

Leading a class discussion

ECOL 8910

Rationale. Reading and discussing research papers is one of the key occasions of learning in college or graduate school. Critically understanding and evaluating the results of other researchers' studies are central parts of scientific research. To practice close reading of scientific research, students in ECOL 8910 are tasked with reading both assigned and student-selected articles. To practice the exercise of intellectual leadership, each student will lead a class discussion of one or more scientific papers.

Learning objectives. The student discussion leader will learn to

1. Identify, select, and summarize key information from the paper
2. Organize information in a way that is open to group contributions, but also keeps the discussion focused on a technical, pedagogical, or conceptual goal
3. Initiate discussion (voluntary contributions from other participants) and re-start discussion as needed
4. Devise thought-provoking questions
5. Ensure that the discussion is inclusive to multiple points of view

Assessment. Discussion leaders will be evaluated according to the following writing rubric.

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Ineffective
Understanding of the content of the paper, including what the authors did, why they did it, how the authors interpret their results, and critical analysis				
Use of an organizational device to stimulate and guide discussion				
Interaction with the group, including managing group dynamics, drawing out multiple perspectives, and synthesizing various perspectives				

Notes: