values, to consider the costs and consequences of various approaches and actions, to examine their personal values underlying their opinions, and to apply the issue at hand to their own lives. Ask probing follow-up questions to clarify statements and to reach deeper meaning of surface comments when necessary. Avoid rhetorical, leading, and loaded questions, and only use yes/no questions in a quick polling format to get the feel of the room, not as a strategy to start conversation.

Advanced Strategies:

- **Paraphrase carefully** by using phrases like “What I am hearing is…” rather than “You mean that…” and give the speaker a chance to clarify or correct you. Know why you are paraphrasing. It is helpful in that it shows you are listening, helps check meaning, and gives the speaker a chance to clarify their point and evaluate their feelings. Paraphrasing can also encourage back-and-forth with you rather than other participants, may miss the essence of what was said, or give participants the impression that you feel that you speak more eloquently than they do/that they are being corrected.

- **Intervene intentionally,** such as when there is an opportunity for learning, a violation of ground rules, lack of clarity or understanding, there is an opportunity to improve group dynamic, or to manage time. Otherwise, let the conversation flow without you, when it can.

- **Set ground rules at the beginning of the forum.** Basic ones include: Be honest and respectful, Listen to understand, Be brief, and Disagree with curiosity, not hostility.

- **Explain your facilitation weakness in your introduction** (“I am not good at cutting participants off, so please make sure that I do not need to”)