

Instructions for Discussion Leaders

HPS/PI 130

Discussion leaders should generate a list of questions, comments, and discussion points that will serve to facilitate discussion. These should be based primarily upon the readings for the previous two classes, but they may make contact with earlier readings as well. Discussion points tend to fall into two broad categories. First, there will be requests or queries directed to the instructor, focusing on aspects of the readings that are further in need of explanation or elaboration. Second, there will be comments and questions directed toward the class for purposes of discussion. Here are some more specific suggestions:

- Were there any places in the readings where the author(s) seemed to presuppose some background on the part of the reader that you do not have?
- Were there any places where an author's argument was difficult to follow?
- Were there any other aspects of the readings that you had particular difficulty understanding?
- What kind of reactions did you have to the readings? Were there any claims that you strongly disagreed with? Do you agree with this particular author more or less than other authors that we have read?
- What were some of the most interesting claims that you encountered in the readings? What were some of the most interesting puzzles raised by the readings?
- Formulate some open-ended questions based on the readings.

Discussion leaders should attempt to produce about 12 - 15 questions and comments along these lines. One member of the group should then type up the questions/comments that were generated. The header should include the date of the class and the names of the discussion leaders. The discussion topics must be typed up as a word document, text, pdf, or some other easily readable format and then emailed to the class listserve by noon the day before the discussion class. I will print copies of the list and distribute them in class.

The discussion leaders will help run the class in Oprah-like fashion, directing questions both at the instructor and the other students. Discussion leaders may also allow a certain amount of open-ended discussion during class, and should exercise their own discretion about when the discussion is productive, and when it is better to return to the list of discussion topics. Discussion leaders should not only direct the discussion, but play an active part in it as well.

After class, the discussion leaders should type up a list of about 5 – 8 of the most interesting or important points that were raised in the course of the discussion. These can be in the form of answers to specific questions, or they can be new ideas that were generated in discussion. These should be posted as a follow-up to the original discussion topics and emailed to the class via the listserve by 2:00 pm the following day.