

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
1115 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

May 19, 2016

Dear SAA folks,

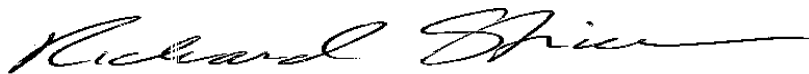
I have only one suggestion for seminar leaders, and it is based on my own experience this year. The Cavell seminar went well – lots of participation, including from the auditors toward the end – and mentions of all the papers. I did not assign specific commentators, a decision that has its pros and cons.

My piece of advice arises from something I did wrong. I had a very clear agenda for the discussion, one that would move from general considerations to more specific ones (treatments of particular play or moments in plays), and do so in a logical way. I sat with this agenda in front of me, and tried to use it to guide the discussion. But the discussion did not follow the beautiful logic of the agenda. This was because I did not announce the agenda, so that no one but me knew about it. If I had, the folks who wanted to speak about particulars could have relaxed, knowing that we would get there. As it was, these folks felt they had to dive in.

So my advice to seminar leaders is this: if you have a clear agenda that you are pretty sure will work and will produce a productive movement through topics, **PRESENT IT AT THE TIME TO THE GROUP.**

There is no guarantee, of course, that the agenda will be followed, but at least it will be known to everyone.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Strier".

Richard Strier
Frank L. Sulzberger Professor Emeritus
Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus