

Discussion Lead (PHIL 194W)

due on date to be arranged with you

Once during term you will be called upon to take my place and lead our in-class discussion. The purpose of these discussion leads is: (a) to give you some practice at leading a discussion, an essential skill for pretty much anyone to have; and (b) to give everyone the benefit of listening to someone other than me lead the day's discussion for a while.

The day on which you'll do your discussion lead will be arranged with you in advance. I will model how to do these discussion leads in our first few meetings, before passing the responsibility off to you and your peers.

Guidelines

In addition to being responsible for leading our in-class discussion for the day, your discussion lead should consist of the following three components:

1. an **introduction**, in which you present the highlights from the day's reading and what you take to be most significant and interesting about it, preparing us for the discussion to follow
2. a structured **discussion activity** of your design and choosing, to get the day's discussion going
3. an **explanation** of why you chose the discussion activity you did

In deciding on your discussion activity, think about what you think makes for an effective discussion and/or some specific way in which our in-class discussions could be improved, and then pick or come up with an activity that will promote that end. For example, if you think that it's important for everyone to speak the

same number of times in a discussion (so that no individual voices are overpowering others), you could introduce and enforce a rule for the day's discussion where no one is allowed to speak a second time until everyone else has spoken once, or a third time until everyone else has spoken twice, and so on.

Your explanation of why you chose the discussion activity you did should simply make explicit the pedagogical end that you're trying to achieve with the activity. You should present your explanation before you introduce and explain the activity itself. Your explanation can be very brief. For instance, in the above example, you could simply say, "I think it's important in class discussions that no single voice overpowers anyone else's, so I've designed an activity where everyone will get to speak an equal number of times."

Grading

You will be graded on your overall effectiveness at facilitating our discussion, the explanation and implementation of your discussion activity, and your overall preparedness and mastery of the day's reading.