

Where Do You Know From?: A Guide to Personal Introductions in the Seminar Room

This document offers some guiding questions for considering how your knowledge is situated, and for introducing ourselves at the beginning of a discussion-based course in ways that help us come to recognise each other as interlocutors. Please note that these questions are meant only as prompts to help you craft an introduction. This is not a test, and you are not obligated to answer all questions, or any questions in particular. I ask only that you consider what *you* want to tell others in the room, and not prioritise what you think others want or expect from you.

1. **What is your name?** What would you like us to call you?
2. **Which pronouns would you like us to use in reference to you?** For some people, the question of pronouns is a recurring one; others may be unaccustomed to thinking about it with regard to themselves. Either way, I encourage everyone to sit with this question, and to answer however you wish, which may be not at all.
3. **What are your intellectual interests?** What do you think about a lot? What have you learned about, and what would you like to learn more about? Do you have a particular research topic you are working on now? Are you involved in personal, family, or community work that has immersed you in certain ideas and questions? Have you read or watched or heard something lately that has lodged itself in your thoughts? We recognise the myriad ways that thinking is inspired and sustained as equally 'intellectual' in status.
4. **How did your interests come to you?** Intellectual preoccupations come from a variety of paths. Given only a few minutes, how would you narrate what brought you to your ideas, or your ideas to you? Was it something you read, witnessed, confronted? Was it something someone taught you, in a class or not in a class? Was it somewhere you lived or went, someone you met or knew, something you laboured at, something you enjoyed? To whom, or what, are your ideas indebted? Tell us one of the many potential stories of where your knowledge and research questions come from.
5. **What is your intellectual work for?** This is a question both about your motivations for enrolling in this degree program and taking this course, and about your broader commitments as a thinker, researcher, and member of intellectual communities. What are you hoping to accomplish in the course of completing your degree? What are you hoping to learn and practice in this class in particular? What do you want to do with the knowledge you cultivate here?
6. **What else would you like us to remember and recognise about you when we engage in conversation with you?** Is there anything you haven't yet mentioned, or that you have but would like to emphasise, that you would like people to recognise in or about you when they engage you and your ideas in conversation?

Especially because this is an interdisciplinary degree program, it is important that we recognise that we bring different experiences and different sets of learning into the classroom. Coming to know each other will be an ongoing process, of course, but we will take the time in our initial meeting to hear how each member of the class invites us to address them, and to listen to the various kinds of knowledge, curiosity, and objectives that

the group has brought to the table. This diversity will give shape to the intellectual work we pursue collectively over the course of the semester.