

The goal of this assignment is to present beginning students with an opportunity to practice networking skills, while approaching opportunities for networking with a greater critical awareness than often comes naturally. By providing students with a set of specific questions to think about while attending a department event, the assignment is geared toward focusing their attention in ways that are relevant to professional development in a context that can otherwise be disorienting or overwhelming.

Prompt: Attend a department event, such as a lecture given by a guest speaker, an event in a speaker series, a gallery opening, a workshop, a department mixer, or even a group advising session. Read the following set of questions before you attend, then, after the event, reflect upon your experience, and write up a response including answers to as many of the questions as you're able.

- What was the issue or theme around which the event was organized?
- Who was the speaker? Where did they come from, and what was the expertise that brought them here? What did they talk about?
- Who else was present? What interest or skill set did the attendees share?
- To whom did you speak, and about what? What did you gain from that conversation?
- How was the space organized, and did that organization change at any point during the event (such as during a break or reception)?
- Was any of the time dedicated primarily to informal discussion among attendees?
- Was there catering, and if so, how was it? How did the catering affect the social organization, and who funded it?