UMW Speaking Center Presents

Participating in Class Discussion

- **Be prepared.** Use different note taking techniques to ensure for yourself a variety of jumping off points for the discussion.

- Bring to class the readings and material you will be discussing. Refer to them during the discussion.

- Be responsive. Remember, you don’t always need to say something “brilliant” to contribute.

- Discussions are not for you to talk about what you know - they are for you to learn more.

- You will get from a discussion what you put into it.

- **Ask questions!** Class discussions are the perfect time to clarify confusing or difficult material. Chances are, you aren’t the only one who had a hard time understanding certain points.

- Don’t be afraid to act the leader. Give the discussion direction and purpose. Always think about the needs of others, however. Don’t grandstand, stimulate the discussion.

- Support your classmates. Listen carefully and use verbal and nonverbal cues to encourage them.

- Be respectful. Pay attention to your tone of voice and word choice when you convey your ideas.

**A GOOD DISCUSSANT...**
- Is physically present and prepared
- Initiates topics, and encourages others to speak
- Returns to points when they need further discussion
- Discusses relevant, important issues
- Avoids drifting to trivial points
- Provides and asks for opinions, suggestions, and clarification
- Speaks loudly, clearly, and in a respectful tone

If you want more information, check out the following UMW Speaking Center handouts:

Class Discussion Packet
Preparing for Class Discussion
Leading Class Discussion