

**OAS Required Skill Module:
Attend a Scholarly Lecture with a Friend and then Drink Some Coffee**

This campus is littered with seminars of a scholarly nature that occur right along with the normal course lectures that are given each day. Every department will hold literally hundreds of these scholarly lectures each year as a way to bring colleagues and new ideas to campus. You will see signs for these lectures posted everywhere. For example, while walking to a help session last week in Geological Sciences, the first four doors I passed, had descriptions of four entirely different scholarly lectures occurring over the next week. Typically these talks are about 50 minutes in length with a question answer period and occur in the late afternoon although they can happen most any time with the really big ones held at night.

Scholarly lectures should become part of your academic experience as you evolve into an intellectual force on campus. And they are easy to do--a description on a piece of paper hanging on a wall or bulletin board is an open invitation for you to attend.

Now often, especially early in your time at UT, you will perhaps feel lost at the lecture because it is on too specific or advanced a topic for you to understand. Please step back and realize that it isn't essential that you understand everything. Even when you are utterly clueless about the subject, just listening starts the internal process of bringing you up to speed in a research area. I guarantee that if you went to a weekly seminar in your area of interest, that by the end of the academic year you would be understanding a great deal.

Not to mention the following perks:

- There is almost always food at these things. It is why graduate students gain weight even though they are poor.
- There is no better way to impress a professor about the serious nature of your intellectual quest than to show up at lectures attended by faculty and grad students. The few undergraduates who do show up to these routinely are invariably referred to in a very different way by faculty—simple, they are the stars of the undergraduate population.

So what do you have to do for this skill module:

- Find a friend or two and go to a scholarly lecture of your choosing.
- After the lecture go somewhere and talk about the lecture. Drink coffee if you would like and let the conversation meander away from the lecture into bigger picture ideas about the way the world works.
- Go home and write 250 to 500 words in which you describe the experience from what went on in the lecture, to what you gained from it, to what the post-lecture conversation was like.
- Submit the response as a pdf to your UGTA and include as a header your name, your UGTA, the lecture title and presenter, the name of your companions, and the time, date and location of the lecture.