

# Handout for Facilitators

## Honors in the Humanities Freshmen Humanities Colloquia, HTH 101 and 102 Bridge Year Program

Participation is an integral part of the Humanities seminars. All students are required to come to class each day having read the assigned texts and prepared to join in the class discussion with meaningful questions and insightful comments. Throughout each semester, pairs of students also take turns acting as class facilitators for each day's discussion of the assigned texts. The teachers and professors assign facilitation dates to the students early on in the semester so that there is plenty of time for the facilitators to prepare to lead the classes. Students should expect to facilitate about twice during the semester.

As a facilitator, you should prepare to lead the class discussion in the following ways:

- Plan ahead and try to be more familiar with the text than others.
- Make the effort to call on classmates by name in a clearly audible voice. Don't be afraid to ask your classmates to speak louder when necessary.
- Begin by asking good, general questions that you have made up that have no clear incorrect answers. It is the facilitator's job to ask the kind of questions that will help the class analyze and acquire a deeper understanding of the text. Then ask follow up questions. Do not start out by asking the class if *they* had any questions. You can leave that for later on in the discussion. Another option is to begin by presenting a particular problem or dilemma about the text, in order to request what others think or thought about it.
- If at first, there is no response to your question, wait until there is. Silence is ok; sometimes the class just needs a moment or two to think of a way to begin answering it. Don't worry if students begin to disagree (politely) in their interpretations of particular issues raised by the text. Disagreements often make for very lively discussions! If the discussion begins to go off-topic, however, you should redirect the class to focus back on the text.
- Make sure to ask a student who refers to a specific place in the text, to tell the class what page he or she is referring to, so that everyone can take a look at it. After all, the text should provide the evidence to support any claim or argument. If the passage is longer than a sentence or two, ask someone in the class to volunteer to read the passage. This is a good way to get shy students to participate in your discussion.

Feel free to talk to your teacher and professor if you have any questions as you prepare for facilitating. GOOD LUCK!