Write one question that you had while you were reading. What passage inspired the question? Why do you think it sparked your interest? Do you think your question has one right answer or many? Does it relate to a recurring theme in the text?
SOCRATIC SEMINARING
THE SOCRATIC METHOD

Throughout this course, I will be asking you to utilize the Socratic method for discussion, where we examine a text for a deeper understanding of the ideas rather than “right” answers. It requires knowledge of the text and using the text to support your thoughts.
THE SOCRATIC METHOD

When working as a member of a Socratic discussion, the goal is not to prove other people wrong but to understand the ideas from more than one point of view.

In a Socratic seminar the focus is on analysis, or breaking the text down into parts and examining how the parts work together, to improve critical thinking.
ANALYSIS
ANALYSIS IN ACADEMICS

- Literary Texts
- Visual Texts
- Historical Experiences
- Social Phenomenon
- Data & Statistics

Analysis Skills
PRACTICING ANALYSIS

- Postpone judgment
- Look for patterns
- Define important parts and how they’re related
- Read between the lines
- Keep questioning
PREPARING FOR A SEMINAR

You need to:

- Read the text completely, annotating the text to highlight key passages.
- Consider preparatory questions that you can offer. Additional questions may develop during discussion.
- Create a list of “big ideas” or themes you think the text discusses.
WHY DIALOGUE?
WHY DIALOGUE

- Build relationships
- Understand someone else
- Build community-group thinking
- Experience multiple perspectives
- Consider more possibilities
- Create a space for reflection
- Identify problems
- Discover solutions
- Clarify an issue
- Practice
KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE?

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KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE

- Everyone participates (nobody dominates or is absent)
- Contributors are prepared for the topic
- Questions are challenging
- Responses are thorough
- Examples are offered
- Individuals are respectful towards others
- Discussion moves forward
- Connections are made
- Reflection on the discussion itself
DISCUSSION ETIQUETTE

• Take turns speaking
• Participate actively
• Ask for clarification
• Refer to the text
• Stick to the point
• Be respectful
• Support and encourage each other
• Question others in a civil manner
• Avoid hostile exchanges
• Allow pauses ~ silence enables thinking
QUESTIONING

Peeling Layers
TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Closed-ended or Right There Questions:

- usually have a “correct” answer
- help to clarify what happened in the text literally
- ask Who? What? When? Where?
TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Digging Deep Questions:
- can’t point to a clear answer in the text
- pose comparisons
- interpret, infer, predict
- ask Why? or How?
DEEPER QUESTIONS

Go Beyond the Text Questions:
• personally engage
• connect separate texts
• look for big ideas

Text-to-self
Text-to-text
Text-to-world
TEXT-TO-SELF

• How does this remind me of my past?
• How is this similar to my present life? Different?
• How does this relate to people I know?
• What were my feelings when I read this?
What does this remind me of in another book I’ve read?

How is this text similar to articles or other things I’ve read? Different?

Have I read something about a related topic before?
TEXT-TO-WORLD

- How does this text remind me of the real world?
- How does the text explore human nature and the human condition?
- What does the text say about certain cultural conventions?
- How are categories like gender, race, and class represented?
STYLE QUESTIONS

• How does the author make use of tone, story elements, and literary conventions?

• How does the author use language and structure to engage and manipulate the reader?