

Plan for the seminar of “Portrait of Siriaco” by the artist da Rocha

Pre-seminar

The seminar rules are presented by the facilitator: Shared inquiry through thoughtful dialogue, listen, many possible answers, be prepared to reconsider and maybe change your opinion.

Group goal:

The group will together decide a goal for the group’s interaction: to talk to each other (instead of the facilitator), to challenge each other intellectually by finding contradictions or by questioning each other, etc.

Personal goal:

Every participant sets a personal goal for his/her behaviour during the seminar. If you, for example, normally are very quiet, you might set a goal to say 2-3 things by your own account during the seminar. If you, on the other hand, normally is talkative you might try to put 2-3 questions to another participant. If you tend to interrupt, you might want to try and listen until the talker has finished etc.

Observers’ tasks:

If there are many participants, the group might be divided in seminar participants and observers. These potential observers are given different tasks: observe how the participants manage to keep to the seminar rules and their set group goal, observe how the group manages to advance the intellectual process, observe how the facilitator works, etc. They will observe quietly during the seminar.

Socratic seminar

Opening question:

If you looked like Siriaco, would you let anyone depict you? Motivate your answer.

Textual analysis/core questions:

What can we know about the Siriaco from looking at the picture?

How does he feel?

What kind of person is he?

Where does he stand?

Was he painted when standing in the landscape or has the artist added it?

What sort of a landscape is it? From where? Does Siriaco belong there?

The dead branch – why has the artist painted it?

Why was the painting painted, do you think?

Potential Socratic/evaluative questions:

Under what circumstances would it be right to expose someone’s flaws?

Why is man so interested in the different?

Post-seminar

Evaluation:

The personal goals are evaluated by each individual (someone might share his/her evaluation). The group goal is evaluated by the group. Potential observers are given the opportunity to share their observations and reflections.