

The Seminar

The seminar is an active learning experience for all involved. In a successful seminar students have read and struggled to understand a reading's relevance and importance to the course material – especially the readings place in our study of a particular period and its importance to the “Big Questions” presented in the course.

Students **MUST** come to a seminar prepared to discuss the reading and its importance with each other.

Students should interpret and challenge the reading and each other's interpretations of its meaning and importance. Students read (usually a primary source text), gather evidence and make inferences based on the evidence they take from their reading and background knowledge.

A note on decorum: Often students will disagree in their interpretations of the text and its meaning and importance to our study. This is to be expected. When disagreements arise you are expected to assemble and present evidence to support your position. Your classmates should listen carefully and in turn present their position.

At no time is it acceptable to shout or speak loudly over others or to criticize the person not their ideas. Such behaviour will not be tolerated by the teacher or your peers and if that behaviour were to continue you would be asked to leave the seminar – your resultant non-participation impacting your mark negatively. Your teacher will go through the Seminar Rubric on the reverse to ensure that you have a clear understanding of how you will be graded during the seminars.

Important: You have the opportunity to drop one seminar mark throughout the year – this could be your lowest mark but if you are absent for a seminar for whatever reason that is the mark that will be dropped.

In order to properly prepare for the seminar you must do the following:

- Collect the reading from your teacher
- Carefully read and understand the reading
- Create point form notes which should include themes, key arguments, and evidence.
- To support your interpretation complete **further research** on the context of the reading within the time period. Read analysis, criticism, and other works that will provide you with context.
- Be prepared to make connections between the text at issue and other works, and the themes and issues of the course.
- Prior to your seminar prepare questions to stimulate discussion. Create interpretative and comparative questions such as “what does the author mean...” or “how does this work compare to...” or “is the author justified..”
- Engage other seminar participants. Be ready to ask, “what do other people think about this.” Try to engage multiple perspectives and interpretations.