

**DRAMA 301: Theories of Theatre I**  
**Fall 2008**

**Seminar Leader**

**Due: See 'Schedule' page on course website**  
**10% of final grade**

---

**What is this assignment?**

Each person or pair is responsible for initiating and guiding a discussion on one session's material, and providing informed questions that facilitate further discussion. The seminar leader should begin by sharing two or three ideas about the week's reading with the class, and providing a brief analysis of these ideas (15 min). The seminar leader should then prepare a series of questions or activities for group discussion that will engage the class for another 30 or so minutes.

**What are we trying to achieve?**

1. To be the 'resident expert(s)' on the session's material: everyone will be reading and thinking about the material, but your careful analysis and repeated reading will help to take our collective understanding to a higher level.
2. To engage the class with your new resident-expertness. In other words, it's one thing to become the expert, and it's another thing to effectively *teach* and *communicate* your newfound understanding.
3. To facilitate class discussion during the session by raising thoughtful and/or provocative questions.

**What should be the elements of our presentation?**

The day's session should have three main aspects:

1. Isolate and communicate 2-3 significant ideas or points raised by the theorist. Interpret and expand on these points. The goal here is to take the ideas raised by the theorist, and address a number of questions: What are the implications of these ideas, both for theatre as an art form, and for theatre's role in the world? What kind of examples can you use to elucidate the theorist's points? You may want to discuss how the course ideas of 'mimesis' and 'morality' relate to your readings.
2. Connect the material with other discussions in the course. How does this theorist's ideas relate to other ideas discussed in the course? Is the theorist offering a new perspective? At this point, you are beginning to extend our understanding of the theorist in very productive ways. Threads of discussion will develop as the course progresses, and the seminar should aim to show how the theorists are engaged in a kind of dialogue with one another.
3. Generate class discussion through a series of well-conceived questions. Be prepared to weigh into the discussion yourself. Invite the class to agree or disagree with certain assertions.

Remember that not all points made in the readings need to be highlighted to the same degree - it makes perfect sense to spend more time teaching the class about a few central points, and only briefly noting more peripheral points.

### How do I get started?

- Read the material and take notes. Try to determine if there are a few central themes running through the piece, and figure out how a variety of smaller points fit with these themes. If you are working with a partner, meet early and discuss the ideas.

- Have a clear plan for how the presentation will take place on the day: what order will the ideas be presented in? How will questions be raised/handled? What kinds of creative ways can you get discussion flowing?

- Take advantage of your professor. I mean, come and talk to me about your questions, plan of attack, uncertainties.

### How will I be evaluated?

You will be evaluated based on the goals and list of elements above. That is, you will be evaluated on how clearly and economically you present the ideas, how well you narrow your focus to your main points of interest, how thoroughly you interpret the material and probe connections with other theorists, and how well you facilitate class discussion.

Below is a table that outlines the criteria for assessment of seminar participation by *all* members of the seminar (in other words, when you're not presenting, you are still expected to be well-informed contributors!) The 'discussion' and 'reading' columns are more relevant than the 'frequency' column, because I am looking for quality over quantity.

Grade	Participation/ Frequency	Discussion	Reading
9-10	Always	Excellent: leads debate; offers original analysis and comment; uses assigned reading to back up arguments. Valuable comments in virtually every tutorial.	Clearly has done and understands virtually all reading; intelligently uses this understanding in discussion.
7-8	Almost always	Good-thoughtful comments for the most part; willing, able and frequent contributor	Has done most reading; provides competent analysis of reading when prompted.
5-6	Frequent	Fair-has basic grasp of key concepts; arguments sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported	Displays familiarity with most reading, but tends not to analyse it or explore connections between different sources.
3-4	Occasional	Not good-remarks in class marred by misunderstanding of key concepts; only occasionally offers comments or opinions	Actual knowledge of material is outweighed by improvised comments and remarks
1-2	Rare	Poor-rarely speaks, or parrots textbook when put on the spot to offer an opinion	Little apparent familiarity with assigned material
0	Rare to nil	Never speaks	no apparent familiarity with assigned material

Source: Guelph University