

## 7 An Etiquette Guide to... Lectures and Seminars

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The first in a series of etiquette guides for students of all years, on a number of University and Archaeological subjects.

Right, so a little guide on the etiquette of lectures and seminars in no particular order.

1) So it is a very interesting 2 hour lecture... no matter how desperate you are do not put your hand up to ask a question unless the lecturer actually *asks* if there are any *genuine* questions... (during the coming years you will work out the difference between polite and genuine).

2) It is not a good idea to stroll into a 2-hour lecture late and not even be embarrassed or discrete about it. If you insist on being late *at least wait until the break*.

3) We are all late to lectures, it happens. But when it does happen it is common protocol to take the first available seat (do not have the audacity to look for a decent seat at the back), look ashamed (look at the lecture slides and not the lecturer). Adopt the late-to-lecture “embarrassed panther” walk. Plus remember: everybody *WILL* be looking at you.

4) If you have been out the night before and have made the stoical decision to go your lecture (you will be rewarded with applause from your housemates), do not sit in the line of the lecture’s vision. You will get a personal lecture for two hours – you will not be able to shut your eyes, or yawn, BUT you will have to retain a fixed look of fascination on you face. However if you have found a good spot at the back, take this advice from a lecturer: ‘you at the back if you are going to fall asleep in one of my lectures, do not fall asleep wearing a white hat’. Avoid bright coloured clothing!

5) Lectures not only provide you with intellectual stimulation (to impress your parents with and justify the tax payers’ money), but will also provide you with a very strong immune system. Because it just takes one sneeze from one person and everyone has a cold. Coughers, if you insist on attending the lecture please *please* make the best effort to hold your cough. It is hard (we have all been there), but coughers get on everyone’s nerves – please sit this lecture out.

6) People who sit on the end seats in lectures – move up, seriously!

7) Seminars – the most intense hour of your life where three groups emerge: the mouthy lot who always have something to say; the some-timers who raise really good points but do not speak for another two weeks; and lastly the quiet lot who either just do not care or are painfully shy.

8) Seminars – *if you have not done the reading*:

- Do not panic! (Unless you are specifically picked out. Then you are probably screwed).
- Try not to make it too obvious you have no idea what the discussion is about, and act as if you were just about to interrupt somebody with a clever point. Fold your arms and nod, but not too much – just enough to suggest you understand what is going on.
- Hope the mature student has done the reading for the whole class.

- Pretend to write lots of notes, try not to make eye contact with the seminar leader it is harder than it sounds!
- When there is a deadly silence after a question is raised look around the class or at the window and hope somebody cracks and says something (*anything*) before the silence lingers there is only so much tension one can take.
- Do not ask the seminar leader to repeat the question because you do not understand; you will get caught out!
- Do not go to the toilet – too obvious!

– *if you have prepared for the seminar:*

- Do your duty for student-kind and speak when it gets awkward. Even better, speak *before* it gets awkward -no one will think you are a teacher's pet, your fellow students will be eternally grateful.
- Try and create an argument by disagreeing to points most people agree with – everybody loves a good shouting match. *But* make sure you can actually back it up, you will look stupid otherwise!
- Do not dominate.
- Do not show contempt for the seminar leader's research topic you will be on their hit list and the talk of the town.

9) Do not fall asleep in seminars! It is just a bad look. But if you do happen to fall asleep make sure you are not: a) in the seminar leaders' line of vision; b) sitting next to the seminar leader; or c) near one of the mouthy lot, you will get caught! Right in the middle will do, and push your seat out a little so that the person next to you blocks the lecturer's view of you.

10) If you are lucky you will have a mature student in your seminar. They will have read more than the seminar leaders and break every potential silence. If you have more than one mature student: LUCKY! You will probably be able to get away without doing any reading you will be set for the term.

## About The Post Hole

The Post Hole is a student run journal for all those interested in archaeology. It aims to promote discussion and the flow of ideas in the department of Archaeology for the University of York and the wider archaeological community. If you would like to get involved with the editorial process, writing articles or photography then please get in touch via email – (<mailto:editor@theposthole.org>).