

Christian Tradition
Fall 2008 Schroeder

Student Discussion Facilitations

This semester, you will serve as a discussion facilitator with another student. The discussion will take about 20 minutes. It does not need to cover all the readings for the day; you may select one text, or one or two themes which cross more than one text, to focus the discussion.

As a discussion facilitator, your goals for the discussion are:

- to bring your peers in section to a deeper understanding of some of the readings assigned for the day
- to provide an opportunity for everyone in our learning community to participate in the learning process

As discussion facilitator, you will:

- Prepare BRIEF remarks to begin the discussion, which will frame and introduce the discussion, such as introducing the organizing themes/ principles, why you wanted to discuss these questions/ topics
- Prepare stimulating question(s) for the class to discuss; these questions should lead students to a deeper understanding of one or more of the texts assigned for that day. See handout on Designing Effective Discussion Questions.
- Consider how to prioritize and/ or group your question(s); we may not have time for all of them. 20-30 minutes isn't long.
- Develop strategies that will invite everyone in the section to join the discussion. Strategies might include developing an activity for the class, work in small groups or pairs, calling on students by name, devising some kind of semi-anonymous method of calling on students (giving students numbers, addressing specific questions to different cohorts of the large section), developing a writing exercise before the discussion, etc.
- Facilitate the discussion. Be ready to keep discussion going by being prepared to turn to specific passages in the reading to illuminate/ illustrate your question if necessary, being an active listener, mediating if disagreements arise, asking students to defend or clarify their positions, having follow-up questions, etc.
- Provide brief concluding remarks at the end of the discussion; these may include your own answers to your questions, things you encourage us to think about.
- **Turn in to me a copy of your discussion plan/notes, including with your questions, your own thoughts on your questions, and other preparatory materials.** It can be an outline with bullet points.

A suggestion: you can direct people to specific passages in the readings with your questions/activities

Your grade will be based on your preparation and efforts at implementation, not on how well your peers respond to your questions.



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