

GROUP DISCUSSION LEADER ASSIGNMENT

SOC 103A - Introduction to Sociology

Prof. Alecea Standlee

Spring 2019

As the discussion leader, your group's role is to act as a facilitator and to provide structure for the week's readings. For a day, your group is in charge!

Frame Your Discussion

- I recommend you begin by introducing the reading.
- Provide a brief overview, some context and additional relevant information.
- You may include video (Ted Talks etc.) or an activity (games, learning activities, etc.) in your introduction.
 - Please limit introductory remarks and discussion framing to no more than 30 minutes including all elements.

Discussion Leader

- The majority of your time will be spent guiding the class discussion.
- Write five or more questions that can be used in class to prompt discussion of the week's readings.
 - Copies of these must be printed out and distributed to the class.
 - The handout you give to me should include a list of any extra reading (articles, websites, etc.) that you did.
- Present your questions to the class.
 - You may use pairs, small groups, or large group discussion formats.
 - All group members should actively engage in facilitating the discussion for your classmates.
 - Class discussion should last the remainder of the class time, at least 45 minutes.

Advice About Composing Questions

- Avoid yes/no questions, unless they have a strong "why" or "how" component.
- Avoid purely factual questions with short answers. Stress questions that require thinking/interpretation.
- You might quote a significant sentence from the reading and ask a question about it.
 - Try to tie the reading to what we've learned about or talked about in other class sessions.
- Ask questions that ask for comparison or connections between the subject of the reading and other things we've been studying.
- Ask questions that need evidence, either from the reading or elsewhere in the course.
- Develop questions that foster in-depth thinking and discussion. Be careful to go beyond basic descriptive questions. Your questions don't need to be overly formal, but should be carefully worded so that class members know what issues or ideas to consider when answering.

Advice About Leading Discussion

- To begin the discussion in class, you should start by sharing your own thoughts about the readings. Discuss some of the issues that you would like to focus on.
 - You might also begin by drawing some links to other texts we have read or ideas we've discussed.
- “Facilitating” does not mean that you have to know everything. Rather, your role is to keep the discussion going by asking questions, examining key passages in the text, offering any supplemental materials, and asking for clarification, examples, or explanations from your peers.
- Allow time for the class to answer. In leading the discussion, remember that the class will need time to think about the questions you are asking and that you may need to ask it in a few different ways to get the discussion going. Be patient when you ask a question, and feel free to ask follow-up questions if your group discovers an interesting idea that you had not originally intended on exploring.
 - Remember: the goal here is to generate and maintain a classroom discussion; it is not to make it through all of your questions in the allotted time.