

 OSHER @ Dartmouth  
Discovering the new. The provocative. The timeless.

# STUDY LEADER HANDBOOK

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2018 Edition





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**PART ONE**

***THE OSHER@DARTMOUTH  
STUDY LEADER HANDBOOK***

**2018 EDITION**

# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Mission and Vision Statements

The mission of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Dartmouth (OSHER@ Dartmouth), formerly the Institute for Lifelong Education at Dartmouth (ILEAD), founded in 1990, is to provide lifelong educational opportunities to those seeking continuing quality of life here in the greater Upper Valley. Our vision is to be recognized as a center of excellence in lifelong education at Dartmouth and among the best in the nation.

## B. Study Leaders

All Study Leaders are volunteers who subscribe to the mission and share the vision of our organization, designing and leading study groups which promote the sharing of ideas and develop knowledge among all participants.

Study Leaders choose topics for their courses, prepare lesson plans, select texts and allied teaching materials, and encourage participants to examine and discuss the issues that arise in the course sessions. A single Study Leader usually leads a study group, but from time to time two or more Study Leaders share this role. Study Leaders aim to come to each course session well prepared, enthusiastic, and primed to anticipate the many questions and comments that bubble up when intellectually curious people exchange ideas.

## C. Courses

There is no typical OSHER@Dartmouth course. The OSHER@Dartmouth umbrella allows for a wide variety of learning experiences, from weekly field excursions to in-depth text analyses of literature, from self-reflective exercises designed to improve the quality of our daily lives to weekly visits of experts who guide us through the minefields of current hot-button issues. The course can be an intellectually challenging introduction to new scientific information or a more personally challenging opportunity to ransack the attics of memory for new insights and life stories. Participants may be asked to read a lot or a little, listen to others, write a few or many pages, engage in lively discussions, or any combination of these and other learning experiences. Make your own vision of an enjoyable and enlightening course come alive.

## **D. A Handbook for Study Leaders**

This handbook has been written to share the excitement, challenges, and rewards of leading an OSHER@Dartmouth study group, offering suggestions to new and veteran Study Leaders alike. This edition represents the wisdom, experience, and editorial contributions of many Study Leaders over the years, most recently including Hank Buermeyer, Barbara Butler, Evva Larson, Joe Medlicott, Dennis Damon Moore, and Banisa Saint Damian.

Many of the questions you may have as a Study Leader are answered in this handbook. Treat it as a friendly guide. A number of the topics introduced in the handbook are given further attention in the special resource documents presented in Part Two. In addition, sample course materials ranging from catalogue descriptions and syllabi to course calendars and correspondence with course participants are on file in the OSHER@Dartmouth office or available on the OSHER@Dartmouth website at [osher.dartmouth.edu](https://osher.dartmouth.edu). For more information, call the OSHER@Dartmouth office at (603) 646-0154.

## **II. BEFORE THE TERM BEGINS**

### **A. Proposing Your Course**

OSHER@Dartmouth offers courses in the fall, winter, spring, and summer, more or less in concert with the Dartmouth calendar. The length of the full OSHER@Dartmouth term in each case is eight weeks. Depending on the subject matter and the Study Leader approach, specific course offerings range from one to eight weeks in length, typically meeting once a week for two hours. (Because of uncertain weather in the winter, Study Leaders often opt for a course of seven rather than eight weeks during that term.)

If you wish to offer an OSHER@Dartmouth course, we ask that you submit a course description (1,500 characters) for the catalog, well in advance of the term in which you propose to teach. (See Part Two for important OSHER@Dartmouth dates and deadlines). This description should include an outline of the aim and scope of the course, the format (lecture or seminar/discussion), and the nature and amount of reading to be assigned. A short autobiographical sketch (500 characters) is also required. *Be sure to include any required lab fees in your course description.* All proposed courses are vetted by members of the OSHER@Dartmouth Curriculum Committee.

## **B. Planning Your Course Sessions**

Plan your course carefully. Consider questions such as: What is this course about? What do I want to accomplish? What form will the study group take? How much time should I spend lecturing, and how much time should I allow for group discussion and participation? What do I want the study group to come away with when the course ends?

Plan each session with specific goals in mind, including effective class discussion – the crackling give-and-take that lies at the core of lively and exciting OSHER@Dartmouth study groups. The better organized you are, the more smoothly your sessions will flow, the more fulfilled your study group will feel, and the more they will appreciate your efforts. (See Part Two for more comments and suggestions related to planning your course.)

If for any reason you decide to change a substantial part of your plan after submitting your proposal, be sure to communicate this in a timely way to the OSHER@Dartmouth office and to your buddy, if one has been requested or assigned. If you must make a change after the term catalog has been printed, be sure to let members of your study group know as well.

## **C. Google Drive Folder**

There is a Google Drive folder for every OSHER@Dartmouth course. The OSHER@Dartmouth office will be sharing your Google Drive folder link via an email 10 weeks prior to the start of term. You will need a Google account in order to edit the folder. You can set one up with your current email address for free. You do not need a Gmail email address. The folder is where you may upload course materials (reading packet, welcome letter, articles) for your participants to view. The participants receive the Google Drive folder link closer to the course start date (See section F. OSHER@Dartmouth Welcome Letter). They cannot modify the folder, only view the materials in it.

## **D. Reading Packet**

If you decide to give your participants reading materials for the class, please prepare and submit these items to the office approximately six weeks before the term begins. The OSHER@Dartmouth office will prepare your reading packet and send it to your class members via a link. (See section F. Osher Welcome

Letter.) When a reading packet is less than 50 pages, the reading packet is free if participants request a printed copy. Anything over 50 pages incurs a printing charge to the participant.

### **E. Book Orders**

As soon as you have decided on the course you plan to lead, select your appropriate text(s). Please call either the Norwich Bookstore (802-649-1114, 291 Main St., in Norwich, VT) or the Dartmouth Bookstore (603-643-3616, S. Main St., in Hanover, NH) and they can check on the availability of your choice(s). However, it is not your responsibility either to order the books or to distribute books to your participants. You simply submit your text list to the OSHER@Dartmouth office in the course proposal form; the office sends the list of texts to the bookstores; then your participants make their individual purchases either from one of the bookstores or online via Amazon.com (or another online vendor). Be sure to provide all the information requested on the course proposal form. In the OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter sent to each participant, the office will include instructions for book purchases, including online options, for each course.

### **F. OSHER@Dartmouth Welcome Letter**

The OSHER@Dartmouth office will send an email to your course participants 3 - 4 weeks before your course's start date. This email will contain a link to the online Google Drive folder. The Google Drive folder will include an OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter with the course information including: your contact information, course title, dates, time, location, optional and required texts, and reading packet cost (if applicable). There will also be information on directions and parking to the courses' location. Any participants without an email address will receive this information in the mail.

### **G. Your Welcome Letter and/or Syllabus**

In addition to an overview of the course, the syllabus should include primary text(s) to be considered, the order of required readings, an indication of other assignments, and a calendar of in-class events. Your syllabus should lay out any responsibilities/opportunities for study group members vis-à-vis readings, oral reports, use of visual aids, class discussion, etc.

You may also email a welcome letter to the course participants to acquaint

You may also email a welcome letter to the course participants to acquaint them with the scope and nature of your course and offer study suggestions to participants prior to the first class. Please blind carbon copy (BCC) the class to preserve their privacy. The most effective study suggestions are clear, simply written, and focus on the issues, themes, and aims of your course. Effective study suggestions plant challenging ideas among the members of your study group.

The welcome letter and/or syllabus will be mailed to any participants without an email address by the OSHER@Dartmouth office. Please copy osher@dartmouth.edu in all email communication with the class.

## **H. Biographical Sketches**

Some Study Leaders may ask each member of the study group to mail or e-mail them a brief biographical sketch before classes begin. Many Study Leaders believe that it's helpful to all study group members to know a little about. The sketches need not be long or detailed; a hundred words is usually sufficient. After collecting all the sketches, you can reproduce them to forward as an e-mail document to all class members and/or distribute at the first course session. An alternative is to have the members of a study group say a few words about themselves in the first class meeting. This takes some time, but it can warm up the group and the session.

## **I. Study Leader Support: Instruction, Mentoring, and Orientation**

OSHER@Dartmouth offers a comprehensive program of Study Leader support. At any time from the earliest preparation of a course, through the stage of intense planning and actual execution, to its final follow-up, you can get assistance from experienced Study Leaders who are members of the Study Leader Support Subcommittee (SLSS). SLSS programs are detailed later in this section.

Study Leader Support offers a free four-week course in the fall term entitled, "Discovering Your Osher Teaching Style."

We also offer an optional buddy program, especially designed for first-time Study Leaders but open to all, in which a new Study Leader is matched with an experienced Study Leader willing to offer advice and guidance before, during,

and after the term. A member of the SLSS makes contact with all new Study Leaders well ahead of the first teaching term to offer the resources of this program. A mentor is there to help you decide how and where that help might be most useful to you. Many buddy relationships are particularly valuable in the early stages of Study Leader involvement in OSHER@Dartmouth. They may also continue as a friendly Study Leader exchange over the years.

Finally, well before the term begins, the SLSS hosts a two-hour orientation for all Study Leaders (and any assigned buddies) where they can become acquainted with one another, where members of the subcommittee and others can provide useful information about leading an OSHER@Dartmouth course, and where early questions can be addressed. The orientation includes an overview of Google Drive and the equipment available to Study Leaders.

## **J. Facilities and Parking**

Most OSHER@Dartmouth courses are held at the Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC House). It is located a few blocks north of the main Dartmouth campus at 10 Hilton Field Road, between the Hanover Country Club and Occom Pond. Courses are also held at other locations, including Hanover Senior/Community Center, Kendal at Hanover, AVA Gallery, Wheelock Terrace, and the Woodlands. Once you have been informed of the location of your classroom, the OSHER@Dartmouth office will mail you information about parking for those off-site locations.

## **K. Classrooms**

At every OSHER@Dartmouth location, it is important to visit the room you are assigned before your first course session. The office will provide the name of a contact person and other contact information at off-site locations. Become familiar with the location of the room. Make sure it's equipped as you wish and has enough chairs to accommodate your study group. Locate the telephone (for emergencies, in the absence of a cell phone), bathrooms, exits, water fountain, etc. Speak with the person designated as your contact on site.

## **L. Equipment**

Plan well ahead for any visual aids you might need for your course: video and TV equipment, overhead projectors, document camera, LCD projector,

PowerPoint set-up, slide projectors, maps, a whiteboard, etc. **Please specify any equipment requests in the course proposal. This is very important to know ahead of time because it may determine where we schedule you to teach.** If you are thinking about using materials from YouTube or other music/video sources on the Internet, contact the office if you need help downloading. If you plan to utilize the Internet for your course, contact the office in order to set up your personal laptop to access the Dartmouth network prior to the start of the term. Also: Members of the office staff will consult with you about the use of A/V, including some instruction in operating equipment. However, you are responsible for the use of such equipment and audio-visual materials during class time, as well as for the use of your own laptop.

## **M. Library Resources**

### **1. Library Privileges**

When an OSHER@Dartmouth member is enrolled in a study group, the member's course fee includes borrowing privileges at Dartmouth's Baker-Berry Library and all other Dartmouth library resources. Library cards are issued at the circulation desk at Baker-Berry and are valid until the following June 30.

As a Study Leader, you have library privileges from the time you commit to teach until the following June 30. A week or two before the beginning of a term, the Baker-Berry staff runs a two-hour orientation program for OSHER@Dartmouth on the use and facilities of the library.

### **2. Maps**

Study Leaders who need maps for their study group may borrow them from the Evans Map Room in the Library. Maps may be signed out for the entire term and are often available in digitized form. It is highly recommended that you request maps on a CD for your class. The telephone number for the Map Room is (603) 646-2579.

### **3. Videos/DVDs or Other Library-Based Course Materials**

If you would like to add a movie or video clip to your study group you can use the Dartmouth College website and the Jones Media Center as resources. Go to [library.dartmouth.edu](http://library.dartmouth.edu). Type in the "key word" of what you are looking for. Under "material type" choose what you are searching for (i.e., video, book, etc.). Under "location" choose Baker/Berry Library. Click on the Submit button. This will provide you with a list of materials available in the Baker/Berry Library.

You may click on each individual item listed to find out more details. Visit the Jones Media Center on the second floor of Berry to get a sense of the vast collection available. If they don't have what you want, they can usually get it. Feel free to talk with librarians about your interests and questions. Plan ahead.

If you need assistance with finding a video or transferring a foreign version to U.S., call Anthony Helm at the Jones Media Center at (603) 646-3830 or see him at the Center in the Baker/Berry Library on the second floor. He is a good resource for visuals for your course.

#### **4. DCAL Center**

The Dartmouth Center for Advancement of Learning (DCAL) is located in Room 102 Baker-Berry Libraries. DCAL is glad to have current and potential OSHER@Dartmouth Study Leaders participate with other Dartmouth faculty in the presentations that DCAL offers as space/enrollment permits. This is a unique opportunity for us to enhance our teaching abilities, especially utilizing Skype. The DCAL website can be found at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dcal>. If you find a topic of interest call (603) 646-2655 to make a reservation. Please keep in mind that OSHER@Dartmouth Study Leaders can only make reservations 30 days in advance of a course date.

#### **5. Art Slides**

OSHER@Dartmouth owns a large slide collection. Get in touch with the OSHER@Dartmouth office for information about its use. OSHER@Dartmouth instructors do not, however, have access to the Sherman Art Library slide collection.

### **N. Costs and Expenses**

#### **1. For Course Members**

There is a cap of \$60 on the total cost of books, materials, and other related items that you may ask each study group member to buy for each course. Occasionally, a Study Leader will arrange to take the study group on a field trip and ask each participant to share the cost of transportation. If you plan to ask for such contributions, make sure your study group knows of the costs well before the term begins. The best way to alert the class to these costs is to include them in the course description you write for the course catalog. It is also wise to remind the class of these costs at your first meeting. Occasionally, an opportunity for an unplanned field trip may arise during the course. If

expenses for such a trip require that you ask participants to go over the \$60 limit, you must obtain approval from course participants. The OSHER@Dartmouth office will collect payment from course participants. On some occasions, a Study Leader may arrange for a guest speaker to address the group. Such speakers may be reimbursed at a modest level for transportation expenses. The study group may be requested to help defray such expenses as a part of each member's \$60 allocation. If you are going to do this, please notify your study group ahead of time.

## **2. For Study Leaders**

Each study group leader may be reimbursed up to \$60 for books and other educational materials purchased for the course. To be reimbursed, a Study Leader must submit receipts to the OSHER@Dartmouth office.

## **O. Reproduction of Course Materials**

Materials for course use, apart from published texts, tend to fall into one of three categories: reading packets prepared ahead of the course and utilized throughout the term; handouts projected and prepared week by week; and last-minute items, often contributed by participants themselves. We understand that there is a place for all these materials in our program and, working with individual Study Leaders, we want to support their preparation term by term. However, bearing in mind the ecological costs and the staff time involved, we ask that Study Leaders minimize the use of hard-copy reproduction and distribute their materials to participants ahead of time electronically when possible.

Electronic distribution of class materials can be achieved by sending an e-mail to your group and attaching the electronic file to that message or uploading it to the course's online Google Drive folder. The OSHER@Dartmouth office is happy to provide support for distributing electronic documents, including transferring printed materials to electronic format via scanning. We recognize that our membership includes many individuals who do not have the means to receive files via e-mail, or who instead prefer printed copy, and we will continue to support that option. The office will print and mail to any participants without an email address. Please include [osher@dartmouth.edu](mailto:osher@dartmouth.edu) in any email communication with the class.

If you choose to have materials copied or scanned at the OSHER@Dartmouth

office, plan ahead. Contact the office before coming in to copy. Please do not ask the staff to copy substantial amounts of material at the last minute (e.g., immediately prior to a class session). In any case, be sure that you make active use of any materials you reproduce and/or ask group members to purchase.

### **III. DURING THE TERM**

#### **A. Class Representative**

Each study group has a class representative, selected by the Study Leader, or in the alternative appointed by the OSHER@Dartmouth office from among the enrolled students. The class representative will assist the Study Leader and the group, performing important non-teaching duties which will facilitate the smooth running of the course. (Section V. provides specific guidelines for those so appointed.)

#### **B. Name Badges**

OSHER@Dartmouth provides each participant with a name badge. Members receive laminated name badges and lanyards that are designed for use at all OSHER@Dartmouth classes and functions. Everyone is responsible for their name badge and should bring them to each class - the office cannot store name badges for members. Each member will receive one name badge at no charge, but there is a fee of \$5.00 to replace a name badge due to loss or damage. Replacement requests should be submitted directly to the OSHER@Dartmouth office.

#### **C. Hearing Assistance**

Hearing assistance devices are available in DOC and Hanover Senior Center classrooms. During the first class, the class representative should inquire if any student wants hearing assistance. The hearing assistance equipment is housed in briefcases present near the front of the classroom. Each case has detailed instructions for use attached to the cover. If there are any problems, contact the office. For courses located elsewhere, please have the class representative call the office to inquire about hearing assistance.

## **D. Cancelling a Course Session**

**1. Cancellation Policy:** OSHER@Dartmouth policy requires individual Study Leaders to make the decision to cancel a course session on their own initiative. Cancellation of the first session is perhaps the most challenging because it must be announced by at least 7 a.m. on the day the course meets, and since the office is normally not open until 8 a.m., staff members are not able to assist. Many OSHER@Dartmouth members live about an hour's drive from Hanover, so timely notification of any cancellation is of paramount importance.

Some Study Leaders use the television or radio for guidance to learn if the Hanover schools are closed, while others use online weather reports or call several participants to get their take on the situation. The "bottom line" is that Study Leaders bear the sole responsibility for cancelling a course. Please be aware that while Hanover schools may not be closed, roads may be impassable in other towns and may dangerous for some participants to attend class on that day.

We strongly recommended that you establish a protocol for a cancellation policy during the first hour of your first course session. Some Study Leaders create an email listing of all course participants and notify them the evening prior to the next session that the course may be cancelled, and that a firm decision will be made and announced by 7 a.m. the following morning. If it is obvious the night before the course session that it should be cancelled, just make the decision known right away. Another way to accomplish this is to establish a phone tree agreed to by the Study Leader and members of the course. The class representative may also be a source of assistance in this process. Please be aware that if there is a storm, some participants may lose internet, phone or both.

No matter what method the Study Leader utilizes, it is imperative that the OSHER@Dartmouth office be notified when a course session is cancelled. The length of each term normally accommodates a make-up session, but the office must verify these arrangements.

**2. Cancellation Policy Example:** This is a guideline some Study Leaders use, however it us up to each individual Study Leader to decide if and when to cancel class.

Go to [www.wmur.com](http://www.wmur.com) on your computer or WMUR Manchester News on

your TV for information. Best to check in the morning of your class. If the Hanover-Norwich (Dresden School District) announces:

- a full-day closure due to weather, classes will be cancelled
- early dismissal due to weather, afternoon classes will be cancelled
- a two-hour delay, classes will be held at the discretion of the Study Leader, who will notify students either by email or phone chain of his/her decision

Even if the Hanover-Norwich schools are open, a Study Leader may cancel class by notifying the members by phone or by e-mail. And we encourage students to make their own decisions about travel if conditions are worrisome.

### **E. Classroom Procedures**

No two Study Leaders organize or run their courses in the same manner. It is a good idea, however, to give some thought as to how best to begin and end each session. As the course progresses, it may be helpful to participants for you to start each session with a brief overview of the previous session and to end each session with a summary of the day's discussion. Try to answer questions or address raised issues by the end of a given session. If there are questions/issues that require some research between sessions, make sure that you deal with them at the start of the next class. Make sure that copies of all handouts are available from one class to another for those who miss a class. Invite those who may be hard of hearing to sit at the front of the room, and let them know that we can provide technical amplification help for the hearing-impaired as well. Also: It is the policy of OSHER@Dartmouth that no pets will be allowed in our classrooms or at our meetings. (See Part Two for more commentary on this topic.)

### **F. Course Session Breaks**

Plan to take a short break (5-10 minutes) about half way through each course session. At the DOC House, coffee, tea, hot chocolate and water are available in the center room with a suggested donation of \$1.00 per cup. Many Study Leaders bring cookies/muffins to the first session and ask for volunteers to do the same at subsequent sessions. A member of the class can maintain a sign-up sheet. With some exceptions, such as the Hanover Senior Center - you should check in with the office on this matter - study groups meeting off-site (i.e., a site other than DOC House) should not expect beverages to be provided.

If facility policies permit (each is different), participants who wish to do so may bring their own refreshments, or the class representative can check with participants and arrange for a sign-up sheet to be passed around for someone to bring in beverages. For courses beginning at 11:30 a.m. or noon, participants often simply bring their lunch.

## **G. Classroom Dynamics**

Make every effort to establish a warm and friendly atmosphere in your classroom. Try to maintain an informal tone and style. Provide some ground rules for class discussion at the outset, urging everyone to contribute, promoting respect for the ideas and questions of everyone in the group, indicating whether members should raise their hands to be called on, etc. If your preference is to give all group members an opportunity to contribute before calling on anyone a second time, and/or you appreciate brevity in offered comments, this is a good time to make it known. Your group members are adult learners, and most of them will get the message right away. They will generally take your authority for granted, and a light touch will do the trick. In any case, your enjoyment in what you do and your enthusiasm for the subject will be infectious, and most study groups feature lively discussion contributing to the enjoyable learning of all involved. It's good to be responsive to participants' questions; do not worry if you don't know all the answers. Some of the best learning in OSHER@Dartmouth study groups happens for the Study Leader when he/she pursues a question between sessions in order to offer an answer at the beginning of the next course session. (See Part Two for more commentary on course dynamics, including notes on leading discussion.)

OSHER@Dartmouth urges members to take an active part in all its study groups. While it may be preferable for everyone to join in course discussions, some participants come primarily to listen, and although you may invite everyone to contribute, you should not *pressure* anyone to speak.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who might tend to monopolize course discussions. We all know individuals who never seem to have an unspoken thought. If your presentation of ground rules has not sufficiently registered with them up front, feel free to speak with them individually (or ask your Class Representative if he/she would feel comfortable taking on this task) to reinforce your model of classroom dynamics. A few comments from you will probably reform the over-enthusiastic talker, and of course you can simply

decline to call on her/him except in turn.

Rarely, a group member will be evidently rude. In such a case it is a good idea to try to nip the situation in the bud, addressing the situation directly (in or out of class) rather than simply hoping that it will disappear on its own. If you are uncomfortable addressing the situation yourself, or if the attitude and conduct persist, you have the back-up of the OSHER@Dartmouth administrative office and the support of the Curriculum Committee in this matter. Any time a serious problem of this sort arises in your class, let Lisa King know about it right away.

If such a problem arises in your first course meeting, you can approach the disrupter during the break or at the end of class and say something like, “You seem to be in the wrong course. You can go to the office to find another, more suitable opening, or receive a refund of your course fees.” And at any time in the course you can take such a person aside, remind him of the ground rules you set at the outset, note his negative presence in your classroom in that context, and direct him to leave your course, go to the office, and receive a full refund. (Again: this sort of extreme situation is rare; mostly things go very well.)

## **H. Follow-Up Forms**

Follow-up forms are emailed to the class participants the week of your last class. OSHER@Dartmouth encourages online completion on the form for legibility reasons. There will also be printed follow-up forms in the class representative binder for those participants without an email. As the Study Leader, you should urge everyone to complete the form, noting how important these forms are to current and future OSHER@Dartmouth programs. (See section V. F., page 18.)

## **I. Recruiting Other Study Leaders**

OSHER@Dartmouth is always seeking new Study Leaders, many of whom come from our membership. If you think one or more of your study-group members would make a good Study Leader, urge them to consider leading a study group. They need not be experts in any particular field. Many Study Leaders are simply persons passionate or curious about special interests which they would enjoy exploring with others. Feel free to share the names of any likely individuals with the office staff and/or members of the Curriculum Committee, who are formally responsible for staff recruitment each year.

## **J. Promotions and Photographs**

Allow no one in your study group to use the classroom as a platform to solicit funds for any organization, no matter how worthy. OSHER@Dartmouth policy does not permit this. You might make this announcement in your first course meeting to deter those who have that idea in mind. Taking photographs in the classroom is acceptable as long as permission to be photographed is given and such pictures are not used for any commercial purposes. If photos are to be used for an OSHER@Dartmouth promotion each person photographed must sign a release form.

## **IV. ENDING AND AFTER**

### **A. Gifts**

It is the policy of OSHER@Dartmouth that a Study Leader should not accept gifts from a study group.

### **B. Feedback and Debriefing**

**1. Feedback:** Study Leaders are encouraged to provide feedback on their roles utilizing a form sent from the office. (This is in addition to the follow-up forms filled out by the participants.)

**2. Debriefing:** At the end of every term, the Curriculum Committee arranges a meeting at the DOC House for Study Leaders who taught during that term. Your study group follow-up forms will be emailed to you beforehand for your review. If you prefer to have the follow-up forms mailed, please request this directly from the office. Read them carefully, taking note of your participants' comments about the course and your leadership. New Study Leaders who have not been professional teachers may be understandably sensitive to classroom critique; but as you will see, our members tend to be very positive about their OSHER@Dartmouth experience. In any case, reading these forms can be helpful to you in preparing and leading another study group. Make every effort to attend this debriefing session to share with your fellow Study Leaders the experiences gained during the term. These gatherings have proven enormously helpful to both new and veteran Study Leaders. We also give all Study Leaders an opportunity to provide their own feedback on the term orally and in writing - which, in turn, can be helpful to the Curriculum Committee and the office.

## V. GUIDELINES FOR CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Prior to the first session of your class, all class representatives will be provided with a written description of their duties. Those duties are listed and summarized below.

### **A. The Class Representative as Liaison**

The Study Leader will introduce the class representative to the course participants in the first session and explain his/her role as spokesperson and intermediary between the class and the Study Leader on the one hand, and the participants and the OSHER@Dartmouth office on the other. In the first session of the course the class representative will invite students to share their concerns directly with the Study Leader. If they do not feel comfortable speaking with the Study Leader, they should share concerns with the class representative. Notify the office immediately if there are major issues of any kind.

### **B. Provisioning Off-Site Study Groups**

Coffee and hot beverages are provided at the DOC House and the Black Senior Center for a \$1.00 suggested donation. Coffee is complimentary at the Woodlands, Harvest Hill, St. Thomas Church and Wheelock Terrace. If your course takes place at a location not listed here, there is no beverage service at your location and participants should provide their own if they wish.

### **C. Taking Attendance**

So that the OSHER@Dartmouth office can have an accurate count of attendees, take attendance weekly. An attendance sheet is provided in the course binder. Within the first couple of weeks of the course, please report to office staff any dropouts, no-shows, or people present who aren't on the roster.

### **D. After Each Session**

If your room arrangement has been changed for a given session of your group, please help the Study Leader to put the room back in order and encourage students to leave promptly so the next group can enter and begin on time.

## **E. Follow-Up Forms**

As class representative, you encourage participants to fill out a follow-up form online. Those participants without an email should receive a printed follow-up form during the next-to-last course session, and you collect the completed forms during the last session. You will share with the Study Leader the responsibility of affirming the importance of completing study-group follow-up forms. Before you distribute forms, read or paraphrase the following to the group:

*Your responses to the questions on this form really matter and will help ensure the excellence of our program. Your comments are especially helpful and will be read by a sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee before they are passed along to the Study Leaders. You will receive an email from osher@dartmouth.edu to complete the form online. For those who prefer to complete one by hand, please return the form to the class rep.*

Full participation in the process gives OSHER@Dartmouth an accurate understanding of how the study group went. Note when students return their follow-up forms on the class roster by making a check mark in the “received” column beside their names so that we can identify the participants who were absent or did not return a form. Place any completed printed forms in a large envelope and return it to the OSHER@Dartmouth office, accompanied by the attendance sheet.

## **F. Putting the Course Away**

After the last class, please return the binder with the follow-up forms, the attendance sheet, and any leftover name badges to the office.

# **VI. A CHECKLIST FOR STUDY LEADERS**

## **A. Before the Enrollment Period**

- Submit a course proposal with the following information:
  - Course description (1,500 characters), Valley News description (300 characters), and Study Leader biography (500 characters).
  - Equipment needs for each session of the course.
  - Whether reading materials and/or handouts will be supplied.

- Textbook(s) to be ordered. Total costs for textbooks, re-printed materials, trips etc. must not exceed \$60.
- Indicate days, times, and dates you are available to teach.
- Resources available to Study Leaders in preparing courses:
  - **Evans Map Room:** (603) 646-2579: Maps may be borrowed for course use, or saved to a CD.
  - **OSHER@Dartmouth slide collection:** Slides may be borrowed for course use.
  - **Baker Library:** As a Study Leader you have library privileges from the time you commit to teach until the following June. Go to the Baker/Berry circulation desk on the main floor for your library card.
  - **OSHER@Dartmouth Copier/Scanner:** You may copy texts, articles, or any other course materials. The office can distribute materials electronically or produce hard copies. Hard copies may have a charge for participants if there is more than 50 pages. Please give materials to OSHER@Dartmouth in print-ready or copy-ready format. Please number your pages.
  - **Jones Media Center:** (603) 646-2165: Media, including thousands of feature film DVDs, that you may use for your course.
  - **Study Leaders may be re-reimbursed up to \$60 for supplies and materials.** Save and submit relevant receipts to Lisa King.
  - **DCAL (Dartmouth Center for Advanced Learning):** (603) 646-2655: For information and help regarding DCAL programs and resources.

## B. Before the Course Begins

- Consider requesting a buddy.
- Attend orientation meeting for Study Leaders & mentors.
- Check with the OSHER@Dartmouth office to make sure copied materials are available.
- Check classroom, rest room, and exit locations. Also check telephone location in case an emergency call becomes necessary and no cell phone is available. Have contact information for off-site locations and liaison personnel.
- Prepare cover letter for syllabus, welcoming your study group

members, highlighting your goals, and exciting interest.

- Consider carefully before putting Baker books on reserve; few will use them. Investigate e-mail and other electronic options.
- Please do not give permission for any non-registered individuals to join your course. Refer them to the OSHER@Dartmouth office. All registrations must go through OSHER@Dartmouth.

### **C. At the First Session**

- Come 10-15 minutes early: arrange furniture; check out equipment. (Afterward, the study group is responsible for putting the room back as found.) Urge the hard-of-hearing to move to the front and/or to use available equipment for the term.
- Establish control while encouraging a warm, informal atmosphere.
- Advise class of any additional costs, keeping \$60 cap in mind.
- Introduce your class representative to your group.
- Set procedure for use in case of class cancellation. Make clear if you'll be using e-mail or telephone to be in touch. Remember to notify OSHER@Dartmouth if you cancel.
- Look for resource people; utilize them in discussions or as guest lecturers.

### **D. At All Sessions**

- Test any equipment to be used to be sure it is working properly.
- If oral reports are to be given, ask for volunteers and assign a time limit; understand that some may inevitably disappoint.
- Respect those who would rather listen than talk. Control discussion, particularly of those who would rather talk than listen.
- Offer a 5-10 minute break at all sessions. Coffee, hot chocolate, tea, and water are available in DOC lobby.
- Conclude each session with a summary of key points.
- Introduce subsequent sessions with an overview of the previous session.

### **E. Feedback and Follow-up**

The follow-up of OSHER@Dartmouth courses is important for all parties, including the Study Leader, who should encourage participants to provide

helpful feedback in this process. The class representative will handle the mechanics and logistics. (See Section IV. F.)

### **F. At the End of the Course**

- The class representative and course participants should understand that gifts are not to be given to Study Leaders.
- The course may conclude with an informal party or a gathering outside of the formal course session.
- The OSHER@Dartmouth website has a form for all Study Leaders called Study Leader Feedback Form. Please fill this out at the end of the term. The feedback you provide is very useful to the office and Curriculum Committee.

### **G. A Few Weeks Later**

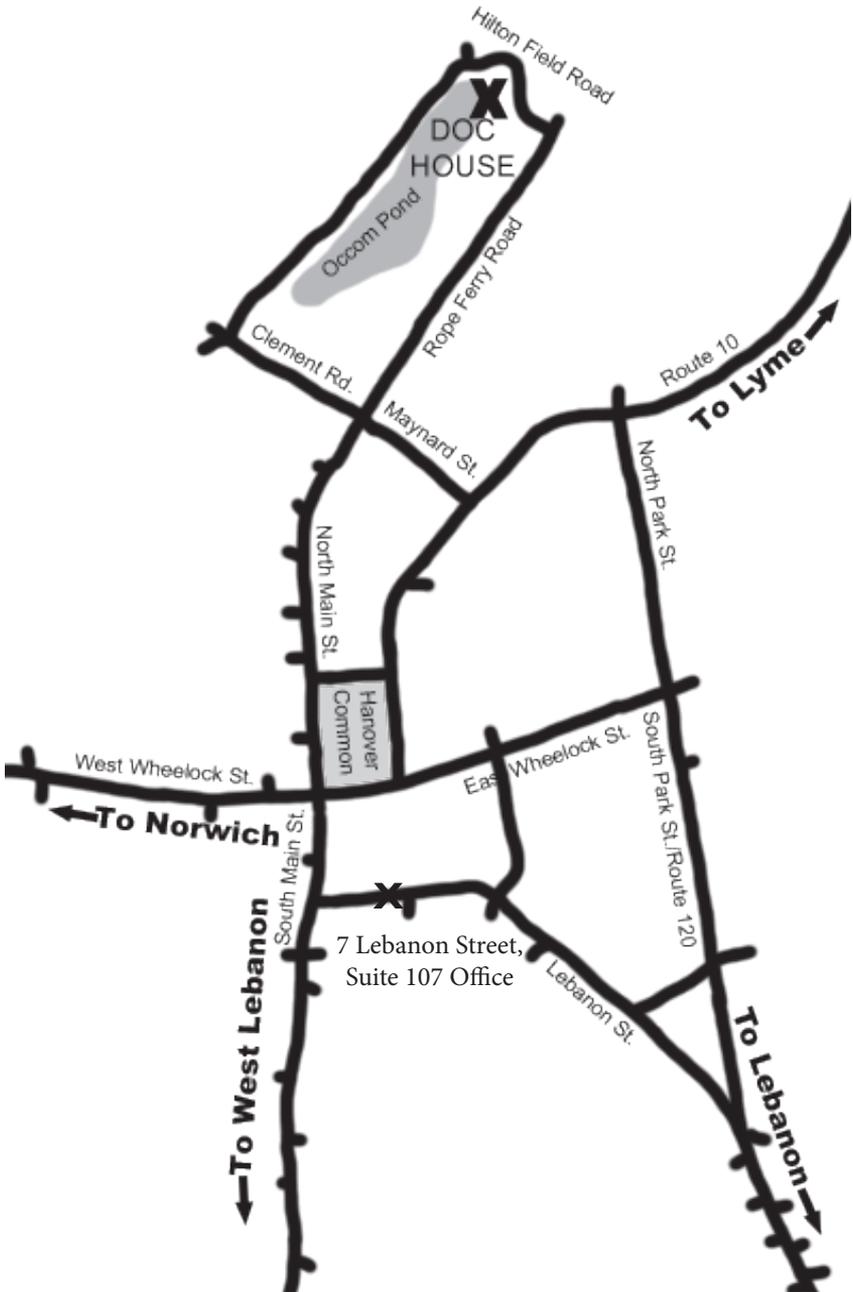
- After the curriculum committee completes reviewing the follow-up forms, they will be distributed via email to each Study Leader for private review.
- All Study Leaders will be invited to a debriefing session, where Study Leaders will exchange experiences and suggestions for use in future courses.

## **VII. TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips can be a positive addition to your course. Transportation, however, may be a complex issue.

- If as the Study Leader you formally organize the group into a carpool, all drivers are responsible and liable in the event of a mishap.
- An alternative is simply to advise the class members to meet for a session at some specified location other than the usual classroom, and let the members arrange their own car-pooling or drive themselves to the location.
- Another acceptable transportation option: a Study Leader may plan a trip and charter a bus from an approved company, costs to be shared by participants. Ask the OSHER@Dartmouth office for a list of approved bus firms and typical costs for the day.

VIII. MAP TO THE DARTMOUTH OUTING CLUB  
(THE DOC HOUSE) - also shows 7 Lebanon St. office location



## **PART TWO**

### ***RESOURCES FOR STUDY LEADERS***

The documents reproduced here originated as materials to be discussed at new Study Leader orientation sessions or distributed in connection with the instructional offering, “Discover Your Osher Teaching Style.” There is some overlap with information and advice offered in a different form in the handbook, but some notes and comments bear repeating. Enjoy.

## I. A FEW TIPS FOR LEADING YOUR FIRST OSHER@Dartmouth COURSE

**1. FIRST PRINCIPLES:** Teach something you know and love; and, in light of your own gifts and inclinations, figure out an approach that will allow you to teach it with passion and joy. Respect your students as adult learners. Be friendly, but don't be afraid to be demanding as well. Be fair. Be patient. Be forgiving. Be both organized at the outset and flexible, as appropriate, through the term. Cultivate a sense of humor. Enjoy your participants. Your reward will be their responsiveness. They have, after all, signed up because they want to learn from you.

**2. PLANNING:** Take good time to plan your course of study and prepare a syllabus to distribute in advance which (a) lists your texts, (b) sets out your aims, (c) projects a calendar of readings and study topics, with assignments, activities, and/or discussion topics for each course session, (d) clearly notes your expectations of those enrolled, and (e) indicates what they can expect of you. In this connection, it is a good idea to think through and convey your preferred protocols for handling such eventualities as snow days and illness (including your own), as well as policies for course conduct. For example, should course participants raise their hands to be called on? Will you encourage others to speak before calling again on those who have just spoken? If you use handouts, try to plan and produce them at least a day or two in advance - and distribute them electronically where possible. Once you have a confirmed course list, in addition to emailing a syllabus and/or cover letter, you may wish to be in touch with members personally by email in advance of the first meeting. (Sample syllabi are on file in the office and online.)

**3. AVAILABLE RESOURCES:** (a) If you wish, as a first-time OSHER@ Dartmouth Study Leader you can be paired with an experienced Study Leader as a buddy with whom you can talk over the ways and means of your course early and late. (b) At all stages of course preparation and teaching, the OSHER@Dartmouth office staff, headed by Program Manager Lisa King, will gladly support your effort in various ways, including setup for film projection and PowerPoint presentations and the preparation of materials (electronic transmission or photocopying) for course distribution. Please give the staff good notice in asking for such support, before and throughout the term. (c) During the term one of your course members will serve as

class representative, distributing name tags, tracking weekly attendance, and generally acting as a liaison between you and the office and between you and the study group. (d) You will have Dartmouth library privileges in connection with your teaching, before and during the term. (e) Also: OSHER@ Dartmouth will subsidize your expenses up to an amount of \$60 (save your receipts); and you may ask students to spend up to \$60 for books and other course materials. See also: “Dates and Deadlines for Study Leaders” and the lists of OSHER@Dartmouth office activities, services, and resources below.

**4. OPENING DAY:** This is a very important day in the course, but its success doesn't depend on high-level discourse. (a) It's a day for new course members to become lightly acquainted with one another and with you. (b) It's a day for you to embody and express the interest and energy that led you to design the course in the first place. (c) You may wish to offer some initial comments about the course as a whole and how you expect to operate week by week. (These comments may usefully repeat and reinforce some of what you have already sent in writing.) (d) You may wish to annotate orally materials already distributed and to exemplify your approach or approaches to the subject matter in treating a particular issue or text. (e) You may wish to give your students an opportunity - in pairs or threes or as a study group - to discuss some specific course material on the spot. (f) You may assume that your study group members have a good-faith interest in your course, but they may be inexperienced or out of practice in focused study. Accordingly, it is probably a good idea, even as early as the first day, to include some instruction in how to deal with and respond to the material. (g) Make your students as comfortable as possible in their learning with you from the beginning. It's one way to ensure that they'll still be with you in the end. (See also below: “Leading an OSHER@Dartmouth Course: Notes re the First Day.”)

**5. COURSE DISCUSSION DURING THE TERM:** For many courses discussion is an important element, and students are usually very willing to participate. Study Leaders can foster good discussion by (a) framing the issues, (b) posing relevant questions for study or as discussion prompts, (c) inviting all course members to speak, and (d) directing the conversation so that one or two members will not dominate. Some student comments may be more penetrating or provocative than others, but in their responses good Study Leaders can make something interesting and informative out of even the least likely question or remark. (See Section III., Notes on OSHER@ Dartmouth Discussion: A Commentary and a Sampler.)

**6. AS TIME GOES BY (A MISCELLANY):** (a) Make at least minimal use of whatever texts you require or handouts you distribute. (b) Depending on the makeup, background, and interests of your group, be prepared to fill gaps in discussion or to go with the flow, walking the line between the distractingly tangential and what some members may see as a my-way-or-the-highway pedagogy. Covering the ground is important, but not at the expense of lively interchange which may take all of you to undiscovered country. (c) Therefore, as suggested above in #1, be prepared to adjust your course plan otherwise as needed and/or desirable, early and late. (d) The tone you set in these matters will help set the overall tone of the course. (e) Being flexible, however, doesn't necessarily mean being laid-back. Don't be surprised if leading an OSHER@Dartmouth course which meets just once a week turns out to be quite time-consuming through the term. (f) Finally, take care of business: begin on time; take a break somewhere in the middle; and round out the interchange by the end of your second hour.

**7. INTERACTIONS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:** OSHER@Dartmouth Study Leaders often ask their students to provide brief biographical sketches ahead of the course. If any information might be particularly useful or pertinent for your course, be sure to ask for it. If all of your group members have email addresses, you may wish to encourage some email dialogue, sending messages to them clarifying this or that matter or making adjustments in assignments as desirable, and receiving questions or comments from them along the way.

**8. A LAST WORD:** We teach OSHER@Dartmouth courses as a service to others, and it can be very satisfying to inspire those before us in the classroom. But just as often we find that our students/participants inspire us, and we leave the course rejuvenated and, wonder of wonders, ready for more.

## II. LEADING AN OSHER@DARTMOUTH COURSE: NOTES RE THE FIRST DAY

**1. ADVANCE PREP:** A successful first day depends partly on what has happened ahead of the term: preparations undertaken, decisions made, materials assembled, messages conveyed. In general, think about what you want your study group members to know about the course and what, if anything, you want them to do prior to and/or for the first day, and then communicate accordingly. A specific example of logistical prep: Visit the room assigned to your course. Consider its configuration and whether you might like a different one. Think about the space and the chairs currently in place, and decide on a maximum enrollment accordingly. Note the location of the clock. If you're going to need special equipment, work with the OSHER@Dartmouth office to that end. In any case, stop by the office to get acquainted with the staff.

**2. THE OSHER@Dartmouth WELCOME LETTER:** Ahead of the term, all study group members receive a standard letter from the OSHER@Dartmouth office which (a) identifies their course, (b) the course roster and directions to the location, (d) lists the required texts and any supplementary materials to be purchased at the office, (e) mentions library orientation at Baker (which may or may not be relevant for your course), (f) provides OSHER@Dartmouth office hours, address, telephone number, email address, and online address, and names and contact information for you and your study group members.

**3. YOUR WELCOME LETTER AND/OR SYLLABUS:** You may wish to share a welcome letter and/or syllabus with your participants. The tone you set and the information you provide in a welcome letter will serve as an important preview of coming attractions. Your letter should be friendly but also take care of business, and it should be one page or less. Here, for example, is how Jim Adler began a welcome letter: "I very much look forward to exploring the wonderful world of contemporary American short stories with you for eight weeks beginning Tuesday, March 22." In that one sentence he tells you how he feels about his offering, confirms the course topic, and reminds you of the start date. Don't be afraid to repeat or build upon information in the OSHER@Dartmouth letter. Please mention the texts or materials required, to indicate how the course will operate, and to make a first assignment. (See #7 in this section.) Take care in proofing the materials you send. You may or may not wish to continue the tone of your letter in

your accompanying syllabus materials - course description (content, themes, goals), text requirements, and a course calendar with assignments - but you do not want to contradict it.

**4. SETTING THE TONE ON THE FIRST DAY:** The tone you set in your welcoming letter should, however, be very compatible with the oral tone you will set in the classroom on the first day of the course. The watchword for most instructors here is positive. Joe Medlicott, the dean of OSHER@ Dartmouth Study Leaders, who has taught memoir writing and literature courses, says, “Greet your study group cheerily. Exude confidence in what you’re doing and how enthusiastic you are about the subject of the study group and your good luck in being able to lead it.” Kenneth Cracknell, who has taught culture of Islam, writes “I always think my first job is to make people feel at home and entirely welcome,” and he conducts most of the first hour of his first day with that job in mind. Barbara Butler, an anthropologist, says that setting the tone is her main goal on the first day: “I want it to be high energy, fun, surprising, interactive - kind of like a fun game.” Although it is important to set the right tone - i.e., your tone of choice - at the outset, you’ll want to maintain its momentum through the session. This doesn’t mean that you need to make jokes for two hours, but at some level everything you say should be in keeping. Another watchword is *consistent*.

**5. HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS:** You may want to begin your day by saying how much you’re looking forward to working with the folks at the table in this course and how much they’re going to enjoy working with the material, with you, and with one another - but you should soon turn to housekeeping matters to be sure you cover them and to get them out of the way. These typically include (a) name badges, (b) attendance, (c) class rep (you introduce her/him, he/she speaks), (d) policy for session cancellation (mainly bad weather in the winter), (e) phone tree/e-mail list for emergency/bad weather contacts, (f) texts required/recommended, (g) office staff identified, (h) snacks issues (whether, what, when, who), and (i) timing for beginning, breaking, and ending each session. For the most part these are straightforward propositions, and they should be treated that way. You should speak loudly enough to be heard by the slightly hard of hearing, and you should invite those who are more hard of hearing to take a seat in front. Your class rep can be helpful in this interval, following up on such matters as a telephone tree or a snack sign-up list. Watchwords for this phase: *thorough* and *efficient*.

**6. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS:** Different instructors have different views on purely autobiographical introductions in OSHER@Dartmouth courses. There may be some benefit in hearing the various voices around the table, but there is little benefit in taking twenty or thirty precious minutes to enable irrelevant personal ramblings. Trying for middle ground, one instructor might ask group members to say why they signed up for the course. Another might ask members to note previous acquaintance with the material. A third - especially in a literature course - might ask about favorite books and reading. Yet another might ask members to note one thing they might like those present to know about them. On the other hand, particularly if you have already gathered 100-word bios from your group members (modeled on one you have written yourself), this aspect of introductions can be dispensed with altogether. It's your call. It is, however, quite important to introduce yourself as a teacher of the material at issue in the course: your experience with it, your approach to studying it, your expectations of group members, what they can expect from you: How much reading will there be per week? How should they go about it? What will you be looking for from them at the course session to come? How will you operate in the course week by week? Will there be discussion? How will that work? What will you expect? This last matter is treated in other OSHER@Dartmouth orientation materials, but one option may be particularly productive on the first day: ask your study group members to say what, in their experience, makes good course discussion. It is likely that they will come up with a model similar to yours, and you will get instant group buy-in as well.

**7. THE FIRST DAY:** The question of a first course assignment is important, because the first day is also the first of your three or six or eight two-hour course sessions, and you won't want to spend all of your time together getting acquainted and eating snacks. It may be helpful to plan to spend no more than the first hour on introductory "first day" matters, moving into first consideration of the material after that. Indeed, if you are leading a cinema course or you are hosting a series of invited speakers, as Susan Cohen did in her course on Ghana, you may wish to feature the first of these on the first day, which will automatically limit your time for housekeeping/introductory matters per se.

This first day's course session deserves your special attention, for several reasons. It will be the group's first experience dealing with this material and, if you are a new leader, with you. It will also be your first experience

dealing with the material in the OSHER@Dartmouth setting, and your first experience dealing with OSHER@Dartmouth participants. It is natural to be a bit nervous, but this will pass. For one thing, OSHER@Dartmouth members are all adults with a lot of life experience behind them. They grew up in an era when teachers were automatically respected. They have signed up for your course because they are interested, and they will bring that interest to the table every week. They will try to do what you tell them to do and be responsive to you in the classroom. In turn it is important that you pay good attention to them - call them by name, look at them, listen to them, respond to what they have to say. At the same time, most of them will know very little about the subject matter; in that sense every OSHER@Dartmouth course you teach will be an introductory offering. In many cases, and beginning on the first day, you will have to teach them how to learn, how to deal with this material in a classroom setting. It won't be perfect. Some group members will catch on faster than others, and you may be better at teaching them in the next course you offer. But it will be good. In different, sometimes surprising and unusually rewarding ways, you will learn together.

There are many ways to begin a course. Mike Heaney opened his course on America's wars since Korea by assigning his students various role-play scenarios (e.g., *You are the President. What's the next action you will take with regard to Afghanistan?*) to get everyone into the mindset of war in our time. Jim Adler began his short story course by discussing a one-page handout on the short story and its study that would serve as the basis for the sessions to come. For her course on culture and language, Barbara Butler made a snappy PowerPoint presentation which set the context for her complex subject with style and verve. For his courses on U.S. foreign policy under President Obama, Sarwar Kashmiri spends time going over the course blog and other use of the Internet to come. For his literature courses Dennis Damon Moore likes to put the writers in context and, engaging the group members immediately, look closely at a strong poem or a rich prose paragraph. What you do, bearing in mind your personal style, your subject matter, and your course goals, is up to you. Enjoy.

### III. NOTES ON OSHER@Dartmouth DISCUSSION: A COMMENTARY AND A SAMPLER

The topics for OSHER@Dartmouth study groups almost always require that the Study Leader provide framing commentary, substantive informing remarks, and good-faith answers to questions raised by participants. This may be especially true in our more technically oriented courses. But as Study Leader CJ Smith succinctly put it, “OSHER@Dartmouth students, in general, like lots of course discussion.” While few participants have real expertise in the subject matter of the courses they take, their professional and/or experiential backgrounds and personal interests have often prepared them to offer their considered views. In addition, many of our Study Leaders themselves regularly encourage discussion to enliven the hour (or two hours) and enrich the educational experience for all concerned. Below are some pertinent comments about leading discussion, largely derived from a series of OSHER@Dartmouth reflections recently submitted by veteran Study Leaders.

#### **A. PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION, IN SEVERAL STAGES, IS CRUCIAL**

1. At the outset, the Study Leader prepares the course by choosing both a topic/theme and rich texts (images, artifacts, books, articles, stories, poems, films) to be considered and discussed.
2. The Study Leader prepares the study group participants by stating expectations, including rules for proceeding (raising hands to be called on, etc.), and assigning specific readings or exercises with associated questions or topics to be discussed. If the material to be considered is brief, you can expect that participants will have actually considered it. If it is more lengthy, you can prompt good discussion by asking participants, in and/or out of the course session, to focus on particularly relevant portions of the larger course assignment. For example, Dennis Damon Moore opened his Vintage Modern course by asking course members to talk about the opening paragraph of Hemingway’s “In Another Country”; and in her recent archaeology course, Jane Barlow asked her participants to make some historical/cultural inferences by examining a U.S. penny. The possibilities in this line are almost endless.
3. Frequently, an important piece of your participant preparation - and, later,

facilitation of discussion in the course session - is modeling the responsive process. While we can assume that our group members will put in the time to consider and understand the material week by week, we cannot assume that they will all know exactly what to look for in identifying the salient points or features of the text, nor that they will know how to sort and express their findings in the course setting. It is therefore often helpful for the Study Leader to provide a demonstration of appropriate analysis before asking the students to undertake it on their own; or, alternatively, in leading the first discussion, to annotate and expand initial responses in instructive ways, affirming participant engagement in each instance.

4. The Study Leader prepares for each course session by carefully reviewing the material shortly before the session, as a warm-up. The idea is to know the day's material like the back of your hand, at least for an hour or two. This will maximize your capacity to comment and respond quickly, appropriately, and helpfully in the discussion you will be leading.

## **B. FOR GOOD COURSE DISCUSSION, Study Leader FACILITATION IS KEY**

1. It is good to begin by setting a friendly tone and creating a safe and supportive atmosphere that encourages expression and interchange, perhaps using an ice-breaker based on the bios you have asked participants to provide.

2. Next, you can focus the moment by posing a question or identifying an issue, preferably one that has been forecast in preparatory materials, perhaps with divergent arguments to be considered, then going around the table, asking everyone to offer a response, however brief.

3. Alternatively, you can ask for opinions or comments, then call on those who raise their hands, trying to give everyone a chance to add a comment before returning to early speakers.

4. You can ask if anyone has a question about the material and let other participants respond, paying focused, attentive respect to both the material and the participants in the process, learning as you go.

5. You can pose/present a question, topic, image or paragraph and ask your participants to consider it for five or ten minutes in groups of two or three,

then let the various pairs/groups report their findings to all.

6. Since group patterns tend to be set early (e.g., by the second session, most of your participants will be sitting in the same seats week after week), to keep discussion lively it is often helpful to use a variety of techniques or approaches.

### **C. IN DISCUSSION, GOING DEEPER IS OFTEN DESIRABLE**

This may be achieved by actually discussing points made during the session, which may be done (variously) by:

1. Inviting participants to respond to opinions/comments made by one of their peers, as in, “You heard what Martin said about Othello. Is this actually the case?” or

2. Posing a second-level question prompted by a point earlier made, as in, “Ralph says that Othello is clueless. Yet he is introduced to us as a great general. How can this be?” or

3. Taking a student/participant remark further on the spot, as in, “That’s an interesting point, Dave, and it lines up perfectly with how we saw Othello react in scene one. Can anyone suggest how these reactions reveal a fundamental character pattern?” or

4. Extending/deepening the discussion by following up later on a statement made or a question raised, with the Study Leader and/or the participants pursuing the matter between course sessions, as in, “That reference to Aleppo may be fruitful, David. Explore it a bit more for us next time.”

### **D. DIFFERENT STUDY LEADERS PROMOTE AND FACILITATE DISCUSSION IN DIFFERENT WAYS**

In the series of OSHER@Dartmouth reflections submitted by some twenty experienced Study Leaders, the question of course discussion was often specifically raised and addressed. The points made above suggest that the house of discussion has many windows. The examples below, all from our OSHER@Dartmouth reflections, show just what might be behind the shades, curtains, blinds, or open sashes.

1. Michael Galbraith tries to select course topics/themes whose issues/questions have no single right answers, as in the case of his course entitled “DeTocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.” All of his courses emphasize discussion. He writes, “In the case of those who usually don’t volunteer, I often invite them to answer to a simple question or to offer a brief personal opinion on a course-related topic to get them involved.”
2. Jeanne Shafer, who leads study groups in the Hood Museum, emphasizes discussion of actual works of art in a context earlier defined/explained in her course.
3. In her OSHER@Dartmouth law courses, Judy Brown uses the Socratic method, i.e., she asks leading questions of individuals around the table. She writes: “I try to focus and control the discussion pretty tightly. I also make appropriate modifications to the approach for my law school courses, e.g., I deal with less technical and more policy-oriented material, offer more guidance through the legal language and rules, etc.” She also tries to take into account the fact that her OSHER@Dartmouth participants are adults. “My emphasis, however, both at OSHER@Dartmouth and in law school, is the same: developing critical thinking skills and demystifying the Supreme Court and the U.S. Constitution.”
4. In her anthropology course on food and eating, Barbara Butler asked participants, in rotation, to bring treats for the break - and to comment on them in the context of the course subject matter.
5. In his course “Famous Court-Martial Cases,” Hank Buermeyer organized an exercise in which group members, working from court transcripts, played the roles of various figures in a given case, prompting a different kind of in-class discussion.
6. In their OSHER@Dartmouth courses, Raymond and Josette Malley employ a number of techniques to elicit engaged discussion, including asking participant volunteers to make brief (10-12 min.) reports or dividing the members into several working groups to consider and report on case studies.
7. In her course entitled “The Future of Faith,” Sarah Reeves found good success in a new exercise: “The group as a whole read chapters of our one

major text, *The Future of Faith* by Harvard's Harvey Cox. In addition, each participant chose a different text from the syllabus for one session - there were two to four options for each session - for which he/she provided a review of their chosen text and described ways in which it reinforced, qualified, or opposed the view of our main text. This was a major contribution to discussion of the topic. In each case there were two or more voices, so we could truly focus on figuring out an issue. It meant a commitment on the part of the participant to prepare; and it encouraged all the other participants to be active listeners to their fellow traveler. Everyone was engaged."

8. Study Leaders who have taught writing courses, including Sylvia Field, Joe Medlicott, and Mame Willey, engage their students in course sessions by asking several participants each week to read aloud what they have written, and asking the other course members to respond with comments. Suggestions for revision are very much in order, though it is good to recall Henry James's three precepts for successful living: "Be kind. Be kind. Be kind." Other variants: ask the person sitting next to the writer to read that piece; or in a course in poetry reading and writing, ask participants to write a paragraph about an exemplary poem, then read it to the group.

9. Early and late, it is helpful to be thoughtful about your audience and how you might best proceed to engage them, being transparent about your goals and approaches throughout. And it is quite likely that you will grow and change as you gain more Study Leader experience. Apropos, we conclude this sampler with a comment from Roland Kuchel, an OSHER@Dartmouth participant and Study Leader for fifteen years: "I believe that my initial courses were well-organized and focused on good discussion material. However, looking back, I realize that my idea about OSHER@Dartmouth teaching at the time was to present a good lecture, with time for questions. As I went along, I certainly improved my approach. I still talk too much, but I do try to elicit the widest possible discussion through comments, questions, and differences of opinion and point of view. I have also learned to be a better teacher, understanding that some learn best with a structured approach, some by discussion, some by visuals such as art works and movies. I also know that the course goes well when participants are comfortable to talk or not, to feel that their views are respected, and to develop the wonderful rapport that so often develops in adult learning. Finally, I have come to realize that our students enjoy a bit of humor along the way."

## IV. TIMELINE TERM BY TERM

### Fall Timeline

- November - April: Recruitment
- May 1: Course Proposals due
- End of May: Appointment of buddy for new Study Leaders
- July: Catalog published
- End of July: Registration opens
- August 10: Reading packets due
- End of August: Orientation
- 3 - 4 weeks prior to class start date: Roster sent to Study Leader OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter & Google Drive link sent out
- End of September - Mid November: Fall Term
- Late November: Follow-Up Forms emailed to Study Leaders
- Early December: Debriefing meeting

### Winter Timeline

- May - July: Recruitment
- September 5: Course Proposals due
- End of October: Appointment of buddy for new Study Leaders
- October: Catalog published
- Early November: Registration opens
- December 10: Reading packets due
- Mid December: Orientation
- 3 - 4 weeks prior to class start date: Roster sent to Study Leader OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter & Google Drive link sent out
- Mid-January - Early March: Winter Term
- Mid-March: Follow-Up Forms emailed to Study Leaders
- Late March: Debriefing meeting

## **Spring Timeline**

- August - October: Recruitment
- November 1: Course Proposals due
- End of January: Appointment of buddy for new Study Leaders
- Mid January: Catalog published
- Early February: Registration opens
- February 10: Reading packets due
- Mid February: Orientation
- 3 - 4 weeks prior to class start date: Roster sent to Study Leader
- OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter & Google Drive link sent out
- End of March - Mid-May: Spring Term
- End of May: Follow-Up Forms emailed to Study Leaders
- Early June: Debriefing meeting

## **Summer Timeline**

- October - December: Recruitment
- February 1: Course Proposals due
- End of March: Appointment of buddy for new Study Leaders
- April: Catalog published
- Early May: Registration opens
- May 10: Reading packets due
- 3 - 4 weeks prior to class start date: Roster sent to Study Leader
- OSHER@Dartmouth welcome letter & Google Drive link sent out to participants
- June - August: Summer Term
- Mid-August: Follow-Up Forms emailed to Study Leaders
- Early September: Debriefing meeting

## V. THE OSHER@DARTMOUTH OFFICE

### STAFFING, LOCATION, AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The staff of OSHER@Dartmouth consists of a small team who endeavor to keep the program running as smoothly as possible year-round. They are:

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