CEP 301: THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY

**Fall 2019**

https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/

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Class Times: MW 8:30-10:20, Gould 110

Office Hours: MW 10:30-11:30 or by appointment

**Introduction**

This course is the “community class” in the CEP curriculum. We start with this course because community is at the heart of the major. In CEP, community is an object of study, a lived experience we intentionally foster and share, and a pedagogical approach that defines our unique form of learning. Our overarching goal this quarter is to simultaneously explore all three of these facets of community. Here’s how:

First, we will read and talk about community. This year, I have selected several texts and films that explore the idea of community in the American context. In particular, we’ll be looking at how community is represented and experienced through the stories of people from several different contexts. Our aim is to begin understanding the multiplicity of community experiences that make up the fabric of America. We’ll look for the differences that make community particularistic and meaningful to each of us, but also for the universal themes that we hold in common as human beings living with other human beings. Along the way we will also, necessarily, explore other ideas interrelated with and co-determined by community, including concepts of identity and self, place and context, belonging and excluding, the particularly American experience of race, and the evolution and change (or not) of these ideas over time and space.

Second, we will practice community by creating a community among ourselves. This will involve learning to listen to and respect one another, supporting one another in our mutual efforts to learn, and developing a sense of shared purpose and connection within CEP. Our goal is not to produce conformity or unanimity; rather it is to create a group of people who are able to harness their differences, as well as their similarities, in the shared project of learning, growing, and creating a better class and major.

Finally, third, we will draw on our class community to engage in a particular form of learning practice or pedagogy. We call this “the CEP process”, and at its core is the notion that we are all responsible for the classroom and the learning that takes place within it. That means we all share responsibility for guiding the discussions, preparing the daily learning objectives and activities, and defining and upholding the standards of participation, product, and performance for the class and for ourselves as individual learners. This style of learning may be quite different from what you are used to. It will require working together to master a set of practical skills— deliberating, active listening, collective decision making, facilitating, planning, assessing, etc. – and embracing a level of accountability to yourself and the class that is much higher than normal. Our approach to learning gives you an unusual degree of freedom to define the character of the class (and the major). But with freedom also comes responsibility. How well this class goes will ultimately be up to you and your commitment to ensuring that it is a success.

**A Warning and a Promise:**

My hope is that you will genuinely enjoy our readings and films. I have chosen books that are important texts in the American canon and also very good reads; the novels have all won awards for their writing. That said, some of what we will read and watch may trigger very strong emotions in you or your classmates. This is particularly true when we read about race and the experience of immigrants. My feeling is that we should not avoid this because to do so would be to turn away from important truths about community in America. However, as we confront these issues we should also remember that our relationships to them are likely to be different, and that to reach a deeper understanding of them we must share these differences and be willing to really *listen* to one another. Listening should always come before judgement.

If at any time you feel like you need to step away from the conversation or the classroom, you may do so. You should also feel free to talk to me about any concerns you have with the class, your peers, or myself. If you don’t want to speak with me directly, you can speak with Megan Herzog, or write me an email or an anonymous note. It is critically important to me and the University of Washington that you feel like you are in an environment that supports your learning, and it you don’t feel this way, you should let us know.

# Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

* Summarize and describe the primary story-lines, characters, and settings of each text and film.
* Identify, describe, and analyze central themes in each text and film, and critically compare and contrast them with one another.
* Analyze how these texts and films illuminate, answer, or challenge key concepts about the nature of community and other course themes.
* Show how these texts and films apply to and are referenced within contemporary society.
* Develop and articulate in speech and writing your own evidence-supported position regarding these texts as commentaries on community.

**Performance Objectives**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

* With a peer, develop an effective lesson plan and facilitate a class.
* Contribute to group deliberations by actively listening, describing, evaluating, synthesizing, applying, and questioning in a manner that advances group understanding.
* Demonstrate self-awareness and form constructive relationships with other members of the class.
* Critically assess your performance and identify strategies to improve.

# Student Responsibilities

In CEP, students have significant responsibilities and the success of the course depends largely on how well they are met. In this course, your first responsibility is to one another and to one another’s education. For this class to be successful, you must be an active participant in both teaching and learning in class. Each of you will participate by contributing to the discussion, listening, taking notes, and analyzing the material. Outside of class, you will participate by reading (or viewing) the material, carefully completing the assignments, and otherwise ensuring that you are well prepared for class. In short, the goal in this first quarter of CEP is to establish a strong ***culture of excellence****,* one that each of you holds yourself and your peers to, and one that will last throughout your two years in the major. I will work hard to ensure this process goes well by providing ongoing intellectual guidance and a course structure that allows you to discover and create new knowledge in a supportive class environment.

Students are also responsible for the following, more specific tasks:

1. Contribute to each day’s discussion and work; add related information from other courses, reading, and personal experience; and understand, reflect on, and form your own views on the issues studied.
2. Complete all assignments on time and ensure that your work meets a high standard. Unless otherwise excused, assignments must be turned in by the due date.
3. Help develop a CEP community of learners, and be responsible to and respectful of your peers.
4. Write a narrative evaluation of your performance in the course at the quarter’s end. This requirement is true for all students, whether they are taking the course for a numerical grade or P/NP.
5. In order to meet the above requirements you must of course attend and participate fully in every class. Attendance will be noted at all scheduled meeting times. Part of attending means ***arriving on time***. This means *at or before* 8:30, not *around* 8:30.
6. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, it is your responsibility to check in with your instructor and peers regarding missed material, announcements, or due dates. Absences will be excused for illness, family emergencies, religious holidays (of your religion), or other significant events outside of your control (eg, jury duty, UW required travel). Absences or lateness will not be excused for missed buses, ineffective alarm clocks, personal travel dates, employment schedules, slow printers, events or assignments associated with other classes, or any of the many other aspects of life that might interfere with CEP 301 class time.

# Instructor Responsibilities

I will play several key roles in the class and will work hard to:

1. Ensure an effective and safe learning context: My first job is to develop the learning context for the course. In this case that means outlining the structure of the course and putting in place the basic elements (calendar, readings, assignments). While you will largely shape the class discussion, I will also play an active role in making sure class sessions are productive by ensuring that you have what you need to understand and analyze the material, helping you when you get stuck or off track, and providing additional context or background to the discussions. Developing the learning context also means that I will do my best to ensure that the learning environment is a safe and respectful environment for everyone. As a community, the class should maintain these standards by regulating itself, but if you feel like these standards are not being met then I encourage you to speak to me so that I can find ways to resolve the problem.
2. Give timely feedback on course assignments and other course requirements: I will be responsible for grading your assignments and providing feedback. I will also be available to answer questions, provide advice and information, help plan your facilitations, and otherwise help you in your learning.
3. Assigning final credit for the course: I am responsible for assigning final course credit, either a standard numerical grade or Credit/No Credit, depending upon which section you signed up for. For standard-grade students, I will file a numerical grade with the registrar. For Credit/No Credit students, I will file either CR or NC with the registrar and complete a narrative transcript which will be kept in your CEP student file.

**A note on accommodations:**

It is university policy to provide accommodations for disabilities. If you would like to request accommodations for this class, please first contact the Disability Resources for Students unit at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/> . This office will assess your needs and send me a letter specifying the required accommodations. Unfortunately, I cannot provide accommodations without the letter.

It is also university policy and Washington State law to provide accommodations for religious holidays. Specifically, “Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). **Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using** the [Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).”

# Course Readings and Films

The books you will need are available at the University Bookstore on the Ave (4326 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105). The films will be available on the course canvas site (on the page “films”). Editions for the readings are as follows:

* *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville. Dover Thrift Edition (2017).
* *Barrio Boy*, Ernesto Galarza. 40th Anniversary Edition, University of Notre Dame Press (2011).
* *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears*, Dinaw Mengestu. Riverhead Books (February, 2008).
* *There There,* Tommy Orange. Vintage Books (2018).
* *Brooklyn,* (film) John Crowly, Director, Nick Hornby, writer. (2015)
* *Do the Right Thing*, (film) Spike Lee, Director (1989)

# Assessment

Your final grade in this course will be based on your performance on the following:

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| *Item* | *Percent* |
| Class Participation | 25 |
| Weekly Reading Assignments  | 30 |
| Discussion Facilitation | 15 |
| Final Essay | 30 |

(There are information sheets below that describe each element in more detail.)

**For those of you taking the course for a standard numerical grade:**

I will follow university guidelines, and that process will result in a numerical grade.

**For those of you taking the course Credit/No Credit:**

University guidelines state that for a course graded CR/NC the instructor must determine the minimum performance level that can earn a grade of credit. In this course, the minimum level is 75 percent. In other words, if you earn between 75-100 percent of the total points in the class, you will receive a grade of “credit.” If you earn less than 75 percent you will receive a grade of “no credit.”

# Academic honesty

The University takes the offenses of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, and so do we. Cheating is taking advantage of the work of others dishonestly. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit. If you are unsure what is OK or not OK, make sure to ask!

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| **C L A S S S C H E D U L E** |
| **Week 1** |
| WednesdaySeptember 25 | Topic: Introductions, the syllabus, getting ready for PlatoReadings: NoneAssignments: None |
| **Week 2** |
| MondaySeptember 30 | Topic: de Tocqueville – Theme: Introducing AmericaReadings: Part 1, Chs 1-4. Total 72 pages. Assignments: Reading Assignment #1 |
| WednesdayOctober 2 | Topic: de Tocqueville - Theme: On DemocracyReadings: Part 1, Chs 13 &14, pp 252-262; 293-295; 302-323. Total 34 pages. Assignments: Reading Assignment #2 |
| **Week 3** |
| MondayOctober 7 | Topic: de Tocqueville – Theme: On Individualism and AssociationsReadings: Part 2, Book 1 Chs 1 & 2 pp 1-13; Ch 8, pp 37-39; Chs 10-11, pp 47-62; Ch 16, pp 77-85; Book 2 Chs 1-7, pp 114-151. Total 78 pages. Assignment: Reading Assignment #3 |
| WednesdayOctober 9 | Topic: de Tocqueville – Theme: On race in America. WARNING: This may be upsettingReadings: Book 1, Ch 18, pp 424-490. Total 66 pages. Assignments: Reading Assignment #4 |
| **Week 4** |
| MondayOctober 14 | Topic: GalarzaReadings: Intro (15 pages); Part 1, pp 1-79 (79 pages). Total 94 pagesAssignments: Reading Assignment #5 |
| WednesdayOctober 16 | Topic: GalarzaReading: Part 2, pp 80-192. Total 112 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #6 |

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| **Week 5** |
| MondayOctober 21 | Topic: GalarzaReading: Part 3, pp 293-214 (21 pages); Part 4, pp 215-276 (63 pages). Total 84 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #7 |
| WednesdayOctober 23 | Topic: GalarzaReading: Part 5, pp 277-298. Total 21 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #8 |
| **Week 6** |
| MondayOctober 28 | Topic: MengestuReading: Chs 1-4, pp 1-64. Total 64 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #9 |
| WednesdayOctober 30 | Topic: MengestuReading: Chs 5-9, pp 64-130. Total 66 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #10 |
| **Week 7** |
| MondayNovember 4 | Topic: MengestuReading: Chs 10-13, 131-177. Total 46 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #11 |
| WednesdayNovember 6 | Topic: MengestuReading: Chs 14-16, pp 178-288. Total 50 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #12 |
| **Week 8** |
| MondayNovember 11 | NO CLASS, VETERANS DAY |
| WednesdayNovember 13 | Topic: Community and Self: Divided IdentitiesReading: Watch *Brooklyn*, Directed by John Crowley (2015)Assignments: Reading Assignment #13 |

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| **Week 9** |
| MondayNovember 18 | Topic: OrangeReading: Prologue, pp 3-11 (8 pages); Part 1, pp 15-78 (75 pages). Total 83 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #14 |
| WednesdayNovember 20 | Topic: OrangeReading: Part 2, pp 81-155. Total 74 pages.Assignments*:* Reading Assignment #15 |
| **Week 10** |
| MondayNovember 25 | Topic: OrangeReading: Part 3, pp 159-225. Total 66 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #16 |
| WednesdayNovember 27 | Topic: OrangeReading: Part 4, pp 229-290. Total 61 pages.Assignments: Reading Assignment #17 |
| **Week 11** |
| MondayDecember 2 | Topic: Race, Place, Identity in AmericaReading: Watch *Do the Right Thing*, Directed by Spike Lee, 1989Assignments: Reading Assignment #18 |
| WednesdayDecember 4 | Topic: Open Discussion: Where are we today?Reading: Class ChoiceAssignments: Reading Assignment #18 |
| **Exam Week** |
| **Tuesday,** December 10, 8:30-10:20 | Topic: Retrospective, Evaluations, Turn in ExamsReading: NoneAssignments: Final ExamNote: we do not have an exam during this period. We do, however, have a class, probably our most important class, in which we will try to make sense of the overall lessons we have learned about community. |

# Weekly Assignments

For each class discussion, you will complete an assignment that has at least one component and possibly two:

1. The *first component* is **required**. This is an opportunity for you to develop your critical understanding of the work we are examining, under our guidance. For this component you will answer a reading question (or questions) that I pose to you. These questions will be tailored to the specific reading or film we are examining that day. In answering this component, ***you should not write more than 200 words*** (roughly the length of this paragraph). The idea is for you to do a lot of thinking about the question, and then to include in your answer only the information that is *really necessary* to answer the question. I don't want you to dump every possible answer you can think of into your response, hoping one of them hits the mark. Instead, I want you to develop your ability to judge what is central and what is marginal to the question. Therefore, while I do not expect verbose responses, I *do* expect insightful and high-quality ones, ones that are the result of you thinking a lot about the question and formulating an incisive answer. The questions for this component are available on the course canvas site, on the “Assignments” and/or the “Syllabus” tab.
2. The *second component* is **optional**. Here I leave you alone to develop your thinking in whatever direction you find productive. You might ask questions you have about the material that you want to ask the group, or you might articulate aspects of the reading you found enlightening, inspiring, infuriating, confusing, or particularly useful for your own work. This would also be a good place to link the material to things that you see happening in the world around you. Really there is a great range of possible things you could write about here. This component depends on you, on the material, and on how those two things interact. The length of this component is also up to you, but try to keep your response within 300 words.

Collectively the weekly assignments are worth 30 percent of your grade. Each assignment will be scored on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest). Your score will be based entirely on the content of the first component.

These assignments should be *entirely your own work*. This is not a collaborative assignment. The collaboration will come during class discussions

These assignments **are due at the beginning of the class period** for which they are assigned. Unexcused late work will not be accepted for credit, though I am always happy to read and give feedback on late work to help you in your effort to understand the material, so don't hesitate to turn in an assignment even if it is after the deadline.

## **Format**

The weekly assignments must be ***typed*** and turned in on paper at the beginning of class on the day they are due so that you may refer to it during class. If you do both components, make sure to clearly label each. Make sure your ***name*** and the ***assignment number*** is on the page. You should fit it all onto ***one*** page. If you find yourself going over one page (because you are writing a long second component), please use the back side of the page to save paper. The due dates for the weekly assignments are listed in the class schedule and are also online.

# Participation

Participation makes up a significant portion of your course grade. As the syllabus says, each of you has a *responsibility* to others in the class to share your reactions, ideas and insights. The main way this happens is by participating in class discussions. Each of you has important questions and ideas to share that we can all learn from. I know this from experience. Even the shyest amongst us – sometimes ESPECIALLY the shyest – have experiences, insights, and questions to share that we can ALL benefit from.

You will be graded on participation class-by-class. Effective participation is not necessarily measured by amount. If you make a few thoughtful and genuine contributions to the class, contributions you really mean, you will receive a good score for that class. If you make many thoughtful and honest contributions to the class, you will receive a good score for that class. If you consistently share your ideas and questions and concerns in an honest effort to explore the material in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, you will receive a good grade for participation.

So, the strategy for participation is this: do not hesitate to share your thoughts. Do not think that they have to be fully formed and 100% defensible before you offer them. Do not think that they have to be brilliant or dazzling. Do not think that you can’t contribute until you’ve read the book that person in the corner just said they read in her Social Anthropology course. ESPECIALLY do not think you should remain quiet because you have different ideas about a topic than most others in the class (that’s when we need you most!). And do not think that you have to *know* before you speak. **Honest questions and true struggles within yourself are excellent ways to contribute,** especially when we are engaging with artistic works like we are this quarter.

Remember also that *listening* is as important as talking. Asking *genuine* questions (for which you have not already decided on an answer) is a good way to listen. If you ask a question that you do not already have an answer for, you will genuinely want to hear what your classmates have to say. The worst thing for discussion is a series of unrelated monologues. What we are shooting for are true *dialogues* in which you engage the comments and questions of others rather than following them with unrelated comments and questions. Be curious about and listen to what others have to say.

And lastly, *writing* is as important as talking and listening. It is important to take notes, to record your thoughts and the things that have been said in class. These notes will allow you to keep a record of your thoughts during discussion so you can refer to them in later discussions or when you work on the final exam at the end of the quarter. (For the final you will want to remember as much of our class discussions as possible.)

I understand that oral participation in class is a struggle for many people and I am very willing to explore any and all ways to help you participate. If you feel uncomfortable with speaking in class, you should come see or e-mail me so we can think of ways to make it more comfortable (I have many good strategies).

# Discussion Facilitation

## Summary

The idea of the discussion facilitators is to have a group of students for every discussion who serve as facilitators of the discussion. There will be student facilitators for most of the classes that involve discussions of readings. Each of you will facilitate discussion twice during the quarter. We will sign up for facilitation during the first week of the quarter.

## Specifics

Facilitators should begin each session by briefly letting everyone know (on the board and/or orally) what they have planned for that day’s discussion. Then, the discussion facilitators will get the class going on its exploration of the important ideas in the readings. Facilitators have some freedom to decide on the format of the class exploration. A few possibilities are sketched on the following page. *The facilitators' job is* ***not*** *to talk,* ***not*** *to stand in front of the class and lecture (though this may be appropriate at times),* ***not*** *to lead the group around by the nose.* Their job is to get *everyone else* to engage in an energetic exchange of ideas and opinions. Remember also that facilitators have everyone’s weekly assignments as a source to draw on.

In preparing their material, the facilitators should meet with me one week prior to the class they will be facilitating. Ideally, they should have some familiarity with the reading before the meeting, though they are not expected to have completed it. The facilitators should then complete the readings and meet with one another well in advance of the class to formulate the structure of the discussion they intend. They should complete a facilitation plan and submit it to the instructor AT LEAST 24 hours before the class they will be facilitating so I can provide feedback. Again, the idea is for the discussion facilitators to inspire everyone to explore the reading in insightful ways. This will take far more time than you expect (plan on at least 6hrs of prep time) so it is important to get started early. If you are facilitating Monday morning, you do NOT want to put this off until Sunday night!

## The Rest of You

The existence of the discussion facilitators is **in no way** an opportunity for the rest of the class to take it easy. The discussion facilitators *guide* the discussion; they should by no means do most of the talking. Their role is to help *you* engage in an insightful discussion. Thus, the rest of the class should digest the material as usual and come prepared to participate fully along the lines laid out by the facilitation group.

# Good Discussion Questions

Good discussion questions are “open-ended.” That is, they have a complex answer and/or a range of possible answers. They are usually not “closed-ended,” meaning that there is a single, discrete, right answer. Good discussion questions are also *genuine*. That means you have not already made up your mind what the answer is. For example if you ask, “Does de Tocqueville think there is equality in America?” and you really have not made up your mind if he does, your question is genuine. You are really *asking*. If, on the other hand, you ask, “de Tocqueville really doesn’t understand how much inequality there is in America, does he?!” you have made up your mind about de Tocqueville’s views and that you think they are wrong. In this case, you are really *telling*, not asking. Good discussion questions, *ask*, they don’t *tell*.

Good, genuine questions can be *descriptive*. These ask about what actually ishappening in the reading, or in the world. Examples: “Does de Tocqueville mean to say…?” or “How X’s sense of self change as he moves from his childhood village to Sacramento?” Good, genuine questions can also be *prescriptive*. Prescriptive questions ask what *should be* going on in the reading, or in the world. For example, a classic prescriptive question is, “Should a community enforce particular kinds of behavior, or should it let people decide for themselves how to behave?” Prescriptive questions open up the issue of values, of what people think the world *should* be like. You can ask either descriptive or prescriptive questions in your facilitation.

In formulating good discussion questions, you should try for the heart of the matter. That is, try to come up with questions that are central to the reading's main argument, rather than questions about something that is clearly tangential.

# Techniques for Planning a Discussion

These are just *some* possible structures. You should feel free to invent new ones as you like. Remember, though, the goal is to focus the class on a productive discussion of the readings. Don’t let a too-elaborate structure – with complicated activities, scripts, and props, etc. – interfere with your primary goal. **Identify your class goals first and then select a technique to help you reach them.**

**Whole group**—everyone engages in discussion together at one time. This is good because you can get a greater range of ideas and opinions with a larger group. Large groups are sometimes tricky to manage well though, so having a good set of stimulating questions is important so you can shape the discussion to move in insightful directions that you have thought out beforehand. Large-group can also be a more intimidating setting in which to speak.

**Small-group discussion**—the class is broken up into small groups to discuss. They can have the same topic to discuss, or they can have different topics. In **jigsaw**, the groups each discuss different aspects of a larger topic, and then they rejoin into a whole group to see how each group’s issues/conclusions fit together.

**Rotate -** each leader develops questions on a particular sub-topic of the day’s topic. The class is divided up into small groups so that there is the same number of small groups as there are discussion facilitators. Then, the facilitators move in shifts from group to group so that each leader has a chance to lead each group. That way, each group gets a chance to discuss each aspect of the day’s topic. At the end, you can bring the group back into whole-group to share insights.

**Structured debates**—two sides of a specific issue are pitted against each other, usually given roles to play, and their interaction is moderated by a moderator. [Note: these are more complicated than most people think and require work to be successful. Usually not recommended.]

**Four-square**—the facilitators set aside four corners labeled “agree,” “tend to agree,” “tend to disagree,” and “disagree.” They then make a statement, for example: “nationalism is a good thing.” Then each person in the class goes to the corner they decide best describes their reaction to the statement. The group in each corner discusses for a while why they agree or disagree with the statement. The class then can go back into large group to discuss the issue. At the end, the facilitators often ask if anyone would like to change corners. Those that do are asked to share why their position changed during the debate.

**Brainstorming**—the facilitators ask the class to come up with ideas about a given topic (say, “things you find appealing about life in the Circle” and “things you find unappealing about life in the Circle”). The product of that brainstorming (usually written on the board) can then serve as the basis for discussion, or it can be a way to sum up a discussion.

**Fishbowl**—here one small-group engages in discussion and the rest of the class observes their discussion. People then rotate into the fishbowl, usually by tapping someone else, until *everyone* has had a turn.

**Role-playing**—is a general technique that can be applied to any of the above methods. A person or group is given a role to play (rather than playing themselves), which gives them a certain point of view to argue from. This is particularly helpful when there is an issue you think most people (when playing themselves) will agree on; you can have people play roles that are in opposition to the common opinion (like defending Socrates’s desire for censorship).

Each of these can be used in combination, or alone. Of course this list is not exhaustive—there are other possible techniques.

Also, be aware that there are several books in Megan's office on facilitation techniques that students are welcome to review or borrow. See Megan for more details.