

**Seminar classes are designed around discussion and active student participation. They strengthen skills in critical thinking, communication, and applying knowledge. Many graduates consider seminars to be some of their most valuable learning experiences. However, succeeding in a seminar requires a different skill set than lecture-based or one-on-one learning.**

### Participation in Seminars

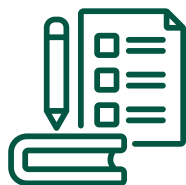
Seminars rely on active participation. If they feel boring, review your own involvement. Here's how to contribute effectively:

- **Answer Questions** - Respond to questions from the instructor or peers. Discussion is the core of seminar learning.
- **Ask Questions** - Engage the group with thoughtful questions:
  - Clarify vague questions (*"Could this be two separate issues?"*).
  - Explore ideas (*"Is this concept practical in real life?"*).
- **Disagree Respectfully** - Don't fear disagreement. It sparks deeper discussion and multiple perspectives. Many seminar questions have no single "right" answer.
- **Give Positive Feedback** - Acknowledge helpful examples or explanations (*"That example made the concept much clearer."*). Positive feedback encourages a productive atmosphere.
- **Keep the Session Organized** - Help maintain focus:
  - Point out when discussion skips topics (*"We moved from Question 1 to 3. What about 2?"*).
  - Remind the group of the seminar's purpose (*"Are we still sharing situational ethics examples?"*).



## Preparation for Seminars

### → Before the Seminar



- *Complete readings and assignments:* This ensures you can contribute meaningfully.
- *Fill knowledge gaps:* If something is unclear, consult background sources.
- *Review just before class:* A quick refresh keeps ideas fresh.
- *Bring materials:* Have readings and notes handy for reference.
- *Create handouts if leading:* Helps keep the group focused and organized.

### → Questions to Guide Your Prep



- *Key concepts:* What are the most important ideas? Why do they matter?
- *Your stance:* What do you agree or disagree with? What feels uncertain?
- *Gaps in understanding:* What's confusing? Do you need more context?
- *Connections:* How does this material relate to the course and to your own experience?

## Potential Challenges in Seminars

### → Avoid Personal Attacks



Seminars aim to explore ideas using reasoning and facts—not to “win.”

- Avoid personalizing debates (e.g., “I can’t accept this because of my beliefs”).
- Controversial topics can feel uncomfortable, but don’t shy away.
- Respectful discussion deepens understanding.
- Skilled leaders set boundaries and guide these conversations.

### → Managing Dominance in Discussion



Sometimes one or two students dominate. Why this happens:

- *Low participation from others:* Silence can make active students seem dominant.
- *Aggressive interaction style:* Some pursue arguments strongly. It’s not meant to be personal attacks, but can feel heated. Excessive aggression is unacceptable, yet false agreement isn’t helpful either.
- *Lack of social awareness:* Some don’t realize they’re taking too much time. In these cases, the leader should enforce seminar guidelines.

