

Seminar Rules

1. Listen actively
2. Build on what others say
3. Try not to talk while others are talking.
4. Silences and pauses are Ok
5. Converse directly there is no need to go through the facilitator
6. Expose/Suspend your assumptions
7. Refer to the text; challenge others to go to the text
8. Be careful not to speak too frequently or for too long

Earning Credit

1. Speak during the seminar and contribute to it in a significant way

OR

2. AFTER CLASS IS OVER, write handwritten response to ideas brought up during the discussion of 2–3 paragraphs

OR

3. Speak the following day in front of class for 1 to 2 minutes about some of the important ideas from the previous days discussion

Pico “On the Dignity of Man” and Machiavelli’s “The Prince” Seminar

1. Why does Pico think “man” is so dignified? What evidence does he provide? Do you agree?
2. According to this what is Man’s relationship with the rest of the world? Do you agree with Pico’s views on this subject? Explain.
3. Were people better off in the past than they are now? Explain your thinking.
4. Based on what you read, what do you think Machiavelli’s view of human nature is and do you agree with it? Explain.
5. Do you agree with Machiavelli’s thinking about: being seen as “a miser”, being “loved or feared”, “being a lion and a fox”? Explain with examples from history or your own life.
6. Why do Princes fail in Machiavelli’s opinion? Also, what does it mean “to fail” as a Prince?
7. How relevant is Machiavelli’s advice in a democratic society like the US? Explain.

