Politics is the practice of decision-making processes involved in managing a state or a government. It deals with “who gets what, when and how” or “who could do what to whom,” to use celebrated phrases. Because political relations involve power and authority, politics and controversy go hand in hand, either overtly or covertly. This course will explore several controversies that have permeated American politics, ranging from contentions about the rationale behind the American political system (motivations of the Founding Fathers, the Electoral College, the financial meltdown of 2008) through disagreements over the essence of public policies (immigration, death penalty, support for the Arts) to debates about civil rights and liberties (affirmative action, abortion, freedom of expression). We will focus on what types of arguments have been used to endorse/reject specific views and how arguments in favor of/against these views have been produced. The goal of the course is thus two-fold: to examine key debates present in American politics and to appreciate the art of making effective political arguments.