

Kellogg Institute for International Studies

Guidelines for Work-in-Progress Seminars

Overview

Kellogg work-in-progress seminars offer an opportunity outside of our regular lecture series for faculty and visiting fellows to present their scholarly work. In contrast to lectures, the smaller, less formal, and more focused work-in-progress seminars are aimed at generating in-depth discussion that faculty have found enormously useful for their projects.

Seminars are limited to no more than 20 faculty and graduate students, all of whom have read the pre-circulated paper in advance, so that we can engage as many as possible in a fruitful dialogue. At the session, the presenter's introductory remarks -- often focusing on particular questions or issues on which feedback is sought -- are held to no more than 15 minutes, followed by brief comments by two designated discussants. Once the presenters have replied to the discussants' comments, the floor is open to other participants for a further discussion moderated by the director of the Kellogg Institute.

In addition to providing the author with valuable feedback, works-in-progress seminars are opportunities for professional development in which the author, discussants, and session participants interact to enhance understanding of the issues from a variety of disciplines, each offering a unique perspective that intersects on a much larger question.

For Authors/Presenters

Papers will be circulated to all registered participants one week in advance of the session. Papers should be provided to discussants as soon as available, ideally at least two weeks in advance.

Authors should expect that attendees have read the pre-circulated paper and limit their opening comments to a maximum of 15 minutes, focusing on the central research question and major conclusions, highlighting key issues most central to the further development of the paper, and posing questions for discussion and feedback. The goal of the opening presentation is to stimulate interest and initiate discussion. Authors should keep in mind that, in most cases, these seminars will involve participants from multiple but relevant disciplines.

Note Regarding Presentation Technology:

Many people use PowerPoint or similar applications to prepare and display presentations. We urge all authors to consider whether the use of technology will enhance or detract from the discussion given the limited timeframe for introductory remarks. If you do incorporate a visual presentation, we ask that you adapt the number of slides to fit within the 15-minute timeframe.

Kellogg will provide a projector and screen in the meeting room for work-in-progress seminars. Presenters typically bring their own laptops. If you do not have your own laptop and need one for the presentation, we ask that you kindly notify us of your needs a day in advance of the session.

Presenters using technology should plan to arrive at the meeting room at least 15 minutes in advance for set up and to ensure presentation is in working order.

For Discussants

Each discussant's comments should be no more than 10 minutes long. Discussants may briefly summarize the contributions of the paper, highlighting key ideas and insights and identifying themes for discussion, then move on to providing constructive and developmental inputs. This may include raising questions about assumptions, methods and interpretation of findings; critically analyzing what the author has done while emphasizing constructive criticism; advancing the ideas in the paper by relating them to the state of the science in the topic area or providing new perspectives to improve the paper; identifying areas that are especially interesting or that offer a unique contribution that may be underemphasized, as well as those that may undermine the paper's contributions; pointing out on-going debates, alternative theoretical perspectives, or other literature streams that may also be pertinent to the paper; and suggesting important directions for future work. *(Note to discussants from disciplines other than the author's: If you feel you do not have the appropriate expertise in specific areas, simply acknowledge this and discuss the paper as best you can from your own disciplinary perspective. You have been asked to discuss the paper because of your knowledge; draw on it in the ways you feel are most productive.)*

It can be especially helpful to provide the authors with written feedback. Authors appreciate receiving comments and critique that is presented in an organized and thoughtful manner. Given the limited time for comments during the session, we ask that you provide feedback on minor issues in writing, allowing more time during the session to discuss larger, provoking questions.

For Participants

We ask that those planning to attend the session register in advance by emailing kievents@nd.edu. Since active participation and constructive input are highly encouraged, we ask that all attendees please prepare in advance.

The moderator will make every attempt for all participants to share questions and comments. In the event that you are unable to provide your feedback during the session, please consider providing your comments in writing directly to the author, even simply a marked-up copy of the paper. The author will appreciate the time taken in preparation for the session as well as receiving feedback that may lead to continued dialogue beyond the session.