

This week, instead of simply turning in your revised and new seminar paper materials, you'll bring that work to your casegroup for discussion and review. Based on that discussion and your own thoughts about your work, you will write a *Revision Strategy* to submit to faculty (along with your papers).

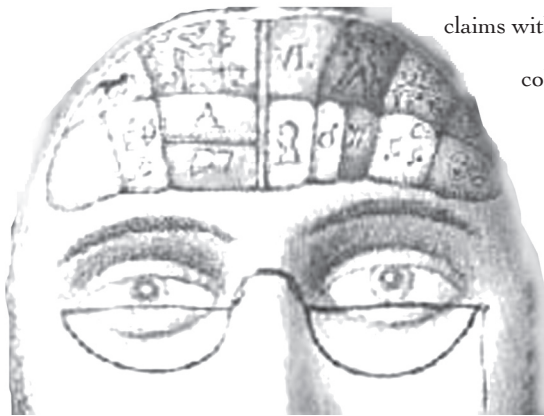
Your faculty will read and evaluate the quality of your *revision strategy*, with attention to your ability to discuss the merits of your work—as well as its deficits—and your ability to characterize the specific and general changes and additions that will make an overall stronger next draft .



Peer Review of Seminar Papers

EACH OF YOU ARE FOLLOWING A VERY DIFFERENT PROCESS as you develop your seminar papers. Some of you will have 3 rather separate pieces; others will have more or less integrated responses to and analyses of the readings. Whatever the case, you have the opportunity to give each other feedback to a work-in-progress and, moreover, to a work that has no predetermined "final state." You are not trying to turn each others' work into finished essays or research papers. This may prove disorienting at first. It can be difficult to advise someone on a project as open-ended as this one. On the contrary, however, there are a great many ways of examining each others' work, and a variety of strategies for productively exchanging feedback.

ASPECTS OF CRITIQUE & REVISION:



claims with sufficient support / evidence
 coherent and useful terminology
 related ideas & details
 control of discourses
 effective use of language
 effective use of sources
 well-constructed questions
 organized pursuit of answers

Obviously, if these are the areas for discussion during critique, they will also be the subjects of your revision strategy.

THE REST OF THIS HANDOUT...

Ø About Feedback:

What we talk about when we talk about talking; conversation strategies

® Group Critique Exercises:

Text Sample "A": Groups practice discussion, interrogation, & written feedback

™ Peer Review:

A process with suggestions & questions to consider

™ Revision Strategy:

An outline to follow



Giving feedback on a sample essay.

The rehearsal of a critique doesn't have the same edge to it that actual critique has. In a rehearsal, you feel free to judge and mock the sample. Though this sometimes results in a 'brutal honesty,' it can also yield simplistic and generally destructive advice. So, in your first practice today, one of you will play the role of the author! There are at least five approaches to providing feedback, the fifth obviously being the one to avoid:

Positive Feedback — praise for what "works" and why

Negative Feedback — claim that something isn't working and why; identification of perceived errors

Constructive Criticism — suggestions for development, enhancement, new directions

Responsive Description & Characterization — careful recounting of the reader's experience, impressions, and sense of what's there

Destructive Feedback — any feedback that communicates disinterest in or disrespect for the author's creative process

How the conversation happens

A small group critique can be a lot like a seminar. Like a seminar, it's often fun, rejuvenating, and necessary to change the format in order to get the blood flowing, as they say. Your group might also find it easier to give effective feedback by staging your conversation, using several of the options below in sequence; authors may also request a specific format. (I don't recommend discussing an author's work when they are not present.) These are a few basic options:

Readers provide the writer with written feedback that includes general and specific responses.

The author provides a series of open-ended questions about her work that readers try to answer

The readers "interrogate" the author to make her clarify, deepen, and expand her ideas

The group converses freely while trying to address the major aspects of critique and revision

The author doesn't talk, but listens in as the readers respond to and discuss her work.

👉 *The overall effectiveness and flexibility of your group will be tremendously increased if you are able to exchange and read papers in advance of your meeting.*

The text sample, "A."

Someone in the group elects to play the role of the author of "A." The author reads the piece out loud while others listen and make notes.

The author interrogates the group with a few questions about the piece, to which response is descriptive, positive, negative, and/or constructive.

The author is then silent, while the group discusses their impressions of the text, concerns, ways it might be developed, practicing the different approaches to providing feedback described above.

Each group member writes a brief response to the author, making sure to address several of the "aspects of critique" above.

Finally, as a group, look over the instructions for the **Revision Strategy**, on page 4, and make some notes about what this author might say in his/her revisions strategy.



Peer Review ...on a spontaneous piece o' writing.

Oh fun! Everyone should now take 10-15 minutes to write an analytical response to the following passages from Ritzer:

...Debord argues that one of the functions of the spectacle is to obscure and conceal "the rationality of the system." I contend that the spectacle is used to overcome the liabilities, especially the disenchantment, associated with highly rationalized systems. Debord has argued that the spectacle associated with commodities is a kind of opiate that obscures the true operation of society (including its rationality). It also serves to conceal the fact that the goods and services purchased are ultimately disappointing (Ritzer, 133).

Simulations may make for spectacle, but they are not likely to create the feelings of awe at the sight of some natural wonder or the feelings of connection derived from relating to others at the mall or in a casino that will draw people away from their computer screens. In the face of the rise of the dematerialized means of consumption, material consumption sites may be guaranteeing their own destruction by moving away from the nonmaterial rewards that they are peculiarly able to offer (Ritzer, 153-154).

When you've finished writing, **each group member should read their work out loud.** You can decide as a group whether you'd like to hear everyone's work up front first or read and discuss each piece in turn.

Before you try to deal with the questions below, the **writer of a piece being discussed should ask any questions they have for the readers.** Open ended (*not* yes-or-no) questions work best. For this exercise, try to come up with at least one good question, even if just for the sake of going through the motions.

For each piece, **answer—as a group—as many of the questions below as you can.** If you like, try some of the conversation strategies mentioned above.

The questions are obvious attempts to **get you thinking** about the "aspects of critique and revision," repeated on the right for your convenience



ASPECTS OF CRITIQUE & REVISION:

1. Almost any sentence is a claim. Including that one. What *claims* has the writer made that are interesting enough to pursue more thoroughly and that would need some significant support, both logistical and evidential?

2. What specialized words are being used or could be used to carry the author's ideas? Are key terms and phrases used effectively or do they occasionally seem confusing or dry?

3. Does the author create a dynamic range of interrelated ideas (concepts, abstractions) and details (evidence, concrete statements)? Give examples of each and the connections between them.

4. What ideas or questions relate the writer's concerns to specific disciplines or discourses, e.g.: sociology, psychology, political science, Marxism, feminism, post-colonialism? Does the writer use the ideas, terms, and insights of these references conscientiously and to her advantage?

5. Does the writer demonstrate control over the flow and effect of her words? Are there meaningful transitions between ideas? Do you feel, as the reader, led carefully through the writer's ideas?

6. Does the writer use references to / quotations from the readings and/or other sources that add real power to her ideas? Does the writer seem aware of the overall import of the reading, or are her ideas missing some of the key points?

7. In the process of developing the seminar paper materials, is the writer bringing up strong, richly nuanced questions? Do the questions seem to suggest a line of research that could bring in significant ideas and information?

8. When really good questions come up, does the writer seem to be aware of and pursue ways of answering those questions? Some questions lends themselves to being broken down in to parts; does the writer's work seem to be getting at the different parts?

- claims with sufficient support / evidence
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See the next page for "question number 9"...

9. Finally, consider which of the program learning goals the student's work seems to be addressing (some have been eliminated from the list below). Consider ways in which the connection between someone's writing and a learning goal can sharpen their ideas, their focus, their questions, and the way they work towards a synthesis of the readings.

- working with moral and ethical dilemmas using critical thinking and quantitative skills;
- understanding moral reasoning skills and the principles that help people build a just society;
- identifying right, just, and fair decisions made by private and public sectors;
- being aware of the roles individuals play in creating a just world;
- understanding how capitalism and economic structures influence how we make ethical choices;
- evaluating data and using quantitative methods to support an informed decision;
- communicating clearly through writing and speaking;
- thinking critically, creatively, and holistically, as demonstrated through written work and discussions;
- recognizing symbols and patterns in the narratives that shape our lives;
- development of systemic thinking that integrates innovation and change into organizational functions;
- integrating aesthetic, expressive and metaphorical concepts with other program disciplines;
- developing and meeting one's own intellectual goals.

Your Revision Strategy can be easily constructed following a relatively straight forward outline. You may even use each part of the 3 sections described below as section headings. The Revision Strategy should be very readable, written in complete sentences. The whole document needn't be more than a typed page. It should be submitted stapled on top of your revised and new material. You may also want to submit material demonstrating the peer review work that you did. (In any case, put all such materials in your portfolio.)

REVISION STRATEGY

1. Review of feedback:

Concise relates the significant points of discussion, general and specific examples of advice that you received from peers, and, to some degree, your estimation of what advice/points will be most useful and what advice will not be.

Remember, the "aspects of critique and revision" and the associated questions provide you with plenty of language and criteria around which to build your strategy.

2. Current Merits and deficits:

A brief account of what you think the strengths and weaknesses of your current draft are. Remember that you are not comparing your work to some formal essay. You are examining the quality of your ideas and your ability to communicate them effectively; use the aspects of critique & revision to guide you.

3. Goals and Strategy for next draft:

Based explicitly on the points you make in #1 & #2 above, you will outline a clear direction for your work and some specific and general ways that you will be revising your materials in order to pursue that direction in your next draft.



You're gonna like the way you feel!