**Chuck Tilly’s Workshop Rules (modified)**

*Since the “original” workshop rules, once available on Jim Jasper’s website, are not accessible online anymore, we have compiled these rules in a new modified version, based on our experiences at the IPB colloquium “politics from below” in Berlin (*[*https://sozialebewegungen.wordpress.com/kolloquium/*](https://sozialebewegungen.wordpress.com/kolloquium/)*)*

1. The overriding purpose is to improve a piece of research. Critics are not supposed to show how smart they are by humiliating the author.  A good comment doesn't just point out a weakness in the project; it also suggests what should be done to make it better
(constructive criticism).
2. Within the seminar everyone is treated as an equal.  First names are used by everyone for everyone.  Everyone is an author and a critic; every regular member of the seminar is expected to present and to comment on everyone else's work every session.  Specialized knowledge on the topic is useful but not
necessary, and often the best comments and questions come from people who know nothing at all about the topic.
3. At the beginning of the session the author is allowed but not encouraged to say a few sentences, usually about the context of the research.  But the session really starts with the presentation, followed by more extensive comments by two preselected critics, at least one of whom does not have a Ph.D. Ideally these comments were written down and read aloud, with a copy going to the author after their presentation. This allows the author to not have to worry about taking notes and facilitates discussion. After the two critics have made their remarks, the author is given time to respond.
4. The floor is then open to comments and questions.  Members attract the attention of the moderator by raising their hand (one-finger question); the leader keeps a queue of names and calls on them in the order in which they have been seen, except that the first three comments after the critics must be made by people without Ph.D.s.  It's okay for an individual to raise several separate questions at once.
5. A second kind of intervention is the two-finger question--it must be directly on the point under discussion and thirty seconds or less.  Asking a two-finger question does not change your position in the regular queue.
6. In addition to oral comments, members are encouraged to submit written comments.  These fulfill at least two different functions:  (1) they communicate specialized knowledge, bibliography, etc. which would not be of general interest to the group and (2) by repeating the oral questions or points, they
again free the author from trying to take notes while answering a barrage of very different questions and issues and give them a record of the discussion which will be useful later when trying to recall what went on.
7. Repeating a point made earlier, it is a firm rule that, no matter how wrong-headed the presented work is, discussion is courteous, friendly, respectful, and
directed at improving the project at hand rather than showing that the commentator is brilliant or that the author is insane or dangerous (although all of these may be true).  Ideally the author is presented with several different ways in which the paper can be further developed, often contradictory ones which gave some choice.
8. One of the keys to success is the continuing group of members who have been socialized into the seminar's norms; people who come in only for a paper or two depending on the topic are usually less helpful in discussions.