Dear Study Group Coordinator:

Thank you for your willingness to provide a service that is vital to ICLRU. We trust you will find your role a most interesting and rewarding experience. ICLRU is truly our organization; it is run totally by volunteers and could not survive without the efforts of study group coordinators like you.

We deeply appreciate the time and effort you are giving to provide the membership with an exciting learning opportunity. We hope you will find this handbook to be a useful reference document.

The ICLRU Program Development Committee

Institute for Continued Learning at Roosevelt University
ICLRU Center, Room 705
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SOME BASICS ABOUT ICLRU STUDY GROUPS
An ICLRU study group is a series of classroom sessions on a focused topic. Sessions of a particular study group are held one time per week. Each session is typically two hours long, with a 10-minute break included in the two hours. A study group is led by a “coordinator,” sometimes assisted by one or more “co-coordinators.”

How study group sessions are conducted. This will vary depending on the subject matter and the coordinator’s preferences. There is no one prescribed approach. Methods may include presentations by coordinators, guests or study group participants. These often involve lectures, PowerPoint computer presentations, commercially-produced video lectures and other pre-recorded materials. Other methods include focused discussions among participants and, in craft-related sessions, instruction and practice in a craft project. A coordinator may ask for a bit of “homework” to prepare for a session in advance.

Study group schedules. Our study group program is comprised of four schedules across the year:
- Winter: a five-week term beginning typically in the second full week of January;
- Spring: a nine-week term running from mid-March through mid-May;
- Summer: a five-week term from late June through early August;
- Fall: a nine-week term mid-September through mid-November.

In advance of each term, a brochure is issued with descriptions of all the study groups being offered, along with coordinators’ names and scheduled times. During a subsequent registration period, ICLRU members may register for the study groups of interest to them.

ICLRU COMMUNICATIONS
Most of our members have access to email and to our website, and for efficiency these are our general means of communication. However, we also mail key documents to those without internet access. In addition, we maintain a bulletin board outside room 705. We use the board, and sometimes a display easel in a hallway across from room 616, to post current notices. Questions and issues can be addressed—in person, by phone or by email—to the ICLRU Center in room 705. The Center also is where we store equipment and supplies needed by coordinators (see notes below about equipment).

THE ROLE OF THE STUDY GROUP COORDINATOR
The function of a study group coordinator is to plan and implement an interesting and informative learning experience on a topic of the coordinator’s choice. As coordinator, you may wish to share your responsibilities with one or more co-coordinators who have an interest in your topic. If so, you as the lead coordinator will manage the assignment of activities. We encourage you to invite your attendees to actively participate in the class. You may invite participants to make brief “mini” presentations (sometimes called “peer” presentations) as part of your study group. If so, you will be responsible for supervising them regarding content, focus, materials and time allotted and used (see the note below on soliciting and managing mini-presentations).
GETTING STARTED

**Plan the study group content:** Your first task as a coordinator is to define your topic. Develop a clear statement describing your study group, worded as you would like it to appear in the brochure. Generally, the scope of a topic is fitted to the length of the study group term. However, if your topic is extensive, you may want to consider continuation in one or more successive terms.

**Complete the standard ICLRU study group proposal form:** The form is available on the ICLRU website and in the ICLRU Center. A copy is appended to this handbook. The completed proposal form is required by an announced date well in advance of the study group term. The form asks for your description of your topic, your preferred day/time slots, and other information needed to develop the schedule and the brochure for the term. We encourage you to use the online proposal form if possible because it facilitates brochure development.

**Organize your topic:** Develop an appropriate schedule of sub-topics for your sequence of sessions. Creating a week-by-week content outline or syllabus will help you maintain a logical order and will help you keep control of time throughout your sessions. In your planning, allow time for questions and discussion.

**Determine your equipment needs:** The standard proposal form asks about what, if any, audio/visual media you plan to use, e.g., DVDs, VHS tapes, audio CDs, computer presentations and overhead transparencies. Based on your requirements, the Center manager will request a classroom for you. It is your responsibility to make sure the Center manager knows in advance what equipment you will need. (Ordinarily, this information will be drawn from your proposal form. If your needs change, you must advise the Center manager.)

**Note about equipment in rooms:** A number of “smart” classrooms are available for use by ICLRU. These rooms have built-in units that incorporate VCR/DVD players, ceiling-mounted projectors and usually a PC. If you have a laptop computer, you can hook it up to the smart room system instead of ordering a COW. (Note: If you use a Mac laptop, you should provide your own adapter to connect to the room’s standard 15-pin VGA cable for video projection. We do have a couple of “loaner” adapters for Mac’s in the Center). Use of a smart room generally makes it unnecessary to get equipment from the Center.

**Equipment in the Center:** Equipment owned by ICLRU and available to coordinators in the Center includes carts with audio and video players, projectors and on some, laptop computers. (We refer to such a cart with the acronym “COW,” for “Computer On Wheels.”) The Center also has an overhead projector for transparencies and a microphone/speaker system.

**Reserve Center equipment:** If you will need any of the equipment held in the Center, be sure the Center manager knows in advance what you will need and when. You will be responsible for arranging to get the equipment from the Center to your classroom for each session and to return it to the Center immediately after. You may move the
equipment yourself or request help from the Center manager or one of your participants. Please be aware that our organization owns the equipment in the Center, and any damage or loss will result in a cost to ICLRU for repair or replacement. **If you are the last person to leave the Center, be sure the door is securely closed and locked.**

**Know how to use equipment:** If you need assistance in learning how to use any equipment, contact the ICLRU Center about training. Also, you may have study group attendees who can help you during sessions. You can ask for such volunteers before or during your first session.

**Determine any photocopying needs:** As coordinator you are responsible for making copies of materials and handouts. Check in at the ICLRU Center to pick up a duplicating machine key to use in the copy room (room 107). To enter that room, you will need the door key code—available from the Center manager. Once you have completed your copying, return the key to the Center.

**Special note regarding handout copies:** You and other presenters should provide handout copies of material only on a need basis, as the University charges ICLRU by the page for photocopying. Typically valid handouts include a syllabus or outline listing session topics, a list of topic ideas to consider for peer presentations and any documents that members will need for reference to better comprehend presentations.

**Attend the coordinator orientation meeting:** An orientation meeting for coordinators will be held preceding the first week of sessions. At this meeting, you will be given a roster with the phone numbers and email addresses of your registrants. It also will list any members on a wait list if your study group is overbooked. You will also be given an Attendance Sheet for your attendees to check in every week. The meeting will cover any updates about facilities, equipment or schedules, and it will provide an opportunity for you to ask questions.

**CONDUCTING YOUR SESSIONS**

**At your first session:** Introduce yourself (and any co-coordinators) to the study group, and give a short overview of your content. Announce your mid-class break time and length. Remind everyone to turn off or silence cell phones.

**SAFETY—IMPORTANT!** Know the emergency exit plan for your room, and inform your attendees about it at your first session. If you have a disabled/wheelchair member, ask for a volunteer to help that person if necessary. Advise everyone to be careful when walking in the aisles: don't trip over chair legs—it has happened! (Repeat/confirm safety procedures at the second session.)

**In the event of a fire or other building emergency:** Most ICLRU study groups are held in the 600-700# rooms, fairly near the Center. In many cases, evacuation would be out door #12. Alternates would be door #10 (which is an exit only, locked from the outside) or emergency exit #13. **Refer to the attached building map.** In the event of a fire or other building emergency, the building fire alarm will sound; everyone should exit immediately, stand away from the exit door and await an all-clear instruction to re-enter the building.
During an evacuation: NEVER go to an inside courtyard. Go outdoors. Stay together as a group; this will facilitate a head count to make sure everyone is out. You, or an able-bodied study group attendee that you designate, should ensure that everyone leaves the room safely and proceeds to the appropriate exit. Take the attendance list with you and check attendance outside the building (see “Attendance” below).

In the event of a tornado warning: The familiar outdoor siren will sound, and everyone should proceed to an interior hallway, washroom or other room without windows, and await an all-clear siren.

At your first session—continued: Identify and welcome new ICLRU members. For their benefit in particular, point out locations of washrooms, note cafeteria days, hours and location as well as vending machine locations, and encourage members to check the ICLRU bulletin board.

Name cards: Encourage participants to use tent cards with their names, placing them on the table in front of them. Many in the group may already have a card. Before your first session, you may pick up a supply of card blanks in the ICLRU Center, along with markers. Contact the Center about creating printed cards. Use of tent cards will help you and all members get better acquainted.

Read the weekly coordinator announcements: A list of announcements will be sent to coordinators by email before the beginning of each week. (Paper copies will be available in the Center.) Reading the announcements is an important service to your attendees: it helps keep them up-to-date on our activities and news. (Please read the week’s announcements at every session.)

Establish discussion “ground rules:” Encourage members to:
- Speak clearly and freely
- Raise questions and offer comments
- Stick to the topic or issue under discussion
- Express their own points of view
- Listen to the ideas and opinions of others
- Refrain from monopolizing or dominating the discussion
- Avoid private or side discussions while someone else is speaking.

Hearing problems: Invite anyone who has a particular hearing limitation to sit near the front of the room.

Attendance: It is helpful to keep attendance in order to know the number of copies you or another presenter may need. On the portrait-format Attendance Sheet, create a column heading for each of your session dates in the open space. You may place the roster on a front table for attendees to put checks by their names as they enter. Encourage late attendees to sign in during your break. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the attendance list may be useful in determining that all attendees have reached safety. Please collect the list as soon as completed and put it where you could pick it up readily during an evacuation. (See SAFETY section above.)
**Wait list:** Often the number registered is greater than those who attend. If your registration roster included members on a wait list, look over your room during the first couple of session to see if there are vacant seats that could be occupied by wait-listed members. If so, contact an appropriate number of them and invite them to attend the remaining sessions. **KEEP IN MIND, YOU SHOULD NOT EXCEED ROOM CAPACITY BY MORE THAN A FEW SEATS.**

**STUDY GROUP EVALUATIONS**

Over years of experience, ICLRU has developed a set of questions to elicit attendees’ evaluations of study groups. The questions are shown on the last page of this handbook. Evaluations have proven very useful to coordinators, and you will be eager to learn your results. During your final two sessions, encourage your attendees to complete an evaluation and to do so by the end of the final week.

Further, encourage everyone with internet access to go to the ICLRU website, find the evaluation form and complete it online—all easy to do.

For attendees without online access (identifiable on your detailed registration roster by not having an email address), obtain paper forms from the Center and make them available in your classroom during the final two sessions. Members may turn in completed paper forms at the ICLRU Center. (If members give any to you, please turn them in at the Center.)

Our experience has been that the online evaluations have more content and more thoughtful comments, so online response is worth encouraging.

**COORDINATOR WRAP-UP MEETING**

Following the final session week, there will be a follow-up meeting of all coordinators. You will receive your evaluation results then or beforehand. The broad purpose of the meeting is for everyone to share insights developed during the term—what worked well, what might be improved, how equipment functioned, what was notable in presentation materials, mini presentations, discussions, etc. This is a valuable meeting in which we can learn from each other’s experiences.

**A note about soliciting and managing participants’ mini-presentations:**

Our members have a wealth of experience, and they have much to contribute on many topics. Providing them presentation opportunities is an excellent way to keep members interested and involved.

Some coordinators begin to recruit volunteer presenters by email or phone prior to the first session. If you choose to wait for the first class session, one method for getting volunteers is to prepare a sign-up sheet listing topic ideas. You may suggest particular dates for certain topics so they fit your schedule. Provide space for group members to write their names next to the date and the topic of their choice.
Stress that volunteer presenters need not be experts, but should do enough research on the topic to present valid information and insights that will stimulate thinking and discussion.

Ask your volunteers to let you know what equipment they need and whether they will require any photocopies. Also advise them to provide time for Q&A and to encourage discussion.

If volunteers do not come forward, you might re-circulate the topic sheet at the next session, or you might consider a more direct technique that has been used:

Develop a set of readily researchable topics suitable for brief presentations, which might be only a few minutes in length. Put each topic on a slip of paper and have all class members draw one. Because of the brevity and limited scope, along with the fact that everyone will make a presentation, virtually every member will become involved. Encourage a positive group response to all presenters. The experience may persuade some to become first-time coordinators in the future—a very welcome result!

If you do have volunteer presenters, be prepared to help them identify where and how information can be found on the sub-topic of their choice (e.g. Internet sites, Roosevelt library, local libraries, possible audio/video resources). Also arrange to provide handout copies of any materials essential to the volunteer’s presentation. (During a volunteer presentation, you may want to “stage-manage” the presenter for some reason—e.g., “please speak louder” or “we only have about 3 minutes left to stay on schedule.”)

**FINAL NOTE**

You are a volunteer contributing to a very worthwhile organization. While you perform your service as a coordinator: have a good time! You deserve it!
INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUED LEARNING AT ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL

Year: 20__  Winter__  Spring__  Summer__  Fall__

Title of Study Group:

Coordinator:
Co-Coordinator:
Primary coordinator’s phone:  Email:

Description of Study Group: Please be as concise as possible. Note: your wording will be published in the brochure. If attendees must pay a fee or purchase something, include the requirement(s) in your description. If you will not meet every week of the term, include the schedule details.

Is there a maximum and/or minimum number of enrollees for this study group?
Maximum number: ____  Minimum number: ____

Do you have a preference for day and time? (Sessions typically are held Monday AM through Thursday PM. Typical times are 9:30-11:30 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM)
_____ No: Any day and time is OK
_____ Yes I have a preference:

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Room setup: Lecture (seat rows facing front)  Seminar (U-shaped with tables)  

Number of Weeks __ (Note: standard is 9 weeks Spring & Fall, 5 Winter & Summer: Study Groups meeting for fewer weeks are acceptable, but please note this in your description above.)

Attendee requirements: if applicable, be sure to mention in your description.
- Materials required of participants: if book(s) indicate title & author:
- Additional costs to participants, if any: $_____  
Please note: If you plan extensive photocopying of materials for members, be advised that ICLRU pays a charge of $0.05 per copy. If applicable, your study group description should specify that members may be asked to pay a fee for such materials.

Will you need audio/visual equipment? Yes___  No___
IF YES, please indicate what media you will be using:
CDs___ audio tapes___ DVDs___ VHS tapes___ overhead slides___
Do you plan to use computer presentations? Yes___  No___
IF YES, can you bring your own laptop? Yes___  No___

Thank you for these details! Contact the ICLRU Center with any questions.
Study Group Title

Session: Fall [ ]  Winter [ ]  Spring [ ]  Summer [ ]

Your honest evaluation will help ICL in developing future sessions. Please be as specific as possible. Thank you!

1. Rate this study group by placing an X by the word that best describes your feeling about it:
   - Excellent [ ]
   - Good [ ]
   - Fair [ ]
   - Poor [ ]

2. What did you like most? ____________________________________________________________

3. What did you like least? __________________________________________________________

4. If this study group were repeated, what would you change?
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Would you take another study group with the same coordinator(s)?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Why not? _________________________________________________________

6a. What study group topics would you like to see in the future?
   __________________________________________________________

6b. Please circle any of these you would like to help coordinate.

7. Other comments (please use other side if needed): _________________________________

   Thank you for your input – The Program Development Committee

   10/98