

Guidelines for class participation:

Our classes are very short, considering all that we have to cover, but they are made more intense and meaningful when people in the class bring their experiences and their insights to bear on the material.

Excitement builds and people see why these ideas are meaningful when they and others discuss intensely why an idea might be good or bad, useful or not for today.

In bringing your own insight to the class, people who make comments should try to edit them sharply for what **other people** in the class might want to hear. Everyone should be conscious that we have only an hour and a half to cover a lot of important material, but at the same time someone from Africa might very much want to know if someone from Japan had the same or a different reaction to the reading. So too for the many different perspectives we all bring to this class.

The HKS is training leaders for a diverse and globalizing world. So we should all be learning in this class (and I count myself among the learners) how to communicate directly and clearly with others who may not be from our own backgrounds. This means speaking loudly enough for everyone in the class to hear, slowly enough for non-native-English speakers to understand every word, and concisely enough not to bore anyone. It's also good to try to make eye contact with different people in the back row as you speak. The skills of communication are among the most important skills we teach here.

For the same reason, when you speak it is best not to refer to readings that others have not had, or use terms that others may not be familiar with. There is enough in what we have read in the class itself to provoke a great deal of interesting discussion.

In the early classes, the material will often seem distant from today and sometimes hard to understand, so many comments in class may be ones of clarification, addressed to me. That's fine. Things that you don't understand probably others won't understand either. (But if you think that your question won't clarify things for others, just drop me an email. Then I can clarify at length and may learn from your question.) Even in these early classes, however, your *reactions* to the reading may be interesting to others. Are you particularly attracted to anything in the polity that Aristotle describes? Do you think he's really wrong or find yourself getting angry at him? If so, try mentioning it in class. Your reaction may well make the reading and the class itself more lively for others.

At the beginning of every class, I will distribute the reading responses, and will mark with a star the points you have made that I think it would be useful to share with the class. Sometimes I will circle the exact wording that you used. Try to use something like that wording when you speak in class, because in writing you have used your intelligence to boil down what you have to say into a few words of concise insight. If you stick to that concision, you will illuminate the reading for others in the class without boring them by going on at too great length. On the other hand, just reading what you have written is

also boring. So try to speak to the other people in the class, making eye contact with them, when you make your point.

If you do not usually speak in class, consider formulating a question or comment in writing before you make it, so that it will be easier for you. (I usually do this when I ask a question at a seminar or public lecture.) But try not to read it directly. Your ideas could be valuable to the rest of the class; that is why you are sharing them and they are the ones you should be reaching.

If you find that you are speaking once a class, consider whether that might be too much. If as a general rule you speak with more than four sentences at a time, consider whether that might be too much.

The overall point is that, except for questions of clarification, **your audience should be the rest of the class.** Your goal should be to interpret the reading for them or to interest them with your insight, your reactions, and experiences you may have had that bear on the issues raised by the reading. This class is usually fun for me and everyone in it – and the excitement comes in large part from the three-way interaction of the writers we are discussing (through their words on the screen), me, and you. Keeping things concise and directing your comments to everyone in the class will help make it even more enjoyable.