

Context Setting Guidelines for Cultural Interlude Seminar Book Presentations

A strong presentation is grounded on strong research. If you are aiming for the “excellent” category, try relying on critical book reviews found in scholarly journals and authoritative popular media, such as the New York Times Review of Books. These are available online – for free – via the Evergreen Library Webpage (relying on Google, Amazon and Wikipedia tend to lead to very superficial treatment of the material – see “fair” and “weak” categories below – though Wikipedia may be a good start, in some cases, for reference material found in links at the end of articles).

For critical book reviews:

- Go to the Evergreen Library home page.
- Click on “Articles/Images via Databases.”
- Scroll down the left-side toolbar to the heading “Find.”
- Continue to scroll down to “Articles via MetaSearch” and click on it. You will get a screen asking for keyword search information.
- Type in the name of the author whose book you are researching.
- Check the boxes of the databases you wish searched, e.g. ones that are likely to have information related to religion, e.g. arts and humanities, general/interdisciplinary, social sciences, area studies, anthropology and architecture, geography, images, philosophy, religion, sociology, etc.
- Click “search” and a bibliography of books, citations, full-text articles and book reviews should appear.

	Excellent	Fair	Weak
Bio-graphical information of author	Use of several authoritative sources; author’s development; other work; reputable critiques of work; controversies involving author.	A few outside sources used; author’s development without interpretation; notable other works omitted; Amazon.com-type reviews	Use of book jacket; scant information on author’s development and contributing influences; no mention of other works, critiques
Historical context of the book	Key issues in times when book was written, especially events/people/debates/schools of thought that might have influenced author.	Cursory listing of historical events with no connection to the text or analysis	Chronology of events, dates
Content	Provides some detailed background on a significant subject, event, place or group of people that author discusses in text, e.g. Karen Armstrong’s treatment of the Protestant Reformation in <i>A History of God</i>	Some background on a significant subject, event, place or group of people that author discusses in text, but presentation marked by broad, sweeping and/or vague generalizations	Little or no background on a significant subject, event, place or group of people that author discusses in text
Relevancy	Sources showing how text connects with other program readings and themes	Explanation of relevancy marked by broad, sweeping and/or vague generalizations	Simply offering group opinion on relevancy

Short-comings or complications	Calling attention to any areas where the author was short-sighted, prejudiced, or uninformed or raised questions in you; providing information to contest author's view of a particular issue	Short-comings of text and/or author pointed out, but no suggestions or contesting of author's view given	Little or no discussion
Context Setter Delivery	Well prepared both in terms of information gathered and poise and effectiveness in public speaking; concise and complete in 5-10 minutes; some visual information to aid understanding, such as a YouTube clip of the author	Somewhat prepared, but gaps in information and a fair amount of "ums," "you knows," and "it's like"	No obvious preparation in content or delivery