

BOLLI



Brandeis



Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at Brandeis

BOLLI
SGL HANDBOOK
2018-2019

Revised March, 2019
Curriculum Committee (CC) & Study Group Support Committee (SGSC)

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INTRODUCTION

The success of BOLLI rests on the combined efforts of you, our Study Group Leaders (SGLs), and the BOLLI members who enroll and participate in your courses. This Handbook is a guide to help SGLs attain and maximize the mutually satisfying experience that is the hallmark of a successful course. It also provides practical information ranging from dealing with emergencies to using audio-visual equipment in the classroom.

Peer teaching and learning present unique challenges. This Handbook gives examples of these along with recommendations for addressing them.

As an additional resource, the Study Group Support Committee (SGSC) selects a liaison for each course to offer the SGL(s) support and help, as needed. This liaison will contact the SGL at the start of each semester and will be available for consultation throughout the term.

Thank you for all your contributions to the BOLLI Program.

Mobility Memo

Classroom Assistants and SGLs are asked to locate and reserve suitable space for class members who use wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches. In most cases, this seating might best be either near the door or at/near the end of a table. Also, designate space for their mobility equipment so it will not block the aisles or doorway.

The goal: to enable these participants to enter and leave the room easily, with a minimum of delay, and to allow other class members space to pass them safely. This will enhance comfort and safety for everyone in the room.

The office will try to identify members who have mobility issues and, with their consent, notify SGLs and Classroom Assistants in advance.

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I. MECHANICS & LOGISTICS

A. Emergencies

Campus Police and Medical Emergency Personnel DIAL 6-3333; Non-emergency – 6-5000

If there is any kind of emergency during class, call for help. A red phone with a direct connection to Brandeis Police and Emergency Medical Services is located under the exit sign leading to the elevator and stairs. There is a black phone in each classroom; dial 6- 3333 to be connected to Police and EMTs. That emergency number is posted near the phone. If you're calling from a cell phone, dial (781) 736-3333. Always notify a staff member of all calls for emergency help. **DO NOT DIAL 911** as that will get to the Waltham Police; Brandeis can provide a quicker response and decide whether Waltham is needed.

Once notified, the On-Campus Emergency Team will show up within minutes. Meanwhile, Public Safety will have called for an ambulance. *It is BOLLI staff policy to call 6-3333 for any injury more serious than a paper cut as we cannot offer medical assistance.*

B. Brandeis Fire Drill Procedure

BOLLI students follow the safety policies of Brandeis University. When the alarm sounds, go toward the front door or emergency door at the rear of the Gathering Place. Exits and routes are posted in each classroom.

- Classroom Assistants and SGLs direct the exit from the classroom, and building captains will direct from there.
- Classes in the Green or Purple Rooms at the time of the drill exit by the main stairs and wait on the grass adjacent to 60 Turner Street.
- Classes in the Gold or Blue Rooms, exit by the door next to the podium in the Gathering Space and wait in the back parking lot.

Those who are unable to climb stairs during the drill should wait in the Gathering Place (near the appropriate exit for their classes) to be evacuated by trained personnel. Classroom Assistants are responsible for alerting emergency personnel that one or more individuals need their help to exit the building.

C. BOLLI Office Contact Information

For questions about registration, class lists, and general information, reserving a classroom, AV/technology, and/or lost personal items, please contact Lily Gardner at 781-736-2992 or lgardner@brandeis.edu.

D. Snow Day Cancellation and Make-Up Policy

BOLLI closes anytime Brandeis University campus is closed and may also decide to close 60 Turner Street out of weather-related safety concerns even if Brandeis University does not close its campus. An email from the BOLLI office will be sent by 7:30 a.m. at the very latest of the day in question. A closure message will be recorded on Lily's office phone at 781-736-2992 and left in an out-of-office message on Megan and Lily's email. It is the member's responsibility to check email before departing for 60 Turner Street. Safety is our paramount concern. For 10-week classes: If a class is missed due to BOLLI closing, the make-up date will automatically be the class day following the last scheduled class. Snow days are included in the publicized BOLLI class schedule. For 5-week classes: If a class is missed due to BOLLI closing, the make-up date will be scheduled by a BOLLI staff member in consultation with the SGL. Make-up classes cannot be scheduled during Lunch & Learn, religious or secular holidays, or in conflict with BOLLI events.

E. Library Facilities

Everyone with a BOLLI ID (“activated” by going to the circulation desk at the library) can borrow books. The library phone numbers are:

Goldfarb Library (Circulation)	781-736-4624
Gerstenzang Science Library (Circulation)	781-736-4728

Although SGLs can place copies of books on Library reserve, it is not realistic to expect BOLLI members to go to the Brandeis Library to use them.

The Library cannot order books for you from Inter-Library loan. Many local libraries can order them though; check with your library.

SGLs have access to library databases while preparing and leading their courses. Check with the office for the procedure. If you are preparing a course, your library registration can be extended through the summer.

The library has several scanners in the central area where you can scan a document and then email it to yourself. After scanning, check your email to be sure that it has arrived your Inbox. Use of the scanners is free.

Questions pertaining to borrowing books or putting them on reserve can be directed to the specific library staff or pursued on the library's website where BOLLI is included with BLC members: <http://lts.brandeis.edu/borrowing/privileges/index.html>).

F. Class Membership

The BOLLI office will email SGLs their initial Class Lists before the semester begins.

Either the SGL or the Classroom Assistant should compare the Attendance List for the first class with that initial Class List of enrolled members and, in the event of inconsistencies, contact the BOLLI office.

At the first class, the Classroom Assistant will circulate the initial Class List to class members for any corrections (e.g., of personal data), and return it to the box containing the hanging file folders for each class.

The BOLLI office will subsequently provide the SGL with an updated (and corrected) Class List to share with class members via email (or by post if a class member does not have email). For questions or assistance, contact the BOLLI office.

Remind the class to alert you, the SGL, of future absences.

The Classroom Assistant is responsible for tracking the weekly attendance and informing the SGL of any continued absences so you, the SGL, might contact these class member(s).

There is no auditing of classes—only those enrolled in a class may be there. A guest may sit in if the visit is arranged by the Membership Committee or the Director, but only if agreed to by the SGL.

G. Withdrawals from Class

Please notify the BOLLI Office if members withdraw from your class, and inform the staff of the reason, if known. Class members are required to notify the office of any changes in their class registration.

H. Classroom Assistants (CAs)

Classroom Assistants are assigned by the SGSC. If you have a particular need or request in terms of an assistant, please contact the committee chair who will make that accommodation for you rather than taking on that task yourself.

On the first day of class, the Classroom Assistant (CA) should identify him or herself to the SGL who should introduce him or her to the class. Together, the SGL and CA will determine the CA will perform. Routine CA tasks include:

Arriving on time to class. (If unable to attend, inform the SGL and when possible, find a replacement.)

Circulating the initial Class List at the first session and asking that class members make necessary additions and corrections

Checking for and distributing class material contained in the BOLLI hanging file at the welcome desk (and making sure old material is removed)

Completing the attendance sheet during each class and returning it to the hanging file; using that sheet as a guide when collecting/distributing material (e.g., for absent members); and informing the SGL if a class member has two or more consecutive absences

Helping to ensure that everyone exits the room in the event of an Emergency Evacuation; alerting emergency personnel to those unable to climb the stairs

Managing Interim Feedback: announcing, distributing, and collecting forms which go to the SGL

Signaling the SGL five minutes before the class is scheduled to end (if desired) and reminding class members to clear tables before leaving the room

Additional tasks may include:

Collecting money for reimbursement (e.g., copying, etc.)

Locating white-board markers or other supplies as needed

Passing out/collecting waiver forms in the event of a field trip

I. Classroom Set-Up

Four classrooms are used for study groups. There is a large common space—the “BOLLI Gathering Place”—where coffee and snacks are available and where members socialize, relax, and prepare for class. A warm, inviting, and convivial atmosphere is a BOLLI hallmark.

We suggest that classroom tables be set up in an elongated diamond arrangement to facilitate discussion and viewing of presentations. If you use a different arrangement, return the tables to that elongated diamond arrangement at the end of class.

Please be mindful that sound travels and may be heard in adjacent rooms.

J. Class Trips and Waiver Form

If you plan to take your class on a field trip, complete the necessary waiver form found on the last page of the Appendices. Your Classroom Assistant can manage the forms and is responsible for turning them in to the office.

K. SGL Audio/Visual Information

The following equipment is available for SGLs during the semester:

In each classroom:

- a laptop PC
- projector and cables for hooking up PC
- projector screen
- DVD player
- White board and appropriate markers
- Easel with paper
- Microphone system (built-in in Green and Purple rooms; portable in Gold and Blue rooms)

In the Gathering Place: same equipment as in each classroom plus hearing assists

Equipment available on request:

- Microphones (for SGL or to share among class members)
- Lapel or other ‘wearable’ microphone for SGL
- Additional laptops (several PCs and 1 Mac)
- Portable CD player
- Document camera (functions similar to overhead projector)
- Music keyboards
- Laser pointer
- Wireless presentation remote (advance power point slides remotely)
- 5 different adapter cables to hook Macs up to projector system.

SGLs with Mac laptops are encouraged to bring their own adapter cables AND to do a walk-through to ensure that the cables will work. Check with the office to ensure that BOLLI adapters work with your Mac.

Using Audio-Visual Equipment

If you plan to use Audio/Visual equipment of any kind in the classroom, whether BOLLI’s or your own, it is essential that you know how to use it and feel comfortable with it. Training sessions are offered by the BOLLI Office and the Technology Committee prior to each semester, a necessary part of achieving this level of self- sufficiency.

Mac users will need to disconnect the classroom PCs to hook up to their Macs and then reconnect the PC after class. You are expected to learn how to do this and be self-sufficient.

SGLs are encouraged to bring their presentations on flash drives and/or email them to themselves, to ensure access to them when needed (i.e. in case of download problems from YouTube or a website).

In addition, you can arrange with a class member to serve as your technical assistant. Do not rely on BOLLI staff except for unavoidable difficulties. Also, always have a Plan B to fall back on if the AV equipment were to fail.

At least one week before the term begins, let the office know what you plan to use with regard to technology during your course. This helps them with planning for equipment use and providing potential assistance.

IMPORTANT: do not place any beverages on tables near the laptops as keyboards are vulnerable to liquids.

See Appendix B for a Checklist for Technology Use in the Classroom.

II. STUDY GROUP LEADERS

A. Principles

BOLLI is committed to a collaborative peer-learning experience in which knowledge and experience are shared by both SGLs and class members. To that end, some guiding principles include:

Create an inclusive, stimulating environment wherein members can interact comfortably with one another and where they can feel empowered to think creatively.

Be flexible and open to different or contrary views, and to other perspectives. Be mindful, too, that some members may come to your course with a significant body of knowledge and experience.

Respect and validate members' efforts to contribute.

Deal with class members' concerns in a positive and constructive manner.

Be organized and informed.

B. Preparing your Syllabus and Welcome Letter

Each SGL is asked to send a Welcome Letter to class members after receipt of the class list. A syllabus should be included with this letter that includes information about reading materials, a week-by-week course layout, and any assignments to be completed by the first class. It's important for class members to have information in advance so they can locate needed books and prepare for the course.

If you will be teaching a 5-week course during the second half of the term, it is helpful to inform class members about books and reading lists at the beginning of the semester, noting that more information will be sent before the course actually begins.

The syllabus is an outline or general framework of material to be covered week-by-week. It should be carefully thought out and clear. The purpose of the syllabus is to enable members to prepare for class, and it is important to adhere to that general outline. If you expect to deviate from it, let the class know

See Appendix A for sample Welcome Letters.

C. Creating the Class Structure

At the start of your first class, introduce your Classroom Assistant who will make a few announcements (emergency procedure, snacks, etc.)

Review the course description in the catalog with the class to confirm that all members understand the expectations.

Explain your ground rules for managing class discussion (e.g., recognizing class members, giving everyone an opportunity, etc.). Remember that some class members prefer to be listeners and can be averse to being called upon.

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off during class except for emergency situations. Ask members to alert you to potential emergency calls.

Where appropriate to course objectives (and agreeable to class members), consider using a variety of approaches to learning such as team reports, forums, role-play, debates, etc. Your Study Group Support Committee Liaison can be helpful in this area.

Begin promptly; plan to have enough material to cover the entire period; and end each class on time.

D. Providing for Class Coverage

In the event of your absence, and as an alternative to rescheduling the class, consider asking a class member to lead the discussion in your place. In any event, notify the BOLLI office of your anticipated absence, at (781) 736-2175 (Megan) or (781) 736-2992 (Lily).

E. Facilitating Discussion

Make sure that everyone can hear. Where hearing issues arise, make necessary adjustments (e.g., speak toward a member at the far side of the room; re-think

seating arrangements, etc.). Be aware that AV equipment and lively discussion may be heard in adjacent classrooms.

Portable microphones and speakers are available from a staff member upon request.

To encourage discussion, it may be helpful to begin with a summary of what was covered the previous week. You might also choose to highlight the key points to be covered and consider putting these points on the board, on a slide, or in a handout.

Keep the discussion focused on the material to be covered during the class. This may necessitate redirecting class participants from time to time.

At the end of class, consider summarizing the discussion (or invite others to do so).

Soon after the end of class, you might consider sending discussion questions for the following week in order to maximize class members' participation.

See Appendix C for sample Guided Reading and Discussion Questions

F. Assigning Readings & Following Up

Ensure that reading assignments are reasonable in length, and remember to refer to them in class. If you are including material for background learning that will not be used in class, note that in the syllabus or inform class members each week, with reminders for the current assignment.

Make clear what the assignment is for each week. Distribute assignments a week in advance, sending them soon after one class ends to give class members adequate time for completing them.

If you use study questions, distribute them a week in advance to optimize class members' preparation and participation.

If members feel the text is too difficult or the amount of reading is excessive, address that problem early on. (Your Curriculum Committee and/or Study Group Support Committee Liaisons can help you with these issues.)

G. Guiding Presentations by Class Members

If you are planning to include presentations by individual class members in your course, topics should be provided in your Welcome Letter, by email prior to the first class, or at the initial class meeting. Dates for these presentations should be clear. Presentations are voluntary unless you have stated otherwise in your course description.

Be sure to set presentation time limits in advance and adhere to them. Schedule presentations for early in a class session in order to ensure that the class member can give it in its entirety without end-of-class time pressure.

Don't over-schedule presentations. One per session may be enough; two per class is plenty. Remember to allow time for Q&A and discussion if that is your intent.

Consider that participants might want to collaborate on a presentation.

When feasible, help to guide the presenter by pointing out relevant materials (texts, articles, websites, etc.)

Encourage interesting presentations. Conversational presentations from notes tend to be more effective than reading aloud from a book, article, PowerPoint, website or other prepared material.

Some SGLs find it helpful to ask presenters in advance how they are progressing on their presentations, and perhaps even view them beforehand. This can ensure that presenters are on task as well as within the time limit.

Be sure to integrate the presentation with materials the group has been studying.

At least one week in advance, ask presenters to check in with office staff regarding their use of technology and to do a "dry run" with the equipment.

See Appendix E for Suggestions for Classroom Presentations This form, if applicable, will be available in the hanging file for distribution to class members.

H. SGL Teaching Tips

Within any course, there may, of course, be occasional rough spots. Often, they arise in relation to class participation or discussion. To that end, the following suggestions may prove to be effective.

Establish your ground rules with regard to participation. You might choose to give everyone a chance to speak once before anyone speaks a second time. You might choose to ask participants to first raise a hand and be recognized by the SGL before speaking. Whatever process you choose to follow, make sure that class members know what is expected of them.

Provide enough time to allow class members to volunteer.

Be alert to how “air time” is shared in the group. When talkative members unfairly dominate the discussion, intervene by pointing out that “air time” is to be shared. Take note of “quiet” members who might like to contribute to the discussion but seem to be having difficulty “getting in” and call on them directly. Look for others to call on, or take charge of the discussion again.

Remind group members to address their comments to the group as a whole and not just to you. This can help to not only engage the group as a whole but also with hearing issues.

Some difficult situations can arise when members disagree. Point out that it is the fullest range of views you seek, not consensus. Such moments may best be handled through a private conversation with the member(s) involved. Try not to see such conflicts as personal matters.

Do not hesitate to call upon your SGSC Liaison for help.

I. Readings: Books, Copied Materials and Costs

At BOLLI, the guideline for the per course maximum cost of materials for each class member is \$45. This is not a fixed rule but a guideline. Check for availability and affordability of the books you would like to have class members purchase. (Please use the list price when estimating costs.)

Study Group Leaders are responsible for purchasing their own course materials, including books and videos. If you are considering teaching a course sponsored by a national organization (e.g. Foreign Policy Association or National Issues Forum), one-time assistance with the costs of an instructor’s kit is available. Please contact the BOLLI Director.

There are a variety of ways for the SGL to provide class information (e.g. syllabus, discussion questions) and materials (e.g. articles, documents, website links). We highly recommend building a Google Site. Note, however, that, if you want class

members to have hard copy with them in each session, a Google Site is not a great option. For more information and assistance, please contact Lily Gardner.

Email is useful but is also limited in terms of how much can be sent at any one time. Google documents housed on a Google Drive can be effective, but this does require that participants have Google accounts. Some choose to use eBoard (an online posting service whose \$40 per year cost is shared by class members). BOLLI staff provides tech training sessions prior to each term and can always be called upon for help. Your SGSC and CC liaisons can also assist you.

Be aware that some class members find it difficult to read long articles or small print on a computer screen and may have difficulty printing them out. Consider the option of a course packet for those individuals. If you are preparing such a packet, check the quantity needed with course members before printing. Some couples or friends may decide to share packets. Avoid color or fancy covers in order to minimize the cost and copy double-sided as much as possible.

Additional handouts can be valuable additions to classes, but they are not free. Photocopies of most materials for your classes need to be made outside of BOLLI as the copier in the Turner Street office is small and does not have the capacity to handle sets of materials. You can charge class members for the materials, up to \$45 for all materials for the semester. It's helpful to let them know in advance that there will be a fee to cover these items.

See Appendix F for Copyright Information

J. SGL Benefits

Study Group Leaders play a special leadership role in the BOLLI Community and often form strong and rewarding connections with each other. The majority of SGLs affiliate with the BOLLI community. The advantages of affiliation are indicated below. All SGLs, regardless of affiliation, enjoy regular invitations to BOLLI teaching workshops and collegial conversations. These gatherings offer the SGL opportunities to consult with one another about the distinctive challenges of the classroom and to connect with each other about the satisfactions of leading study groups. Many friendships and mutually supportive relationships form as a result.

SGL Membership Types and Discounts

Pricing reflects substantial discounts. Details and explanations follow the chart below.

SGL Membership Types	Cost
Special SGL Seasonal Membership (with BOLLI Lectures & Activities)	\$60
SGL Seasonal Membership (Teaching a 10-week course solo) <i>Eligible for study groups. Annual pricing also available.</i>	\$175
SGL Seasonal Membership (All SGLs not solo teaching a 10-week course) <i>Eligible for study group. Annual pricing also available.</i>	\$265

Some SGLs like to take study groups themselves, either concurrent with their own teaching or in the next term. These SGLs will want to affiliate at the \$175 or \$265 level, as reflected in the chart above. Annual pricing is also available – contact the office for details.

If you are leading a **ten-week course** by yourself, you are entitled to two (2) course lottery exemptions and a 50% membership fee reduction. With one or more co-leaders, you are *each* entitled to two (2) course lottery exemptions and a 25% membership fee reduction. If you are leading a **five-week course** by yourself or with one or more co-leaders, you are each entitled to one (1) course lottery exemption and a 25% membership fee reduction.

The membership fee reduction applies only to the semester in which your course is being taught.

SGL Lottery Exemptions

Course assignment lottery exemptions mean that SGLs are guaranteed spots in two courses of their choosing. Lottery exemptions for SGLs may be exercised in the same semester as they are teaching, or in the subsequent semester but may not be “banked” for longer than one semester. Both exemptions must be used in the same semester. Lottery exemptions will be considered as applying to the semester in which the SGL is teaching unless the SGL notifies Staff in writing at the time of registration for their teaching term.

If you would like to attend BOLLI programs but not enroll in study groups, we encourage you affiliate as a **Lecture & Activities** member, specially discounted for SGLs by 75%. For \$60, an SGL can enjoy a host of outstanding programs over a six-month period—faculty lecture series, lunchtime lectures, member

presentations, Special Interest Group meetings, and reduced cost for Spingold Theater tickets and other campus events. Note that the SGL Lecture & Activities membership allows access to BOLLI programs for the fall/winter or spring/summer terms.

If you would prefer to refrain from membership during your time as a BOLLI SGL, please speak with our Membership Coordinator, Lily Gardner at 781-736-2992 or lgardner@brandeis.edu. She will be happy to help you get properly oriented and ensure that we have your contact information in our database. Whenever you are in the building to lead your study group, you are our guest and are welcome to participate in the lunchtime presentation before or after your class meets.

K. Study Group Interim Feedback and Final Evaluation Forms

Honest feedback gives SGLs useful information about their courses and their teaching. To that end, please encourage class members to be candid on both the Interim Feedback and Final Evaluation Forms. Their honest feedback is critical to the ongoing conversation between SGLs and class members that ensures the success of BOLLI courses. As such, it is a vital element of participation in BOLLI. In addition to these BOLLI forms, SGLs may want to create their own evaluation forms in an effort to solicit even more specific information.

Early in the semester, your Study Group Support Committee Liaison will contact you about visiting your class (such visits are optional). At that time, you might wish to indicate that you'd like the Liaison to focus on a particular aspect of your course structure or operation for feedback. This visit is not to be construed as being evaluative in nature. Rather, it is intended to provide the SGL with an opportunity to discuss any concerns with the visiting SGSC Liaison after class or at another mutually convenient time.

1. Interim Feedback Form

The Interim Feedback form provides class members with the opportunity to give SGLs direct feedback early in the semester so that course adjustments can be made if necessary. Make sure that you, the SGL, explain the purpose of these forms to the class. Ask class members to fill them out, and explain that their comments will benefit both you and them. Give the group time to fill them out either at the

beginning or end of class. During the following class session, please take some time to acknowledge the class comments on the forms and explain any course adjustment that you plan to make.

For 10-week classes, forms will be distributed during the 3rd session. For 5-week classes, they will be distributed during the second session. They are to be turned in to you, the SGL.

See Appendix G for Interim Feedback Form

2. Final Evaluation Form

Final Evaluation forms are completed on-line. Evaluation forms will be emailed to all class members after the class in the next-to-last semester week and before the class in the final semester week. This applies to second-half 5-week courses as well as 10-week courses, and even to courses that extend past the semester because of make-up sessions.

Encourage class members to reflect upon the course as a whole before writing their evaluations. Consider asking them to review the course description as well. You might even choose to do so with them during the 9th week session.

Evaluations will be e-mailed to SGLs within a week after the course is completed. They are also kept on file in the BOLLI office.

After you receive them, your SGSC liaison will contact so that you may discuss the evaluations if you like.

Immediately after the semester ends, the evaluations are reviewed by the Coordinating Committee, consisting of two members each from the Study Group Support and Curriculum Committees.

See Appendix H for Final Evaluation Form

L. Study Group Support Committee (SGSC) Events

Pre-Semester SGL Gatherings: A few weeks before each semester begins, **new SGLs** are invited to attend an **orientation session**. The focus is on answering questions and helping this group to prepare for their courses. A week or so prior to the beginning of the term, the committee convenes a **gathering of all SGLs**. It

includes an opportunity for SGLs to meet each other and to explore a topic of interest in a **workshop** format.

Air and Share: An “Air and Share” session is offered mid-way through each semester. The purpose of this informal meeting is to bring together all SGLs, both experienced and new, who are teaching during that term. There is no formal agenda; rather, it is a time to share the full range of SGL issues and insights. Topics may include (but are not limited to) teaching strategies, class participation, class formats, member presentations, classroom management tactics, and so on. Give thought to issues you would like to have covered and questions you want to have addressed at “Air and Share.”

End of Semester Celebration: Each term ends with a luncheon and program for all SGLs who provided courses during the semester.

III. APPENDICES

These items may be copied.

- A. Welcome Letters (Samples)
- B. Technology in the BOLLI Classroom (Checklist)
- C. Discussion Guidelines and Questions
- D. Classroom Presentation Guidelines
- E. Copyright
- F. Interim Feedback & Final Evaluation Forms
- G. Class Trips (Release and Waiver of Liability Form)

Appendix A: Welcome Letters - Sample 1

Dear Fellow Myth Seekers:

Welcome to this new class at BOLLI! I am delighted to be able to share this ongoing study and search with you, and I very much hope you will enjoy this rich topic as much as I do.

Most of us are familiar with the Greeks and Romans, since they tend to be the most publicized myths. In *Comparative Myth*, however, we will spend more time on the roots of myth and how various cultures probably developed their own perspectives on life's fundamental questions. Multiple ideas exist around the topic since written records were not kept until later in our history. I am looking forward to lively class discussions. Polite dissent, of course, is always welcome on a subject so open to interpretation. All I ask is that you come with questions, ideas, and a mind open to serious consideration of the concepts we will examine.

The texts are listed in the catalogue. I am asking you to do some reading for the first class so that you will already be thinking about the nature of myth. I encourage you to take notes and, if you are inclined to keep a journal of your own reflections, this should prove to be very much to your advantage.

Your First Assignment (for the first class).

Read: Karen Armstrong, Chapter one, "What Is a Myth?"
Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, Chapter I, "Myth and the Modern World"

Consider: What questions do myths try to answer? What definition(s) of myth seem most meaningful to you? What is the truth of myth? Pick at least one point from Campbell that stood out for you and be ready to speak about it.

I will email future assignments and will also have a hard copy for you in class. I am available for any questions at (email address). I am an early to bed, early to rise type, but I do not mind receiving calls in the mornings or early afternoons at (telephone number).

I am looking forward to meeting all of you and sharing your important ideas.

All the best,
Alorie

Welcome Letters – Sample 2

In the musical *Cabaret*, the main characters sing, "Money makes the world go round, the world go round, the world go round." What do you think? Do you believe that it is true? And how might it relate to the concept of greed?

Welcome to our exploration of this timeless issue—greed!

Clearly, greed is an issue featured in countless plays, books, paintings, poetry, the news, etc. The spate of scams that have come to light in recent months whetted my appetite for this as a subject for a BOLLI course. Indeed, it has proved to be a virtual treasure hunt and a stimulating topic for conversation.

I welcome you to join me as we seek to learn more. Those of you who have taken courses with me before know that I am neither an expert on drama nor on the topic

chosen. However, I am a seeker of information who enjoys exploring ideas and sharing thoughts and insights with others.

Please read the material enclosed. We will go over this in the first class. Also, check your newspaper for an article relevant to greed. Cut it out and bring it to class. Think about your concept of greed. Finally, view the video *Wall Street*.

Printed versions of the 1905 *Voysey Inheritance* are costly and limited in number, but it is available on the internet. Go to Google Books and type in *Voysey Inheritance*. You can read the whole 1905 play on-line. It is a perfect example of a Ponzi scheme. David Mamet's adaptation (accessible for purchase on-line) is an American version of this British play. Please start now to access both. It is worth the effort to refer to them for comparison after reading both. We will discuss them in our 2nd and 3rd sessions.

Looking forward to our joint venture!

Elaine

Appendix B: Technology in the BOLLI Classroom – a Checklist

At BOLLI, technology includes classroom equipment: projection systems, computers, VHS/CD/DVD players, speakers, and microphones. Classroom PCs have PowerPoint and other applications. Music keyboards and other resources are also available. When planning for your course, the following questions may prove to be helpful.

General Presentation:

- Is the use of technology essential for this class session? Does it add value?
- Am I sufficiently prepared to run the equipment and handle simple problems by myself?

- Alternatively, have I signed up someone to help (a class member or other non-staff person)?
- Do I show or play only what's needed, no more and no less?
- Have I set up the selections to play or show in advance to avoid time-consuming set-up or searching during class?
- Have I kept the number of changes of equipment to a minimum in each class session?

PowerPoint:

- Have I limited the amount of written material on each slide?
- Have I ensured that slides do not repeat what I plan to say (ensuring that I do not read to the group)?
- Have I made the information readable from the back of the room?
- Have I minimized unnecessary features and effects?
- Have I done a dry run in the classroom to ensure compatibility of the equipment?

Class Member Presentation:

- Have I checked out the presentation at least one week before use to be sure that it will go smoothly? (e.g. PowerPoint file format, CD, DVD, etc.)

All Uses of Technology: Do I have a back-up plan if the equipment fails?

At least one week before the term begins, be sure to inform the office about the technology you plan to use in your course.

Appendix C: Discussion Questions and Reading Guides – Samples

The intent of discussion questions is to guide class members in their reading and to help them prepare for the each class session. Depending on the type of course and the SGL, they may range from open-ended to specific, from minimal to detailed. A particular SGL may call them “discussion questions” or “points to ponder,” or any number of other terms. Whatever they may be called, they share a similar purpose, so choose what works best for you and your class. Samples from several courses are provided here.

Women's Fate: The Cinderella Story Meets the Sexual Revolution

Eleanor Jaffe and Marjorie Roemer

We hope that you will come to each class with some notes on your own responses to the readings. What resonated with you? What offended you, shocked you, or annoyed you? Where do you identify and where do you dissent?

*

Science Fiction: Speculating about Society, the Future, and What It Means to be Human - Naomi Schmidt

Things to think about in Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke

How might the arrival of intelligent aliens affect believers in the major religions of the world? Would it destroy the “myths” of these religions, or might believers just restructure their world view so as to accommodate this new knowledge about the universe without giving up their long-held beliefs and myths?

During the Utopian age that the arrival of the Overlords ushers in, it appears that the world has become so perfect that it cannot be improved. Is it true that without discontent, without strife and struggle, artistry and creativity necessarily suffer?

*

The Future of the American Empire – Janel Starrett

Week 1: Ferguson, Introduction, pp. 1-29. What is an Empire?

1. Why does the author want Americans to admit they run an empire?
2. Who are today's empires? What, according to Ferguson brought down the empires of the 19th century (British, French)?
3. Ferguson states that America has failed to learn from history (p. 16). This will be a recurring theme. What had the British experienced in Iraq prior to WW II?
4. What is “Limited sovereignty?” Do you believe that it is legitimate? What does such a policy imply for the “imperial” power?

5. Ferguson comments that Europe has become “a kind of fortified retirement community.” What do you think? Note other comments that warrant our consideration.

Constructing Questions That Encourage Discussion

When planning, consider the types of questions you might pose with your group in order to bring out relevant and substantive discussion that moves your course forward. While there are countless types of questions to consider, here are some categories that may prove helpful.

Information Seeking Questions: These questions bring out the facts for the group to consider. They help to summarize material and provide definitions for the group. They are *who*, *what*, and *where* questions. (*How* questions would be focused on *how much* or *how many*?)

Analytical Questions: These questions involve drawing and supporting conclusions. They are *how* and *why* questions. (*What* questions would be focused on causes/results, relationships, similarities/differences, main arguments, evidence or proof, etc.)

Evaluative Questions: These questions involve examining values. *Good or bad? Correct or incorrect? Effective or ineffective? Relevant or irrelevant? Clear or unclear? Logical or illogical? Advantages or disadvantages?*

Hypothetical Questions: *What would happen if...? What would be different if this had happened?*

Questions of Significance: *What are the implications? How is this significant? What does it mean for us, moving forward?*

Another important category of questions includes those that serve the group process. These are “management” oriented questions that help the group to move smoothly through discussion.

Process-Centered Questions: These questions address some of the “snags” that often arise in group discussion.

- When an individual makes an unexpected or unusual sort of

comment, be sure to acknowledge his or her contribution. Responding with something like, “That’s an interesting point of view,” followed by “Could you briefly clarify how you came to it?” may help to ease potential tension in the group. Be sure, though, to moderate how much air time you give to it.

- When someone asks you a question for which you do not have the answer, be honest and say so. Follow up by asking if someone else in the group does know. Ask for a volunteer to look into it and bring back the answer for your next session.
- If the discussion strays too far off topic, you will need to intervene to bring the group back. “We seem to be getting off topic—let’s get back to…” or “I don’t quite see the connection to our topic—can someone else see how it relates?”
- When side conversations interfere, it is important to intervene. “Please, only one conversation at a time.” This is especially important given the hearing issues that many members experience.
- When the discussion becomes repetitive or it’s time to move on to another topic, indicate that “We seem to have covered that point pretty thoroughly. Let’s move on to…”
- Finally, when it’s nearly time to end the class, indicate that “It’s almost time for us to stop. Let’s summarize what we’ve discussed today.” And then, let the group know that, “Next week, we will…”

The Harkness Discussion Method

In a Harkness Discussion, the teacher or study group leader serves mostly as an observer who steps in if or when the group gets too far afield or off track. Essentially, this form of discussion is a “team effort” in which everyone is expected to contribute in such ways as:

- Organizing, leading
- Clarifying, summarizing
- Offering examples from the text or other sources
- Making connections with other texts, situations, or other discussions
- Providing an opinion
- Making a suggestion
- Reacting/responding to comments
- Analyzing text, comments, or even the discussion itself
- Filling in a gap
- Arguing a point
- Asking a question: for information, clarification, response, etc.

In a successful Harkness Discussion,

- Everyone participates, and does so more or less equally
- The pace, while lively, allows for clarity and thoughtfulness
- Focus is on one speaker and idea at a time
- An attempt is made to resolve questions/issues before moving on to new ones
- The loud do not dominate, and the quiet are encouraged
- Everyone feels heard and understood
- If the process is not working, the unhappy say so, and the group addresses it
- Participants avoid repetition by responding to each other and the points at hand
- Participants take risks and dig for new meanings
- Participants back up what they say with examples, quotes, etc.
- Everyone respects each other and “shares the air”

Harkness discussion is not for everyone, but it can be an exciting and meaningful alternative approach—especially when it comes to exploring literature or the impact/significance of historical events. Your SGSC Liaison can help if you want to explore it more fully.

Harkness Discussion Guidelines

Listen carefully.

Take turns speaking without raising hands. A raised hand is a signal that says, “I have something to say.” Too often, it is raised while someone else is speaking, which suggests that the hand-raiser is not only not fully listening but is also asking the group’s facilitator to split his or her attention between the speaker and the hand raiser.

Moderate participation. If you tend to be a somewhat dominant presence at the table, monitor your frequency of involvement. Don’t just jump in at every opportunity. If no one else in the group makes your point and it remains salient as the topic draws to a close, do indeed add it. Overall, it is important to pull your own weight—but not everybody else’s as well.

Don’t address everything to the instructor or study group leader. Make eye contact with the person whose point you are addressing. Look around the table to let people know that they are included, and use names to focus interaction.

Stick close to the text or topic at hand. If the group seems to be going astray, make an effort to pull it back in line by asking if the group feels it is moving too far afield.

Collaborate. Affirm comments made by others; encourage others to clarify or expand ideas that might be foggy.

Challenge or argue politely if you disagree—but don’t debate. Let a group member finish phrasing a comment or developing an idea before you jump in. Clarify your difference of opinion first. Debate is an oppositional activity and competitive in nature; each side tries to prove the other wrong. Discussion is collaborative, with multiple sides working toward shared understanding.

Be sure the group is content with the exploration of one topic before heading off into new territory. In moments of silence, determine whether the group is wrestling with an idea or is ready to pursue a new line of inquiry. Ask for summarizing, if we’ve taken the topic as far as we could, if we’re satisfied and ready to move on.

Listen carefully. (Can’t be said often enough!)

Appendix D: Suggestions for Classroom Presentations by Participants

Presentations by course participants provide another way to engage class members in the learning experience. As an SGL, you should feel free to share these guidelines with your presenters to help them prepare.

Guidelines to Assist Course Participants with Presentation Planning

Generate Content: Select a topic of interest to you. Be sure that you know how much time you will have for your presentation. Keep that allocated time in mind as you prepare and stick to it when you give your presentation.

Brainstorm and prepare a tentative outline for your presentation. Identify the kinds of information you need and develop a schedule to accomplish the work. Use a variety of sources when you prepare and remember that learners absorb and process information in different ways. Refer to 1) experts or authorities, 2) dates/statistics, and 3) examples in a balanced way. And include visual elements.

Organize Content: Review your material and organize your main ideas in an order that is logical, given the nature of your topic. Decide how you will begin and end your presentation. Try starting with a question, quotation, startling fact, statistic, or anecdote to draw the group into the topic. At the end, consider referring to your opening to bring your presentation “full circle.”

Delivering Content: Here are some decisions you should make before you finalize your presentation.

- If you decide to use technology, be sure that you let your SGL know. It would be wise to go over it with him or her at least a few days before your class. (Be prepared with a back-up plan if technology fails—perhaps a handout.)
- Think about questions. It would be wise to tell the group to hold their questions until the end of your presentation; if you take questions during your presentation, you may end up running out of time.
- Ask your SGL if post-presentation discussion will be possible. If so, construct a meaningful question for the group to consider. Presenting: Speak from notes or an outline rather than a “script” so that you do not read to the group. Conversational speaking tends to keep listeners more actively involved. Limit the language used on slides (and don’t read it to the group).

Appendix E: Copyrighted Material

You should be aware that material you copy for use by your class may be copyrighted. Improper usage of this copied material without permission is illegal.

However, "fair use" by an educational organization such BOLLI may be exempted and allowed if certain conditions are met. The factors by which to assess whether or not your materials come under "fair use" are whether they are:

1. for educational purposes and do not have an economic effect;
2. essentially factual, rather than creative in nature;
3. used *verbatim*, without being transformed;
4. a small portion of the total work from which they are extracted;
5. are properly attributed, including source and authorship.

If you are posting materials on a class internet bulletin board or website, restricting access by requiring a password helps to keep them as private as possible. Be sure to remove these materials from online sites when they are no longer needed.

If you wish to see Brandeis University's position on copyrights, go to:
<http://www.brandeis.edu/about/copyright.html>

Appendix F: BOLLI INTERIM GROUP FEEDBACK

This is not an evaluation. It is an Interim Group Feedback Form to help us make mid-course corrections!

Course Name _____ **SGL** _____

1. What is working well in the course?

2. What adjustments might be effective?

Signature (Optional) _____ **Date** _____

(Form is printed horizontally)

Appendix G: Final BOLLI Study Group Evaluation

This evaluation is filled out online after the course ends.

The continuing strength of the BOLLI program depends on the quality of its courses. We appreciate the hard work SGLs put into their courses and their willingness to volunteer. Your honest evaluations help maintain the standards which support BOLLI's excellence.

Course Name _____ SGL _____

1. What did you like about this study group? Consider commenting on the design of the course, the preparatory materials (e.g. readings, audio, video), the facilitation of discussion, or other elements of the experience.
2. Do you have any suggestions for improving this course?
3. How many class sessions did you miss?
4. What else would you like the SGL to know?

Name (Optional) _____ Date _____

Appendix H: Release and Waiver of Liability

By my signature below, I indicate my voluntary consent to participate in

_____ on _____,
(Event) (Date)

I hereby acknowledge and understand that neither Brandeis University nor the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis (BOLLI) assumes responsibility for my welfare, or for any injuries, claims, or losses arising from my participation in this event. On behalf of myself, and my executors, heirs, administrators or assigns, I hereby release and forever discharge Brandeis University, its Trustees, officers, employees, agents, or volunteers and BOLLI, its employees, agents, and volunteers, from any and all claims or causes of action arising from my participation in this event.

Each person attending this event must separately sign this Release and Waiver of Liability.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name Printed _____