

## **Discussion Leader Assignment**

Phi 335 Epistemology

Jared Bates, Winter 2014

Students will take turns leading class discussion on the reading assignments throughout the term. The primary purpose of this assignment, for the discussion leader as well as for class participants, is the development of analytical skills, critical judgment and collaborative engagement.

### Dates

During the first week of class, students will be assigned dates to lead discussion. It should work out that each student takes one of the Mondays from the second week of class to the last week of assigned readings.

### The assignment

Discussion leaders have three distinct jobs to do:

1. Reading questions. Discussion leaders will formulate three to five questions pertaining to the reading assignment on which they will lead discussion. The questions should challenge the class to deepen their understanding of the issue the author is discussing, to clarify and complete their understanding of the author's central argument, to critically assess the adequacy of that argument, or to compare the author's position with that of another author we will have read. The questions should be clearly and concisely formulated. And even if it isn't made clear in the formulation of the question, the discussion leader should have a very good reason for asking it; that is, it should be clear to the discussion leader why the question is an important one. Where relevant – and this will be most of the time – the question should include page references to the reading assignment.

Reading questions must be submitted by 5pm the evening before your assigned class period. They must be submitted to the Coursework section on the MyHanover portal for this course.

2. Class discussion. Discussion leaders may conduct class discussion however they like – with more or less structure. Since most of the assigned dates will be Mondays (i.e., the first day for each reading assignment), discussion should focus first on answering questions about interpretation, clarification or analysis. Criticism must await these questions and may be carried out later in the week. The discussion leader's official duties end on their assigned dates, but they are welcome to take a leadership role in subsequent discussions of the reading.
3. Summary report. Discussion leaders will write up a set of answers to their reading questions, answers that summarize the class discussion. Discussion leaders are responsible for summarizing answers even if the questions were not addressed during their assigned date, but were addressed later in the week. The summary report should be about 350-500 words in length (i.e., less than one single-spaced page).

Summary reports must be submitted by 5pm one full week after the discussion leader's assigned class period.

### Grading Criteria

The discussion leader assignment is worth a total of 30 points; each component is worth 10pts and will be graded pass/fail.