



# The Complete Guide to Seminar

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## WHAT IS SEMINAR

A small group discussion around a focused theme that helps to explain values and beliefs that people hold and how they function in society. Helps develop ability to take concepts and ideas and explore them. Allows you to understand other people as unique individuals with valid viewpoints that may differ from your viewpoint.

## PURPOSE

1. Allow for in depth questions to be discussed that might not be appropriate in a large group.
2. Provides a forum for each person to speak freely because:
  1. Trust is established so that discussion is not a personal attack.
  2. Expression of divergent views is acceptable and indeed is encouraged.
  3. Learning, discovery and change are essential if we are to learn from the past.
  4. Challenging ideas, beliefs, and opinions helps to understand the unique character of each individual, society, race, country, government, and culture.
  5. Learning requires listening as well as talking, hearing and understanding as well as speaking and teaching.
  - f. Change and diversity are healthy; ideas can be shared, modified or changed.
  - g. No one person has all the answers, life is lived by learning and adapting to change.

## PREPARING FOR SEMINAR

1. Read all the material for the week's discussion prior to seminar.
2. Underline or mark appropriate passages in texts so can find them readily.
3. Complete the writing assignment prior to seminar.
4. Include two questions, with page citations, about the material at the end of the portfolio entry.
5. Late papers are not accepted.

## WHAT TO BRING TO SEMINAR

1. Completed journal entry including two written questions for in class discussion.
2. Bring the texts, portfolio, handouts, presentation notes, pencil and paper to seminar.

## SEMINAR PROCESS AND PARTICIPATION

1. Take seat; get ready for seminar to begin. Open folder to last page of the essay. The facilitator initials the paper if it is a complete.

2. If the paper is not complete, the facilitator will ask you to leave seminar and you will be graded accordingly.
3. Appoint a Gatekeeper whose job is to:
  - a. Insure that the discussion stays focused on the material.
  - b. See that everyone has a chance to participate in the discussion.
  - c. Inform you if are off the subject so discussion can be refocused on the topic.
4. Get to know each other by identifying yourself by name each time you speak.
5. Starting the discussion.
  - a. Use the written portfolio questions as a jumping off point.
  - b. When you ask a question name the person you want to answer question. This helps insure that everyone participates.
  - c. If you are called upon your ability to answer shows you did your homework.
6. Discussion.
  - a. Use the assigned texts, handouts, and video presentations.
  - b. Use information from class presentations in the seminar discussion.
  - c. Respect the opinions of others even if you do not agree with them.
  - d. Do not allow what happens emotionally in seminar affect your relationships with each other in the rest of the class.
7. Participation
  - a. Everyone is expected to actively participate in the discussion that means you speak.
  - b. If someone is not speaking call on him or her directly to include him or her in the discussion.
  - c. If you are called upon you must give an answer to the question.
  - d. Do not monopolize the discussion.

## **ESSAYS**

1. Keep all essays in a manila folder and write name on the outside front and the tab.
2. Paper is word-processed in Times New Roman font, 12 cpi.
3. After completing the essay, write a minimum of two questions about the material that is appropriate for discussion in seminar.
4. Bring the folder with the completed paper to seminar and use the paper as part of the discussion.
5. Folders are collected at the end of seminar.

## **HOW TO SEMINAR SUCCESSFULLY**

### **Be Prepared**

1. Read all of the assigned material.
2. Highlight important information in the text and write notes in the margins where you have questions you want answered or as reference points for seminar discussion.
3. Bring questions, comments, insights, opinions, and additional research about the material to the seminar for dissemination to the other members.

### **Bring all the course texts with you to seminar**

1. The text is needed to supplement your memory of the concepts.
2. Bring the notebook to use for taking notes in seminar.

### **Conduct yourself with respect to others**

1. Listen when someone else is talking.
2. Don't dominate the discussion. You may have much to say, but listening to others is just as important as sharing our own ideas. Effective listening is a much more important skill than talking.
3. After making a point, allow ample time for others to talk before rejoining the discussion.
4. Do not speak unless it is about the topic being discussed and wait your turn.
5. Do not have side discussions going on with people around you. Keep focused on the topic.

### **Risk by behaving in academic behaviors you are not comfortable with**

1. If you don't normally talk in class, do so in seminar.
2. Have courage to disagree, make a point, stand firm with an idea or admit an error of thinking or misperception.
3. If you don't share ideas in seminar, the gatekeeper or the facilitator will eventually call on you.

### **Focus on the issue, topic or idea at hand**

1. Try not to personalize the discussion or share personal stories unless the information is brief and directly related to the topic.

### **Reference**

1. Clarify concepts; ideas, research and issues by using the author's name and page number of the text will help others follow your line of inquiry.

### **Respond**

1. Speak to the seminar group as a whole or to individual students who you may have asked the question or who may have asked a question of you. Do not address your statements to the seminar facilitator.

### **Speak**

1. Allow sufficient time for a person to finish before adding our own ideas. Also, allow time to fully discuss the topic before changing focus.