

Dissertation Preparation Seminar: Fall 2020, Wednesdays 6.10pm-8.00pm

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The Seminar is open to all PhD students in their fourth or later years. These meetings are meant to be a resource for you, at any of the various stages, early or late, that you may have reached in your work on your dissertation. The Seminar will be a forum in which you can gain experience in presenting your work; you can discuss the direction of your research; you can comment on the work of your fellow students; and you can learn from feedback from new interlocutors. Many generations of students have commented that their chapter drafts have been radically improved after discussions at these meetings. Besides improving your own work, the Seminar will develop your skills in commenting on the work of others, an important professional ability you need to acquire.

I will make sure we have a friendly and supportive atmosphere. I will be the only faculty member present, and the seminar will be restricted to Columbia graduate students. There will be no element of formal assessment or grading. Each week at the seminar, a student will make a presentation, of up to 50 minutes' length. A presentation may be any of the following:

- (i) a draft of a dissertation chapter;
- (ii) a critical overview of some topic or subtopic which you are thinking of discussing in your dissertation, on which feedback would be helpful in making decisions about which directions are likely to prove most fruitful;
- (iii) an early version of a job talk.

There may be an opportunity to give more than one such presentation, depending on timetabling considerations. Presenters are asked to send me the text of the presentation, or at least the notes or slides on which it is going to be based, 24 hours before the event.

The Seminar will be held remotely over Zoom in the Fall Semester of 2020. We will arrange the schedule over the next few weeks, and the Zoom link will be posted on the Courseworks site for the Seminar.