

# PSCI 462/663: POLITICS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Winter term, 2015  
ML 354, Mondays 11:30 AM to  
2:20 PM

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 2:30 PM to  
3:30 PM

## Contact Policy:

Email is usually the best way to get in touch with me outside of usually scheduled office hours. A few things to remember when emailing:

- **Please use your official UW email account.** To ensure your privacy, I will not reply to emails sent from a non-UW account (such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, Sympatico, etc.).
- Please remember to sign your email with your first and last name.
- Please allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email.
- Please note that I generally do not answer emails after 6:00pm on weekdays or on weekends (4:00pm Friday to 9:00am Monday).
- **Email should be used for brief questions that can be answered quickly.** If you want to discuss course material, assignments, or another matter in greater detail, please see me during my office hours or make an appointment to meet at some other time convenient for us both.

**Course Description:** This course focuses on the history and contemporary situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and to a lesser extent in other parts of the world. It begins with a consideration of the situation of Indigenous Peoples before the arrival of “explorers” and later “settlers” from Europe. The dispossession of their land and the race-based regulation that followed have had long standing consequences still found today. The course concludes by looking at the activities of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations and in other global organizations.

**Pre-Requisites:** Level at least 4A.

## Course Objectives:

1. Familiarize students with the situation of Indigenous peoples in North America prior to contact, including some discussion of political arrangements.
2. Introduce students to the history and development of government policy and regulations that have restructured and altered the political and social structures of aboriginal societies.
3. Develop an understanding of what kind of impact these governing arrangements had on political and social life within Indigenous communities and to gain some insights into the broader effects of this impact.
4. Review the contemporary challenges to government policy and regulation as reflected in the struggles for land, aboriginal rights, and self-government.
5. Improve essay writing skills; develop group leadership and discussion skills.

## University Regulations:

### Cross-listed course: PSCI 663

#### Academic Integrity:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for her/his actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of her/his university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>. See also:

[Student Support <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/arts-undergraduate-office>](https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/arts-undergraduate-office)

**Turnitin.com:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This step is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course. If you do not wish to have your assignments submitted to Turnitin, an alternative arrangement between you and the professor can be worked out where your work can still be rigorously assessed to ensure its academic integrity.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

### **Text**

J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009

Texts are available for purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore.  
Texts are on 3-hour reserve at the Dana Porter Library.

### **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:**

#### **Class Participation:**

Normally, the discussion of readings will be divided into two or three parts each week. A day before the class, students will be chosen randomly to lead the discussion on one of the given readings for the week.

#### A.1 Discussion of social science or historical readings.

All students will be expected to come to class with a **one page** document for **each reading of the week**, which has the following components:

1. List of key concepts and terms
2. Summary statement (four sentences maximum) of the author's main argument. *This statement should be written in your own words as far as possible.* It should not be borrowed directly from the text of the reading.
3. Three or four issues or questions in the reading that are important and merit some discussion and that you would like to be addressed by the class, time permitting. *Formulate these in the form of a question.*

**Note that all three of these components should be focused on understanding the readings well, and not on criticizing them. Criticism should only follow when we have a good understanding of what the author is arguing.**

The leader of the discussion should begin with the following questions:

*1. These are the several key concepts and terms that I noticed in the reading such as . . . . Are any of these unclear to any of you? Are there any other key concepts that you noted that need to be clarified? (If one or more are unclear) Can anyone help us clarify the meaning of <problematic concept(s)>.*

**Advice:** try to keep this part of the seminar to about 10 minutes. Use your discretion here. If a concept or term brought up is interesting but not central to the reading, then suggest that we come back to it if we have time. If a concept is integral to the argument (see below), you can reserve its discussion for when we get to the next step.

*2. Would any member of the class like to give us their statement on what the main argument of the author is or at least a sentence to start us off? Would anyone like to add something to what <the first person> has said? Do you agree or disagree that we have captured the key aspects of the argument?*

**Advice:** Try to avoid starting off with your own statement of the argument. See if you can draw it out from members of the class first. You can add some of your own understanding as the argument proceeds. As you see the discussion being finished or beginning to get into key issues arising from the argument, move to the third step.

The discussion should then flow until members of the class are relatively satisfied with their understanding of the argument

*3. I would like now to identify some of the key issues that arise out of the reading and that we might discuss. One of these might be . . . Are there any others that we might take up?.*

**Advice:** Your goal here is to get as many key issues discussed as is possible. Try to draw in members of the class who have not had a chance to speak. The aim here is to improve understanding of the reading, not to criticize it. If members move to critique, stop them and say we will do that soon. Keep an eye on your watch or the clock. You want to reserve time for a critical discussion of the reading.

Proceed to introduce and facilitate a discussion of the issues chosen

When there are **ten minutes** left in the time, the following question should be posed.

*4. With our understanding of the argument and the various issues related to the argument, we can now spend a few minutes to reflect critically on the reading. Are there any points that are particularly problematic in your understanding? Are there any points that are particularly useful or persuasive?*

**Advice:** It is important here to ensure that members of the seminar get a chance to comment on both the *weaknesses* and the *strengths* of the given reading. Don't just concentrate on the weaknesses.

## A.2 Discussion of literary texts and films

Preparation for and discussion of a literary text or a film are different tasks than those involved in historical or social science writings. For these reasons, we will use another approach to discussing them and to preparing summaries for class when it comes to a literary text or a film. Literary texts and films are denoted with an asterisk (\*) in the readings section of the outline.

### **1. Questions to keep in mind when reading a literary text**

As you go through a short story or a novel or an excerpt from a novel, you might ask yourself the following questions:

#### A. The theme of the text or film

What big ideas is the text or the film playing with?

How do plot and characters work to advance these ideas?

#### B. The form of the text or the film

How is meaning shaped and/or complicated by the way the text is written or the film is designed

#### C. The historical context of the text or the film

How does the context—time and place—of writing and reading or of viewing shape the meaning of the text or the film?

#### D. The cultural context of the text or the film

What kinds of social values, myths, conflicts or ambiguities does the text or film illuminate/interrogate?

### **2a. Preparing Summary Papers for literary texts.**

A. Select one short passage from the text (one paragraph max.) that you think is important in terms of the major themes of the text, or the theme of the given week's readings, or the issues of the course in general. Copy it into your summary statement or prepare a photocopy that could be handed in after class.

B. Using specific references, explain in one paragraph why you think the passage is significant (thematically and/or formally) to the work as a whole.

C. Where possible, note any images, ideas, or questions contained or suggested by the passage that connect with the broader themes of the week's discussion or of the course.

### **2b. Preparing for discussions of films**

A. After viewing the film, take 10-15 minutes to identify and think about a particular scene/episode/set of encounters that you think is important in terms of the main message or its relevance to the theme of the given week's class

B. Write down why you think that the scene/episode/set of encounters is significant in the context of the film as a whole.

C. Where possible, identify particular aspects of the scene that are relevant to the broader themes of the week's discussion or of the course more generally.

### 3. Facilitating the discussion of literary texts and films.

A. The person facilitating the discussion of the literary text or film will go around the table and ask each member of the class to read out their selected passage from the text and then to state their reasoning why they think the passage is significant. In the case of a film, they will ask the member to talk about a statement or scene and explain why they think that it is significant. The same text or scene may be selected by several class members. The facilitator should still ask for each person's reasoning. (Selections of text or a scene may be justified in varying ways). The facilitator can choose to read her or his selected text or to identify her or his scene first or last.

B. With this initial discussion of the literary text done, the person facilitating the discussion will return to the questions outlined above under the heading: *Questions to keep in mind when reading a literary text or watching a film*. The facilitator should ask each of these questions and whether there is consensus on answers to them. If there is not consensus, the facilitator should draw out the different points of view. When these differences are on the table, the facilitator can then move to the next question

**Before the class, each member emails me a copy of her or his summary statements, whether it be a social science/history reading or a literary one. Failing that step, the statement should be given to me at the class in printed form and emailed immediately afterward. Late submissions of these materials will *not* be credited to the participation grade (see below). Put all three statements in the same computer file, with your name as part of the filename. *Avoid using section breaks and do not insert headers or footers*. For Films, members will send me a written statement about the chosen scene/event/encounter and its justification within one day after class.**

#### Allocation of the participation grade:

- a. **Leading discussions** 10%  
(For some thoughts on leading discussions, see Appendix B below)
  
- b. **Participation in seminar discussions** 15%  
For some information on the difference between evaluating *participating* and evaluating *knowledge and understanding*, see Appendix A below).
  
- c. **Handing in of summary statements.** 10%  
These will be prepared for each of the substantive discussions of the readings, hence 11 in total. *To receive credit, these summaries must be submitted electronically prior to the class.*

#### **Assignment:** 30%

Each student will write a research paper of no more than 4000 words investigating a particular topic or question in an area of the politics of Indigenous Peoples of her or his choice. By the end of the Week 4 of the course, students will submit a two-page proposal that includes the following:

1. A statement of the research question to be investigated

2. A brief justification of the why this topic related to the politics of Indigenous Peoples.
3. A summary of any problems or questions that you need to discuss with me before writing.
4. A preliminary bibliography.

The paper is worth 30% of the final grade. The paper is due at the last class for the course. No extensions will be given except for medical or compassionate grounds.

### **Take Home Examination:**

35%

At the last class, a take-home examination composed of 7 questions will be handed out. Students will be asked to answer **three** of these seven questions. Each answer will be limited to 1200 words. The examination will be worth 35% of the final grade.

*Late submission of the exam will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every four hours it is late (to a maximum of 15 points).*

### **Other Course Policies:**

#### **Course Website**

The course outline, details for assignments, class announcements, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN . If you have questions about when assignments are due, late policies, sickness accommodation, etc., your first source of information is the course outline. Users can login to LEARN via: [Learn http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/). Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password

#### **Late Penalties**

All late assignments (that is, assignments submitted after 4:00pm on their due date) will be penalized 3% a day (including weekends). For example, if you receive a grade of 78 per cent on the assignment and you are late one day, the grade will be reduced to 75%; for two days, it will be reduced to 72% and so on. A waiver of this penalty will only be considered in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance such as a note from a doctor. See “Extension Policy” below. Late assignments can be placed in the professor’s drop box in the Department of Political Science. This box is cleared out daily.

#### **Take Home Examination**

*Late submission of the exam will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every four hours it is late (to a maximum of 15 points).*

#### **Final Submission Date for Assignments**

The final submission date for assignments is one week (7 days) after their due date (with the imposition of late penalties). The instructor WILL NOT accept the assignment for grading after one week has passed without a documented extenuating circumstance. If an extenuating circumstance may prevent you from submitting an assignment by its submission date, please contact Professor Coleman at the earliest

possible convenience and be prepared to provide him with official documentation concerning your situation.

## Extension Policy for Assignments

All requests for assignment extensions must be directed to Professor Coleman. The professor will only consider granting an extension in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (that is, serious personal illness, critical personal or family crisis, etc.). Such a letter would normally come from a doctor. If a situation arises that may prevent you from completing an assignment, contact Professor Coleman as early as possible, ideally before the assignment is due to deliver the documentation.

The UW Verification of Illness Form can be found at: Health Services <https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic>. Please note that midterm examinations cannot be deferred. Instead, the final exam will be re-weighted appropriately.

## Computer Problems

Students are expected to back up their written assignments and lecture notes. You should save copies on a USB stick, email them to yourself, or open an account on Dropbox where you can save your files in the cloud for free ([Dropbox https://dropbox.com](https://dropbox.com)). Extensions will NOT be granted for computer-related issues. Furthermore, students will be responsible for finding replacement lecture notes where they fail to back-up their files.

## Other Course Policies: Gender Neutral Language

I request that you use gender-neutral language except where you are referring to a specific gender. “He” and “His” and “Man” and “mankind” are no longer acceptable generic terms. Nor are countless other expressions that derive from the assumption that **man=human**. It is important to get into the habit of using gender-neutral language for at least two reasons:

1. Clarity of Expression: When you write or say ‘man’ or some other masculine/generic term, readers should be confident that you are talking about a man, and not about men in general, women, boys, girls, humanity, etc. The way to avoid misunderstandings is to use terms literally and precisely. If you mean all humans, then say ‘humans’ or ‘humanity’ or ‘humankind’ or ‘people’ and so on.

2. Empowerment: Each time we use a masculine word as a generic term, we perpetuate the conception that **male** norms, male experiences, male perceptions, and male perspectives are **societal** norms and experiences. We imply that **female** norms, experiences, perceptions and perspectives are marginal and abnormal. Such usage disempowers females and reproduces male domination/female subordination (Patriarchy). By using gender-neutral language we can challenge patriarchy, empower females, and increase our sensitivity to our own unintentional sexism. Gender-neutral expression is not just a matter of style; it is also a matter of politics and research ethics.



## **Schedule:**

### **Week 1, January 5**

Language: The difficulties of categorization: how do we speak about Indigenous peoples?

Course Outline: A review of the objectives, assignments, text book, and topics of the course.

Film: *Dish with one spoon*

## **PART ONE: ORIGINS**

### **Week 2, January 12, the Haudenosaunee**

Reading 1: Chapter 1, *At the Beginning*. In *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, Second Edition, by Olive Patricia Dickason with William Newbigging. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Reading 2: John C. Mohawk, *Iroquois Creation Story: John Arthur Gibson and J.N.B. Hewitt's Myth of the Great Grasper*. Buffalo, NY: Mohawk Publications, 2005. Read the *Forward* by John Mohawk

**AND**

Akwesasne Notes, *Basic Call to Consciousness*, pp. 31-40

Reading 3: Chief Jacob Thomas, *Teachings from the Longhouse*. Toronto: Stoddard, 1994. Pp. 1-28, 125-149.

### **Week 3, January 19, Indigenous Law**

Reading 1: John Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. Chapter 1

Reading 2: Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*, Chapters 2 and 5

Reading 3: Beverly Jacobs, *International Law/Great Law of Peace*. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2000, Chapter One, Political, Social, Cultural and Historical Aspects of Hodinohso:Ni

## **PART TWO: IMPERIALISM**

### **Week 4, January 26, Early Contacts**

Reading 1: Peter H. Russell, *Recognizing Aboriginal Title: The Mabo Case and Indigenous Resistance to English-Settler Colonialism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Chapter 2, "Western Imperialism and its Legal Magic."

Reading 2: Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, Chapters 1, 2

Reading 3: Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, Chapter 3

**Note:** Background Reading: *Royal Proclamation of 1763*

Reading [http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/PreConfederation/rp\\_1763.html](http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/PreConfederation/rp_1763.html)

## **Week 5, February 2, The Treaty Process**

Reading 1: Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, Chapters 5, 7

Reading 2: \*Film: *Honour of the Crown*

**Essay Proposal due:** The two page proposal will include the following:

1. A statement of the research question to be investigated
2. A brief justification of how this topic is related to the politics of Indigenous Peoples.
3. A summary of any problems or questions that you need to discuss with me before writing.
4. A preliminary bibliography.

## **Week 6, February 9, The Indian Act**

Lecture: The historical background to the Indian Act and its subsequent development

Reading 1: Daschuk, James. 2013. *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*. Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, Chapter 9, pp. 159-180.

Reading 2: E. Bruce Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986, Chapter 3.

\*Reading 3: Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native people in North America*, Chapter 3.

**Note:** Note Reading 3 will be treated as a literary text.

**Note:** For further background information of this difficult period, see Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, Chapter 8

## **Week 7, February 23, Residential Schools**

Reading 1: J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Indian Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, Chapters 6, 7

\*Reading 2: \*James Bartleman, *As Long as the Rivers Flow: A Novel* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2011), pp. xi-xiii, Chapters 1, 2, 3.

\*Reading 3: Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native people in North America*, Chapter 5.

**Note:** Readings 2 and 3 this week are both literary texts.

## **Part Three: Current Debates**

### **Week 8, March 2, Transition and Policy Change**

Reading 1: J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*. Third edition; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), Chapter 13

Reading 2: \*Government of Canada, *White Paper: Indian policy - statement of the government of Canada on Indian policy*. Ottawa.

Reading <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/arp/ls/pubs/cp1969/cp1969-eng.asp>

AND

\*Harold Cardinal/Indian Association of Alberta, *Citizens Plus*. Edmonton, 1970, pp. 1-23

Reading 3: Walkem, Ardith and Halie Bruce, eds. 2003. *Box of Treasures or Empty Box?: Twenty Years of Section 35*. Penticton, B.C. Theytus Books Ltd., (1) Ardith Walkem, "Constructing the Constitutional Box: The Supreme Court's Section 35(1) Reasoning", pp. 196-221

(2) Bruce, Halie and Ardith Walkem, "Bringing Our Living Constitutions Home", pp. 343-362.

### **Week 9, March 9, Resistance (1): the Oka Crisis**

\*Film: *Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance*

### **Week 10, March 16, Resistance (2): Indigenous Women and Violence**

Reading 1: Kuokkanen, Rauna. "Self-Determination and Indigenous Women's Rights at the Intersection of International Human Rights" *Human Rights Quarterly* 34 (2012) 225–250

\*Film: *Finding Dawn*

### **Week 11, March 23, Urban Aboriginal Governance**

Reading 1: National Association of Friendship Centers and the Law Commission of Canada, *Urban Aboriginal Governance in Canada: Re-Fashioning the Dialogue*. Ottawa: Law Commission of Canada, 1999. Pp. 1-12, 43-69

Reading 2: Heather A. Howard, "The Friendship Centre: Native People and the Organization of Community in Cities", in *Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities* eds Heather A. Howard and Greg Proulx, pp. 87-107. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011.

Reading 3: David R. Newhouse, "Urban Life: Reflections of a Middle-Class Indian", in *Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities* eds Heather A. Howard and Greg Proulx, pp. 23-38. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011.

## **Week 12, March 30, Indigenous Peoples and Globalization**

Reading 1: Henderson, James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood. 2008. *Indigenous Diplomacy and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Achieving UN Recognition* Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Ltd., Chapters 5, 6, and 7

Reading 2: Henderson, *Diplomacy*, Chapters 8, 9, and 10.

Reading 3: Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, "Adat/Indigenous: Indigeneity in Motion" in *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*, Carol Gluck and Tsing, eds. , pp. 40-66. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

### Additional Readings:

Venne, Sharon H. "The Road to the United Nations and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" *Griffith Law Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2011, pp. 557-577.

William Coleman and Theresa McCarthy, "Critical Mass, Global Mobilities and the Haudensaunee: Struggles for Cultural Autonomy" in *Mobilities, Knowledge and Social Justice*, Suzan Ilcan, ed. 277-299. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

## Appendix A: Evaluation of Participation

Part of the participation grade will come from an evaluation of how much a given class member contributed to the seminar. **Remember that evaluation of participation is different from evaluation of knowledge or understanding of a set of given readings. My evaluation of your knowledge and understanding will come from the two short papers and the final examination.** If you wish to check out how well you are doing in your participation, you might ask yourself the following questions:

Did I initiate a topic or question?

Did I provide some information when it was needed?

Did I give some positive opinions or reactions?

Did I give some negative opinions or reactions?

Did I ask for positive or negative opinions or reactions?

Did I confront someone whom you thought was wrong?

Did I try to restate what someone else had said to ensure I and others understood?

Did I ask someone else to restate what he or she had said?

Did I give examples when they were needed?

Did I ask others to provide some examples?

Did I try to synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion?

Did I ask if someone might synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion?

Did I sponsor, encourage, help or reward others in the group?

Did I relieve tension in the group by cracking a joke or calling for a break at an appropriate time?

## **Appendix B: Leading a discussion**

The following suggestions are adapted from Gale Rhodes and Robert Schaible, *A User's Manual for Student-Led Discussions*, available at: [Discussion  
http://www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/StdLedDisc.html](http://www.usm.maine.edu/~rhodes/StdLedDisc.html)

I liked the approach and it is consistent with what we are trying to achieve in the course.

### **Preparing**

To lead a discussion, you must be familiar with the assigned material. "Familiar with" is just the right phrase. You need not have mastered the material; after all, a goal of discussion is to move everyone towards mastery, that is, to improve everyone's (even the leader's) understanding. To prepare for discussion (leadership or participation), first read and study the assignment, underlining the more important or interesting points, and making notes in the margins. Then think about and write down some of the main issues that the author raises and a few questions pertinent to the issues. Then go back over your notes and the text and note the key concepts or terms and then try to put the author's argument into your own words.

### **Getting Started**

Class has started and your name has been drawn from the hat. How do you begin? Simply clear your throat and begin with the questions everyone has been asked to address. Before you know it, the hard part -- getting started -- is done.

One word of caution: Start out on a positive note. Avoid beginning with an apology for being poorly prepared or for finding the reading difficult. Treat the day's topic as having real value. Openers like "I didn't get much out of this" or "I don't agree with anything the author said" will stifle, rather than promote, discussion. Remember that a time for critical evaluation will come at the end, but only after the class has worked on its understanding of the author's arguments. If you treat the readings as worthwhile, your classmates will follow your lead, join you in examining the day's assignment, and thus make your job easier.

### **Sustaining Discussion**

Discussions, like sleepy horses, need some urging to keep them moving. A discussion leader can often keep things moving with only modest prodding, giving the class its head when things are going well. Of course, if you can contribute something useful, do so; but other kinds of comments or actions on your part can sustain the discussion just as well as an injection of insight. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Get students to talk to each other. Ask for a response to the most recent comments. (Anyone have a response to Clara's opinion?) Or ask a specific student to respond. (Clara, do you agree with Ralph?)

2) Get students to defend or explain their opinions. (Marvin why do you say that? What's your evidence or reasoning?)

3) Encourage an exploration of differing points of view. When you hear conflicting views, point them out and get the holders of those views to discuss their differences. Perhaps ask a third person to sum up the two positions.

4) *Keep the class on the subject.* If you are even halfway familiar with the material, you know when the discussion is no longer connected to it. Just say so. (We've gotten pretty far from the readings; let's get back on the subject.) Or simply consult your list of questions. Any sensible response to one of your questions is bound to be pertinent.

5) Point to a particular passage in the text relevant to a comment made by one person, or to a discussion among several. This might be a passage that challenges, or sums up and confirms, the views being expressed.

6) Don't fill every silence with your own voice. Any discussion will lapse occasionally. It is not your job as leader to avoid all silence. Some quiet periods are productive. Students who are not so quick to speak will frequently get the chance they need when others are quiet. If the silence gets too heavy, take advantage of the other students' lists of questions. (Ginny, give us one of the questions you brought to class.)

Remember, as discussion leader you do not have to be the brains for the class. You are not expected to know it all; the class is full of students who have read the same assignment that you read. Your job is to give them a chance to talk about it and thus give others the benefits of their thinking. If any one student begins to do all the talking, gently correct this problem by bringing other students into the discussion. You are there to steer, to keep the class reasonably near the center of the path, by pulling a rein when needed, by loosening the reins when it keeps to the trail, by reining it in when it threatens to gallop away to greener subjects. If students are talking to each other about the reading material, things are going well; relax, listen, and contribute when you can.