

The University Seminars
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Rapporteurs have remote access to The University Seminars Digital Archive...

The University Seminars Archive is a valuable compilation of intellectual history spanning nearly 75 years, consisting of seminar minutes, announcements, and related materials. In many cases, the only record The Office has for a seminar's activity is the accounting given by the rapporteur.

In academic year 1944-1945, five seminars began to meet on an ongoing basis; three of those original seminars remain active to this day. Since these WWII-era beginnings, scholars have founded over two hundred seminars, and the questions, concerns, and challenges of the intervening decades can be traced through the development of new seminars. Today 94 seminars meet, and The University Seminars continue to provide venues for open and unfettered intellectual exchange among peers, allowing attendees the freedom to try out ideas without the inherent limitations of a public discussion.

In 2003, then-Director Robert L. Belknap began the project of scanning the first fifty years of the pre-digital meeting minutes of the seminars. Under his supervision, over a half million pages were digitized. The original documents were organized, boxed, and entrusted to Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. In 2011, Summer Hart was hired to work with Robert Belknap and Robert Pollack to unify the various components of the archive.

On December 1st, 2015, The University Seminars Digital Archive was launched, opening up full-text searchable files to scholars on dedicated laptops in the RBML reading room on the 6th Floor of Butler Library. Researchers can browse, keyword search, and view the records of seminars. Boxes containing original materials, housed offsite, may also be requested.

Beginning in 2018, Summer Hart will provide access rights to rapporteurs. All seminar rapporteurs will have remote access to all seminar files from 1944-2012, with 40,625 items from 194 seminars. Additional files are incorporated on a yearly basis, keeping in-line with the Seminar's five-year privacy policy.

Robert Pollack and Summer Hart continue to collaborate with the library and the Copyright Advisory Office on ways to make the archive more accessible to the University Seminars community while addressing the privacy and intellectual property concerns inherent in such a collection.

The University Seminars' material is sorted into the following series:

- Series I: Minutes and Notes
- Series II: Related Papers
- Series III: Books Based on University Seminars
- Series IV: Digital Archive

For questions about remote access to the collection, contact: Summer Hart.

Announcements serve multiple purposes...

In addition to reaching out to membership, announcements of seminar meetings have other purposes. Each seminar has an individual page on The University Seminars departmental website, with a statement of purpose, contact information for the current chairs and rapporteurs, and a schedule of meetings. When The office receives an email announcement, John Jayo cross-checks and updates the meeting schedule on the website.

When the PDF announcement is uploaded on Dropbox, our office can then use it for reimbursement documentation, to form the framework for our Annual Directory of Seminars. PDF announcements are also a valuable component of our archive.

Announcement Format

Email

The subject line must include the full seminar name and number, name of speaker, and meeting date and time; the body of the email.

PDF

All announcements must be uploaded as PDF files to Dropbox, using the library naming convention.

Please see also the Announcement Template. Both versions must contain the following information:

- **Full Seminar Name and Number**
- **Meeting Date, Time, and Location**
- **Speaker's Name, Title, and Affiliation**
- **Title of the Presentation**
- **Abstract or Description of the Talk**
- **Meal Payment and Logistics:** Dinner at Faculty House is \$30 per person (checks only, addressed to "Columbia University" and listing the seminar name and number on the memo line).
- **Reply Request:** Specify the name and email address of the seminar's contact person (usually the rapporteur) for RSVPs due a week prior to the meeting.
- **Note Regarding Donations:** Inform members that donation checks can not be combined with dinner or parking costs; see "Gifts Accounts"[*] for more information.
- **Accessibility Statement:** *Columbia University encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. The University Seminars participants with disabilities who anticipate needing accommodations or who have questions about physical access may contact the Office of Disability Services at 212.854.2388 or disability@columbia.edu. Disability accommodations, including sign-language interpreters, are available on request. Requests for accommodations must be made two weeks in advance. On campus, seminar participants with disabilities should alert a Public Safety Officer if they need assistance accessing campus.*

To foster an open and unfettered intellectual exchange...

The University Seminars aim to foster an open and unfettered intellectual exchange among peers, allowing attendees the freedom to try out ideas without the inherent limitations of a public discussion. Members of the seminar therefore decide whether minutes of the meetings are “closed” or “open.”

If the minutes are “closed,” they are not to be posted online, emailed, or otherwise distributed for five years prior to their inclusion in The University Seminars Archive. Please note that even with a “closed” policy, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

If members choose an “open” policy, the seminar decides when and how to circulate minutes. The University Seminars Office will not; however, post minutes on The University Seminars departmental website, even with an “open” policy. Even with an “open” policy, seminars may not continue the conversation on a blog or other public forum outside of the meeting.

Rapporteurs circulate and collect the following required forms at every meeting:

- **Seminar Meeting Attendance and Privacy Policy Form:** The rapporteur or chair checks the box for either “closed” or “open.” This indicates the privacy policy of the seminar meeting and is done prior to circulating the form. All in attendance fill in their names, affiliations, and email addresses. Also referred to as “Attendance Form.”
- **Speaker Acknowledgement of Seminar Privacy Policy:** The rapporteur or chair completes the top portion of this form, and the speaker and chair both sign; a separate form is required for each speaker. Also referred to as “Speaker Form.”

Blank copies of these forms are made available for download from the Forms and Guidelines folder on Dropbox or The University Seminars Website. Printed copies are available in the vestibule of The University Seminars Office. Both completed forms must be brought to The University Seminars Office after every meeting, sliding them under the door if the office is closed.

75 years and counting...

Minutes of seminar meetings are maintained in archives in both The University Seminars Office and at Butler Library. Writing up the minutes from seminar meetings is an important part of a rapporteur's job, and the part that has the most longevity—75 years and counting! Minutes taken by rapporteurs are an integral part of the intellectual history of The University Seminars and Columbia University.

Since, each seminar operates as an independent entity, expectations for minutes will vary from seminar to seminar. The office, however, has certain requirements. **Please see also the Minutes Template.**

The University Seminars Office requires, at minimum, the following:

SUBMITTED AS PDF | USING LIBRARY NAMING CONVENTION

- **Full Seminar Name and Number**
- **Meeting Date and Location**
- **Name and Affiliation of Speaker(s):** It is important to use the speaker's full name, title, and affiliation(s) in both the minutes and email announcements. The central office refers to this information when preparing copy for the annual *Directory of Seminars, Speakers, & Topics*.
- **Title of Meeting Presentation:** This is the title of the presentation as it is to appear in the *Directory*; if there is a discrepancy between the title given in the meeting announcement and the title listed in the minutes, the directory will use the latter.
- **Name(s) of Presiding Chair(s)**
- **Name of Rapporteur**
- **Name and Affiliation of Attendees**
- **Summary of Presentation:** This is a narrative description of the speaker's presentation, not an outline. If the speaker has provided a paper with an abstract, the abstract may be used as the summary, but it should be clearly identified as the speaker's work.
- **Summary of Discussion:** The major work of the seminar takes place in the discussion period, making this the most important part of the minutes. The discussion need not be recorded verbatim, but the summary should clearly convey the specific issues addressed.
- **Copyright Language:** Please add the following to your minutes document footer: " ©[Current Year], The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York"

File names contain all the metadata for library cataloging...

The University Seminars uses Dropbox as a one-year repository for minutes, announcements, and related materials from seminar meetings. Only rapporteurs have access to their seminar's folder on Dropbox. After the academic year closes, files are moved to The University Seminars' server. After five years, materials are made available to scholars through The University Seminars Digital Archive. It is the responsibility of the rapporteur to upload a PDF version of the meeting announcement and minutes for every seminar meeting. Additional materials, such as a background or speaker's paper or presentation are uploaded only if the speaker checks "yes" on the Speaker Form.

File Naming Convention

Rapporteurs must submit all files following The University Seminars | RBML naming convention, which the library uses to catalog and incorporate files into the archive. Please review the naming convention carefully before submitting files, as they must be named correctly to be accepted. **The only approved file format is PDF.**

The file content must be noted in the file name, using the following codes:

The file naming format is:`[Seminar #].AY[academic year].[meeting date].[file content].pdf`

- a = announcements
- e = email
- h = handouts
- m = minutes
- sn = speaker's notes
- sp = speaker's papers

Example: Minutes for Seminar #123, meeting on January 4th, 2019, would be named:

123.AY20182019.0104.m.pdf

Folders for Submissions

On Dropbox, rapporteurs have access to a folder with their seminar's name and number. This folder will contain the following subfolders:

- **Meeting Documentation**
This is where minutes, announcements, and other materials from a seminar meeting go. All files must be submitted in PDF format, and named according to the naming convention.
- **Email List**
The office does not require an email list; however, we highly recommend rapporteurs upload an updated email list once a year as back up. The University Seminars does not maintain email lists for individual seminars otherwise.
- **Forms and Guidelines**
This folder contains rapporteur resources.