

ATTR PhD Seminar Guide

Central to all ATTR seminars and summer schools are the PhD fellows' own presentations of papers based on their dissertation work, with prepared responses by other PhD fellows. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of ATTR, the focus of the discussions will be primarily on methodological matters and interdisciplinary insights. To make these sessions as fruitful as possible, please read this Seminar Guide carefully.



How to present and respond

The PhD seminars at every ATTR event are important means to the ATTR learning goals:

- **Writing and presentation skills:** The seminars aim not only at providing a setting for constructive discussions relating to thesis work, but also at preparing the candidates for life after their dissertations. ATTR thus aims to hone students' presentation and writing skills, skills that may be useful for development of research projects for which funding can be sought from, e.g., ERC and RCN.
- **Methodology:** The objective of ATTR is to create a venue where interpretive methodologies can be critically discussed, evaluated, and developed, so as to broaden the candidates' perspectives and heighten the quality of their analyses.
- **Networking:** In all its activities, the creation of an interdisciplinary network of young scholars in order to ensure the highest possible academic quality of PhD education is a central goal of ATTR.

Paper presentation sessions

Each paper presentation seminar session consists of two parts, each lasting 55 minutes. Each of the two 55-minute parts consists of:

- 1 paper presentation, 10–15 minutes
- 2 responses, 5–10 minutes each
- Open discussion for the remaining 10–35 minutes

Note: All PhD students attending the seminars are expected to have read all the papers, and to have prepared comments for all presenters in their group; these comments may be communicated during the open discussion. You are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the discussion of all the papers in your seminar group, for your own sake and for that of the presenters. The list of groups/presenters/respondents will be distributed together with the papers.

Paper presentation

This is an important opportunity to practice your presentation skills, so prepare well. You have 10–15 minutes to present a summary of your paper. Make sure that you introduce your project in such a way that the audience understands what the main points are, and where the challenges lie, especially with regard to methods/approach. If you cannot present without a power point presentation, please contact ATTR administration. Advice for academic paper presentations can be found here: <https://www.aarweb.org/annual-meeting/presentation-tips>. Presenting a paper is an opportunity to receive valuable interdisciplinary feedback on your project, and a chance to be part of a critical and constructive exchange of opinions related to your theories.

Response

To give a response is an important part of academic life. Please use the opportunity to practice your critical and analytical skills, and learn from interaction with the different methodological approaches that you may encounter in the paper you are asked to respond to. Again, there are plenty of tips online. You will be assigned two papers to respond to.

For each paper, you shall prepare:

- A written response, which you can send the presenter after the seminar. We aim to send you the papers approximately three weeks before the seminar. You are to submit your written response to the ATTR Head of Administration a few days before the seminar.
- A 5–10 minute oral response.

Make sure that you

- Point out exactly what you think is good (praise often tends to be too vague, but if specific it constitutes just as valuable feedback as critique does).
- Point out any challenges that you may detect in terms of methods/approach and contents.
- When responding to papers that are not directly related to your own field of study, remember to treat that field with as much respect as you do your own.

ATTR is a highly interdisciplinary research school. This implies certain unique challenges, both with regard to giving and receiving feedback. Please remember that different academic fields have different traditions and different ways of writing. The respondents should be humble and respectful towards the other fields, while at the same time trusting that they themselves can contribute with valuable perspectives from their own fields and expertise. The overall goal is to promote broad reflection on theoretical and methodological approaches, and ultimately to help each other write better dissertations.