

Socratic Circle Final Exam

Socratic seminars (a.k.a. Socratic Circles) are formal discussions, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions, and participants are encouraged to engage in thoughtful reflection that collaboratively builds meaning. Reflecting Socrates' belief that the answers to all human questions and problems reside within us, Socrates was convinced that the surest way to discover those answers and attain reliable knowledge was through the practice of disciplined conversation. He called this method the dialectic. A Socratic Circle is not a debate, and the point is not to determine "right" or "wrong," rather, to thoughtfully share, listen, and develop meaningful dialogue.

The text we will discuss is Chadwick's *Women, Art, & Society*. Each student is asked to sign up to be an expert on a specific period studied this semester, and to know the text covering your period thoroughly.

Here's how the Socratic Circle will work:

- Students will be arranged in an inner circle and an outer circle, each composed of ten.
- The inner circle will be asked an open-ended question, and participants will develop understanding fluidly. Meanwhile, participants in the outer circle will observe and create new questions, which will be asked during the following round.
- After 10 minutes of discussion, participants will switch from inner to outer circle.
- Questioning, "piggy-back" responses, and communal problem-solving will be encouraged over rebuttals, persuasive rhetoric, and debate. Participants are encouraged to respectfully challenge, and to offer alternative views. Remember that Socrates loved playing "Devil's advocate" and feigning ignorance of a topic to delve deeply into a subject.