

# Socratic Discussion Rules

Based on the Liberty Fund Model

## The Core Philosophy

The goal of this seminar is **Socratic Inquiry**. We are here to explore ideas, not to reach a consensus, solve a policy problem, or “win” a debate.

- **No Lecturing:** The format is entirely conversational. No one delivers a lecture.
  - **Text-Based:** The conversation is grounded strictly in the assigned readings. Participants are expected to reference specific pages to support their points.
  - **Equality of Voice:** There is no hierarchy in the seminar room. A junior student has the same standing as a senior professional.
- 

## The Queue System

To ensure fairness and continuity, we utilize a dual-queue system managed by the Discussion Leader.

### The Two Signals

There are two distinct ways to enter the conversation. Please use the correct hand signal.

### 1. The Long Queue (New Points)

- **Purpose:** To introduce a new topic, a new angle on the text, or a substantial argument that changes the direction.
- **Signal:** **Raise your hand.**
- **Priority:** *Standard.* You will be placed in the line and called upon when the current thread is exhausted.

## 2. The Short Queue (Direct Responses)

- **Purpose:** To make a brief rebuttal, a clarification, or a direct follow-up to the *current* speaker. It is **not** for introducing new ideas.
- **Signal:** **Raise one finger** (or “Pinch”).
- **Priority:** *High*. You are allowed to “jump” the line to keep the conversation fluid and coherent.

**Warning:** The Discussion Leader has the right to cut off a “Short Point” if it evolves into a lengthy monologue and place that person at the back of the Long Queue.

---

## Roles & Responsibilities

### The Discussion Leader

The Leader is a facilitator, not a teacher. They will not lecture on the material. \* **Traffic Control:** Their primary job is to manage the queue and recognize speakers. \* **Guardian of the Text:** They will intervene if the discussion drifts into anecdotes unrelated to the readings. \* **Timekeeper:** They ensure the session starts and ends exactly on time.

### The Participants

- **Preparation:** You must read the material in advance.
  - **Civility:** Interrupting is strictly forbidden. Wait for the Leader to call on you.
  - **Active Listening:** If your point is made by someone else while you are waiting, please lower your hand to save time.
- 

## Logistics

Feature	Rule
<b>The Table</b>	Seating is arranged in a circle or hollow square so everyone can see everyone else.
<b>Citations</b>	Always cite the page number or paragraph when making a claim about the text.

Feature	Rule
<b>Timing</b>	Sessions end promptly. If a sentence is unfinished when time is called, the session ends regardless.
<b>Crosstalk</b>	Side conversations and whispering are discouraged; they detract from the shared inquiry.

#### 💡 Summary Checklist

1. Read the text thoroughly.
2. Cite page numbers.
3. Use the correct hand signal (Hand vs. Finger).
4. Address the group, not just the leader.