

I. PURPOSE:

There are three parts to this discussion. The first (about 30-45 min) involves sharing some of your brainstorm. The second (about 15 min.) we will devote 15 min to filling out course and TA evaluations. Finally, we will watch part of the "Making of the Trials of Life" in which you get to see some of the people whose work we have discussed or seen this semester.

Each of you has given brainstorming a try for your previous and current journal assignments; now it is time to share some of your ideas. We want to make this more than just a "show and tell" session. Make it a chance to practice three important skills: 1) concise, straightforward presentation of ideas, 2) constructive criticism of ideas, and 3) revision and restatement of ideas. Having your pet idea examined by your peers may seem a bit intimidating. However, I assure you that the effort to explore your own ideas and those of others in an open exchange can be a very positive experience.

There are a few ground rules for this session. First, be supportive of each other. Try to find a positive way of expressing your reaction to other's ideas. The goal is to transform them into something stronger than they were. Second, let some of the less vocal people in your section have their turn to speak. Many of them have done some excellent thinking in their journal assignments. We want to give people an opportunity to express their ideas. Finally, this is a good chance for some of you to play "devil's advocate". In this role you take a position that you may not agree with and try to support it. This makes you step back from your own position and examine it in more detail than you might if you were trying to defend it. You will be surprised at how much this can reveal to you about the strengths and weaknesses of your own ideas.

II. READINGS:

Your own brainstorm forms the basis for this discussion. It would be great if you read journals of other students in your section and began a discussion before class.

III. ASSIGNMENT:

Do not take this assignment as an excuse to come to section unprepared! Half-baked ideas are going to waste a lot of time and we want to give as many people as possible time to air their ideas. Both creative brainstorming and critiquing ideas from lecture or Alcock can be presented and discussed in this section.

Each of you should prepare a short (maximum 5 min.) presentation of a brainstorm you have done. Choose one you would like to "try out on others" or "get some feedback on". We will not get to everyone, so pick one that others might be interested in. You want to engage others in an interaction. Pick a brainstorm that is easy to present and likely to stimulate discussion.

A Reminder About Grades

1. Please re-read the course prospectus and the news about the final exam and grading on the web site. Here is the part of the prospectus about grades.

Grades are based on exams, participation in discussion sections and progress in your journal. An "A" reflects an outstanding grasp of the conceptual and factual course material and the ability to work creatively and critically with it. It also requires active and valuable participation in section and considerable effort in your journal -- e.g., well beyond the minimal requirements). A "B" reflects good to very good understanding of the material and an ability to work synthetically with it (plus consistent effort in section and journal). A "C" reflects an adequate understanding of the course material and at least occasional participation in section and the minimal required effort in the journal. I interpret an "NC" to include both "D" (poor) and "NC" (failure). **Consistently scoring below 50 points (out of 100) on exams, lack of participation in discussion, and minimal effort on journal exercises are likely to result in an "NC".** Each hour exam counts as 50 points, the journal is 50 points total 200 points)

2. Remember that your journal must be complete in order to pass the course. By complete I mean that all of the assignments have been done. If one or more has not been completed, contact Waage as soon as possible to discuss what options you might have left at this point.