Humanities 10

Summer Reading

Student-led Discussion: How to Prepare

In both of our summer reading choice books, we encounter characters (not unlike you in age and in their pursuit of knowledge) who are running headlong into a world that asks them to change into something other than what they were before. In each case, we see students grappling with the challenge of creating their own identities while shaped by the powerful sway of generational and cultural forces. This challenge of creating a new identity for yourself is what we’d like you to think about for tomorrow, having read and thought about either *The Belly of the Atlantic* or *Annie John*. As you prepare for tomorrow’s student-led discussion, be prepared to talk about gains and losses in the story of this character.

During this discussion, teachers will only observe (and possibly correct false data that steers the conversation into unproductive territory). The ball is in your court to keep the conversation interesting and productive. Below, we’ve provided some tips to help you prepare for the discussion, though the most important thing you can do is to dedicate time and energy to thinking critically about the stories we’ve been studying.

Keep in mind the Essential Questions of the Humanities 10 course:

* How have the journeys of people and ideas across cultures shaped the modern Atlantic World?
* Are there winners and losers in the modern world? What counts as winning? Who decides?

**As your formal preparation for the student-led seminar, please write at least TWO interpretive questions and TWO evaluative questions about your summer reading choice book (*The Belly of the Atlantic* or *Annie John*). You are expected to use (and even adapt) these questions during the discussion in order to keep your peers thinking productively, insightfully and passionately (even if it means some respectful disagreement). You should also mark at least 2-3 passages in your book that you found illuminating, inspiring, or provocative, such that you can refer to them in discussion.**

**Print your questions on the page in OneNote indicated for that purpose.**

Reminders:

* An **interpretive question** requires the responder to carefully reason through complex material and interpret meaning and/or significance without necessarily valuing that material or aspects of it as good or bad. An example: “How does the author use the religious symbol of forbidden fruit (from the Garden of Eden) throughout the story in order to establish a theme about temptation and knowledge?”
* An **evaluative question** should demand careful reasoning as well; however, it is ultimately asking your opinion on an issue. These questions will likely link the ideas in the readings and film to the real world, for example, “Who is a better role model for the youth of today and/or the ancient Greek world, Achilles or Odysseus?”

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|  | **Conduct** | **Leadership** | **Reasoning** | **Listening** | **Reading** |
| Excellent  5 pts | Demonstrates respect, enthusiasm & skill for the seminar through speech and manner. Shows insight into important texts & ideas gained through the interplay of collaborative and personal inquiry. Effectively contributes to deepen & broaden the conversation, revealing exemplary comprehension and application of the core skills. | Takes clear responsibility for the seminar’s progress or the lack of it. Takes stock of the overall direction & effectiveness of the discussion & takes apt steps to refocus the conversation. Makes sure that reticent peers are involved and that all questions are addressed. | Arguments are reasonable, logical and substantiated with evidence from the text so as to consistently move the conversation forward and deepen the inquiry effectively. The analyses made are helpful in clarifying complex ideas. Criticisms are never ad hominem. | Listens unusually well. Takes steps to comprehend what is said and is consistently attentive as indicated through direct and indirect evidence. | Conduct indicates the student has read the text carefully & is thoroughly familiar with the main ideas. Can offer insightful interpretations and evaluations of it, is respectful of the text while critically reading & engaging the material. Has come prepared with thoughtful questions, underlined passages, & annotations in the margins. |
| Good  4 pts | Demonstrates in speech and manner an overall respect for and understanding of the goals, processes and norms of reasoned discussion & shared inquiry. Participates to advance conversation, and displays mature comprehension of the core skills, but may sometimes be ineffective in sharing insights, advancing inquiry or working with others. | Is generally willing to take on facilitative roles and responsibilities. Either makes regular efforts to be helpful (in moving the conversation forward & encouraging others to participate) but is sometimes ineffective in doing so. Or does not typically take a leadership role but is effective when doing so. | Arguments are generally reasonable, apt and logical. There may be some minor flaws in reasoning, evidence or aptness of remarks, but the ideas contribute to an understanding of the text or comments made by others. | Listens well. Takes steps to comprehend what is said. Generally pays attention and/or responds appropriately to ideas and questions offered by other participants. | Conduct generally indicates that the student has read the text carefully, grasps the main ideas, can offer reasonable if sometimes incomplete or questionable interpretation, has come with apt questions and ideas regarding it. Has been somewhat sporadic in underlining and annotating the text, but shows some effort in critical reading techniques. |
| Satisfactory  3 pts | May contribute, even frequently, to the conversation but is somewhat ineffective due to opinionated or unclear and underdeveloped views. | Takes on facilitative roles infrequently, but demonstrates support for those who do. | Unsubstantiated or undeveloped opinions are offered more often than sound arguments. Comments suggest the student has some difficulty moving beyond mere reactions to more thorough arguments, or difficulty in following the complex arguments of others. | Does not regularly listen very well and/or is not always attentive, as reflected in comments & body language. Verbal reactions tend to reflect an earlier failure to listen carefully to what was said. | Comments indicate that the student may have read the text, but that the student misunderstood the text or its context. Needs work in honing critical reading skills. |
| Minimal  2 pts | Speech and manner suggests that the student misunderstands the purpose of the discussion and/or is undisciplined concerning seminar practices and necessary comprehension of core skills. | When taking on a leadership role, may misconstrue the responsibility by lobbying for favored opinions or speakers only and/or trying to close off discussion. | Students may sometimes resort to ad hominem attacks instead of focusing on the critique of claims and arguments (as reflected in questions asked and/or non sequiturs). | Does not listen attentively and is not focused upon the discussion as reflected in comments made to the class. | Student has not put enough focused effort into preparing for the seminar. Or varying conduct indicates that the student’s preparation is inconsistent. Does not show effort in using effectively the techniques of critical reading. |
| Failure  1 pt | Speech and manner display little respect for or understanding of the seminar process. Student appears to lack an essential understanding of the core skills & is either routinely argumentative, distracting and/or obstinate. | Plays no active facilitation role of any kind OR actions are consistently counter-productive in that role. | Comments suggest student has great difficulty with analytical requirements of seminar. Remarks routinely appear to be non-sequiturs and/or so illogical or without substantiation that others cannot follow the thread. | Does not listen adequately, as reflected in later questions or comments (e.g. non sequiturs or repetition of earlier points) and/or body language suggestive of inattentiveness. | Student is either generally unable to make adequate meaning of the text or has generally come to class unprepared. Text does not reflect any engagement of critical reading skills on a consistent basis. |