

The OBJECTIVIST CENTER AND ATLAS SOCIETY

17th annual Summer Seminar

Objectivism: Theory and Practice

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Center is currently planning its 17th annual Summer Seminar, which will be held at Chapman University, in Orange, CA (in greater Los Angeles), July 1–8, 2006.

To create the program for the Seminar, the Center is soliciting proposals for lectures, courses, workshops, artistic performances, exhibits and other program elements. This document contains general information about the Seminar, descriptions of the categories of material the Center is interested in having, and guidelines for proposals.

General Information

The Seminar is a weeklong conference for people interested in Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, combining education, recreation, and social opportunities. The primary features of each day's schedule are lecture, performance, and workshop sessions. The audience, normally between 120 and 220 people, is diverse in background, interests, and level of knowledge. It includes college and graduate students, professional and business people, retirees, and professional scholars. Because of the size and diversity of the audience, the Center is seeking an equally diverse program, with presentations that vary in subject matter, format, and level. Information about past Summer Seminars, including program and schedule, may be found online in the "Events" section of our website, www.objectivistcenter.org.

(There will be several "Advanced Seminar" sessions at the Summer Seminar in which students and scholars discuss new academic essays on Objectivism to help hone them for publication. Papers should be proposed by November 15, and authors should plan to provide an initial sketch of their paper by January 15, 2006.)

Summer Seminar proposals will be selected on the basis of the Center's judgment about their intellectual merit, appeal to the expected audience, and fit with the overall program. An additional consideration is the potential value of the presentation as a future publication—such as a *New Individualist* article—or audio product. We are particularly interested in speakers who can offer two or more talks or offer a mini-course covering two or more sessions.

The deadline for proposals is **November 15, 2005**. Please send an electronic copy to:

William Thomas, Director of Programs

Email: conferencedirector@objectivistcenter.org

The Objectivist Center and Atlas Society, 1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 425
Washington, DC 20036

Program Categories

Philosophy

Lectures in this category deal with issues in philosophy, including the history of ideas and philosophical aspects of other subjects such as psychology, literature, etc. Presentations in the Philosophy track include, but are not limited to:

- ❑ Core principles and topic areas in Objectivism. These include values and virtues, including topics such as social virtues or the pyramid of ability; metaphysical or epistemological doctrines, such as contextual knowledge; political principles; and aesthetic concepts. These presentations should offer a clear statement of the position, including definitions of the relevant concepts, and a clear explanation of the reasons for it. Constructive criticism of Objectivist principles is also welcome.
- ❑ The extension of the philosophy to new areas and issues, such as philosophy of law (e.g., tort rules, property rights); medical ethics (e.g., assisted suicide, genetic screening); and standards of certainty and proof in specific areas of knowledge (e.g., science, history, law, literary interpretation). These presentations should reflect knowledge both of the relevant Objectivist philosophical principles and of the subject area to which they are being applied.
- ❑ Surveys of other thinkers, historical (e.g., Aristotle, Locke, Sartre, Russell, Freud) or contemporary (e.g., Thomas Kuhn, Peter Singer); or of systems of thought such as existentialism, evolutionary psychology, or secular humanism. These presentations should include similarities and differences with Objectivism.

Politics and Culture

This category includes commentary and analysis from an Objectivist point of view on political and social issues, and on intellectual and cultural trends.

We are especially interested in talks that highlight unique Objectivist concepts as they apply to our culture and politics. For example, *the sanction of the victim* explains how we lose many battles for freedom because we fail to take the moral high ground; the understanding that *interests conflict only when individuals desire the unearned* explains why we have such a high-conflict, politicized society; and the lack of *a morality of true self-interest* in the habits and ideas of individuals explains why too few individuals are upset at limits on their liberty.

We are interested as well in presentations that advance our understanding of the conflict in today's culture between the broadly *modernist* principles and values we advocate (reason, objectivity, science; respect for human achievement in all fields; individual freedom, responsibility, and the pursuit of happiness) and opposing views from the premodern right or postmodern left. David Kelley explains this distinction in "The Party of Modernity" printed in *Navigator* V. 6 No. 3 and available in the *Navigator* online archive. We are also interested in surveys of important contemporary thinkers from each of the subcultures.

The ideal presentation will reflect solid understanding of the specific issue or field and will offer a genuine insight or new perspective on the issue. Presentations that reflect a distinctively Objectivist approach are welcome, as are presentations which explore free-market solutions to pressing political issues.

Applications

Presentations in this category put Objectivist principles into action, applying them to practical life issues and problems, such as:

- ❑ Personal concerns such as goal-setting and priorities, relationships, inner life and self-esteem, thinking effectively, communication skills, raising children, health, etc.
- ❑ Business and professional issues involved in pursuing careers and interacting with people in the workplace
- ❑ Ideas for effective political and cultural activism
- ❑ Ways of addressing spiritual needs and enriching the experience of Objectivism as a way of life through ceremonies, motivational practices, and communities
- ❑ Lessons and workshops on writing, acting, dancing, exercise, and other areas in which participants may wish to develop their abilities

Arts and Aesthetics

Seminar participants have a strong interest in art. Any form of art—from music and dance, to the visual arts, to literature, theater, and film—is an appropriate subject. Presentations in this category can include:

- ❑ Issues in aesthetic theory, such as the standards of art criticism
- ❑ Historical or contemporary trends in art
- ❑ Specific works that would be of interest to our audience
- ❑ Appreciation: instruction in how to enjoy and/or evaluate art
- ❑ Artistic performances, readings, and exhibitions
- ❑ Ayn Rand as a literary artist.

If you have any questions about the content of a proposal or about ideas you may have had for a proposals, please contact William Thomas, the Center's Director of Programs. Email: wthomas@objectivistcenter.org. Telephone: (518) 669-1867.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals for presentations should address the following issues:

Brochure copy: please include

1. A brief statement advertising your presentation (100 words in total). This should include a summary statement of the presentation content and a brief biographical note that speaks to your qualifications. If your proposal is accepted, we will edit your statement for use in the Seminar brochure, and may make editorial changes as we see fit. Please consult brochures for previous Seminars as models (copies available online, or by request).
2. Please let us know if you have a photograph suitable for publicity that we could use in our brochure.

Full Explanation of your Topic: Elaborating on the brief description from the brochure copy (above), please tell us what subject matter the presentation is about. Please summarize the key questions you plan to address, ideas you want to put forward, skills you want to teach, etc. If possible include a broad outline of the presentation.

Elaboration re: Qualifications: To help us evaluate your proposal, please provide any information in addition to your brochure-copy bio that would help us understand your background in the field on which you would be speaking and your experience as a teacher, public speaker, or performer.

Audience: Please describe as clearly as possible the nature of the audience you envision, including their level of knowledge about your subject matter, the nature of their interest in that subject, and the benefit your presentation would confer on them. Summer Seminar sessions vary in level from the introductory (suitable for those with minimal exposure to Objectivism and to your topic) to the advanced (requiring some prior familiarity with the field). It is very important that we know the level you propose to address so we can plan a balanced program.

Relation to Objectivism: Despite their varying backgrounds, the audience will share a basic interest in and some familiarity with Objectivism and especially the writings of Ayn Rand. That shared context is what draws our audience to the Seminar, and you should take account of it in preparing your presentations, relating your material in some way to some aspect of Objectivism. Naturally, the nature and extent of these connections will vary with the material. Please indicate in your proposal how you propose to do so.

Class size: Because of the large number of participants expected, few sessions will be plenary. In most cases, two or more presentations will be scheduled simultaneously. Presenters should expect an audience in the range of 50-150 people. Workshops may be smaller.

Length: The standard session length will be 75 minutes, including question and answer period. It is essential that topics be delimited and structured so that the presentation takes no more than 60 minutes, leaving ample time for the question and answer period. For material that requires more time, we can schedule double-length sessions or mini-courses of 2-4 separate sessions. We welcome proposals from one session in length on up, and are particularly interested in mini-courses that require two or more sessions.

Delivery: Written lecture, extemporaneous, interactive? Describe the format you plan to use. All presentations should meet high standards of delivery: motivating the audience, attention to pacing, regular summaries, repetition of main points, good voice projection, and well-designed graphics. We have noticed that participants prefer presentations that use visual aids such as slides, PowerPoint, or overheads. Presentations should not attempt to cover more content than can be delivered with these values in the time allotted. If you will have any room or equipment requirements above and beyond the usual audiovisual requirements, please let us know that as well.

Because we must review many proposals and create the program within a short space of time, we ask that you use the items above as a checklist to make sure your proposal is complete.