
ISI FORUMS BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR FACULTY

Thank you for signing up to organize an ISI Forum on your campus.

These seminars are intended to bring together students and teachers like you for deep learning experiences focused on key ideas and texts from the conservative canon, drawing from the larger Western tradition. ISI serves hundreds of undergraduate students and teachers at colleges across the country each year, and we help leverage conservative students who show leadership potential to positions of influence in key sectors ranging from the academy, technology, business, public service, and journalism. ISI's educational program cultivates these students and steeps them in the wisdom of history's great men and women. The ISI Forum you'll be holding might be the first step in one of these students' lifelong ISI journey.

This guide includes the step-by-step process and best practices for holding a successful ISI Forum on your campus.



INTERCOLLEGIATE
STUDIES INSTITUTE

COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

- The registration form will ask you to describe the topic and goals for the forum briefly. You can find suggestions on topics here: [The ISI Educational Approach](#).
- We suggest selecting a topic you feel comfortable framing for your students and guiding the discussion on. You should choose something that will be interesting to your students while also challenging them. You will need to include your selected topic, along with a short paragraph (2-4 sentences) summarizing the topic you choose and the name of the assigned reading, in the application.
- ISI will review your application and either accept it or decline it. ISI staff may also respond to you and “steer” the topic you proposed in a direction that would be consistent with this program’s mission and ISI’s values. The decision to decline or accept your application is at the discretion of ISI staff.
- If accepted, you will receive \$800 to use toward any relevant expenses related to the ISI Forum. You will receive the amount via a digital RAMP Visa debit card, to use online or in person, through Apple Pay or Google Pay. The funds should be used towards expenses like meals, books, and venue fees. More advice below on how to schedule the meals and the best way to use the RAMP card.
- Please select a venue for the event to take place. You will be asked to report it in the registration form. We suggest on-campus lecture halls or meeting rooms that can fit 16 people. You are also welcome to find an off-campus venue. Restaurants sometimes have rooms that you can rent, and you can use the \$800 in funding that ISI provides toward any room fees.
- You are responsible for selecting the reading and distributing it to students.
- The reading should be accessible to students and not extremely time-consuming. ISI serves students from all academic backgrounds, and we encourage you to try and recruit some students outside of the humanities, if possible. The reading can be challenging, but it should not be a selection that only advanced students of philosophy can understand. It should also not be so long that students can not find the time to read it in its entirety before the seminar. You are welcome to assign selections from longer books, essays, entire books (if they’re short enough), and even digital media. You can use your judgment to determine a reasonable length of reading depending on the time window between students getting the texts and the meeting date, but we recommend staying under 150 pages.
- You can either buy the books in one shipment and distribute them to students yourself, or you can ship them directly to students. The former option will save you a lot of time.

SELECT A DATE AND TIME FOR THE SEMINAR

The standard ISI Forum will ideally begin with a lunch and conclude with dinner, with programming taking place between these meals. These seminars are intended to bring together like-minded students eager to learn from these authors, you, and their peers in a friendly and engaging setting. We will also provide a sample email invite text that you can send to students. We find that beginning at around 11 am-12 pm with lunch either in the classroom or at a campus restaurant helps students settle in and get to know you and each other. After lunch, programming can begin with the start of Session 1. Each of the three sessions is 60 minutes long and should roughly follow this format, with 10-minute breaks in between sessions.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE:

Lunch	12-1
Session 1	1:15-2:15
Session 2	2:25- 3:25
Session 3	3: 3:35-4:25
Student Survey	4:25-4:35
Dinner	4:35-End

We realize dedicating this much time to an extracurricular activity is likely difficult on a weekday for you and your students, given the demands of the typical college class schedule. That's why we suggest holding this seminar on a Friday or Saturday when students have more flexibility.

However, if you are able to hold this successfully during a weekday, you are encouraged to. Of course, as you likely know, it's also recommended that you avoid holding the seminar too close to major breaks or finals. In some cases, you can truncate the timeline to accommodate availability.

MEALS

You are welcome to decide whether you'd like to order catering, such as sandwiches or burgers, or whether you'd like to meet students at a restaurant for either meal. What matters most here is ease and proximity to the seminar venue.

If you will be going to a restaurant with the student registrants, we recommend you call ahead of time and inquire about the restaurant's ability to accommodate large groups. Some restaurants have a spending minimum for groups that can be very steep, while others may simply not have room for a 15-person group.

While you're unlikely to encounter these kinds of issues on a college campus, it's always best to make a reservation ahead of time, especially if you are holding the seminar on a weekend during the Fall semester (when football games and other activities are making campus a busy place).

RECRUIT STUDENTS TO THE SEMINAR AND DISTRIBUTE BOOKS

You should aim to recruit 15 students to the seminar.

You are encouraged to promote the seminar to students in a class you teach, or through other on-campus organizations you may participate in. You could even post flyers around campus if you'd like to see if any students in the wider campus community are interested in participating. What matters most is that these are undergraduate students and that you set a deadline for registering.

Begin distributing the books ASAP. You want to give students as much time as you can to read the texts carefully and in their entirety. We suggest giving students at least 2 weeks to read the texts, which means beginning to recruit at least 3 weeks ahead of the seminar date.

PREPARE FOR SEMINAR

Try to budget in time for yourself to review the readings. We suggest preparing opening remarks to help frame the discussion.

EXECUTE THE SEMINAR!

Do not forget that students must complete the student survey during the ISI Forum. A link will to the survey will be provided for you to share with students. In the above sample schedule, you can see that there is a time slot budgeted in to allow students the time to complete this.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT

As part of your After-Action Report, you will be asked to note in the form any students who were outstanding or made particularly impressive contributions to the discussion. We are asking that you identify at least two students.

Please make note of these students throughout the seminar so that you don't forget. These students will be contacted by ISI and invited to exclusive upper-level seminars and other opportunities, so you will be doing them a great favor by making note of their participation!

These seminars are ISI's way of putting our network of teachers in touch with students who aren't yet familiar with what we do. The education you're providing these students at this seminar may very well be the highlight or turning point of their time in college, and we'd like to get talented conservative students involved in our special network to continue giving them deep learning experiences like this one.

You will also receive a \$400 honorarium upon successful submission of the After-Action Report

**You have successfully completed an ISI Forum.
Congratulations and thank you for your time!**

You must complete the After-Action report to receive your \$400 honorarium.