

## **Discussion Board: Instructions to Students (Examples from two instructors)**

### **Example 1: Instructions Provided to Students**

Every week you will be asked to reflect on and respond to at least one Discussion Board question and post your contribution to the topic on the Discussion Board. Your contribution to the topic should be clear, complete, and accurate. This assignment also requires that you read the answers posted by your classmates and each week respond to at least one of those postings.

For each Discussion Board assignment enter the appropriate Forum, read the posted questions and pick one to answer. Click on "Reply" and compose (or cut and paste) your answer. When you have finished writing your answer click on the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page.

Your answers must be posted no later than noon on the Saturday of each week. Your responses to the answers of other students are due no later than noon the following day (Sunday). Late discussion responses and replies will receive NO credit. Do not wait to the last minute to post your answer! Posting early allows you to write thoughtful answers and to be the first one to make important points. Posting early also ensures that you will not miss the deadline.

### **Discussion Board Guidelines**

To post to the Discussion Board enter the "Discussion Board" area of the course. Then click on the title of the forum you want to enter.

Make sure you check your answers for spelling and grammar. You may go back and edit your answer but not remove it. When you are ready to post your answer click "Submit". When you are ready to reply to an answer given by your classmate, go to the question in the forum and click on the answer of the person you want to reply to. (Do not click on the author's name or you will open an e-mail window.) The selected answer to the question will appear. Click on the "Reply" button in the lower right hand corner and type or paste in your reply. Click "submit" and you are done!

The Discussion Board is not an informal chat room. Your answers and replies should be thoughtful, considerate, and use college-level language and grammar.

**I strongly recommend that you carefully compose your answers on a word processing program.** Before posting your answers, check them for spelling and grammatical errors, then save them, and then copy and paste them to the Discussion Board. It is important that you save your document in your word processing program before you paste it to the discussion board. If, for whatever reason, the Discussion Board "eats" or "loses" your answer, you can just cut and paste it on the Board again if your answer has been saved on your computer. ("The Discussion Board ate my answer" is not a legitimate excuse in this class!)

### **Replying to the Postings of Your Classmates**

In addition to writing your own answer, each week you will compose a response to at least one

answer posted by another student. In your replies to other students you can:

- 1) Expand on or clarify a point made in the answer.
- 2) Offer an additional argument to support a position taken in an answer.
- 3) Suggest ways in which an idea could be more clearly expressed.
- 4) Identify passages where you think the writer misunderstood a concept or applied it incorrectly.
- 5) Disagree with a point or position made in an answer.

If you are disagreeing with the views of another student, please be constructive and respectful. You may criticize a position but not the author. Just writing "Your position on abortion stinks" will not do! State precisely the point you disagree with. (Make sure you have not misinterpreted the writer's position.) Offer reasons why you think their view is incorrect and support your position by citing the text or other sources.

## **A good answer or response will have some or all of the following features:**

- **There are virtually no errors in punctuation or spelling, grammar or usage.**
- **All parts of the question are completed answered.**
- **Sentences are smooth and carefully constructed.**
- **The words chosen are clear, accurate, and precise.**
- **Vague or ambiguous terms are clearly defined.**
- **The answer avoids triteness and unsupported generalizations.**
- **Use of supporting information is superior: the evidence clearly supports the positions and the evidence is sufficient and specific.**
- **The ideas reflect critical thinking and insight.**
- **There is some originality in the writer's response.**
- **The content has depth and substance.**
- **The answer or response holds the reader's interest.**

### **Student Responsibilities**

The purpose of the Discussion Board Assignments is for students to reflect thoughtfully and exchange ideas on the philosophical topics covered in this course. As a class, you will benefit from this assignment only as much as you put into it. Last minute posts that are inaccurate, sloppy, unorganized, and unclear help no one. If you find that a post is unclear or inaccurate, it is your role to ask your classmate for further clarification or to point out the inaccuracy. If someone replies to your post with a question, you owe him or her the courtesy of a response. You are also responsible for posting your answers and replies on time.

Each week I will read all the answers and replies posted to the Discussion Board. I will comment, where appropriate, on those posts or discussion threads that contain inaccuracies or where there seems to be some confusion. I will also point out those posts or discussions that I thought were particularly thoughtful, insightful, or well written.

## **Grading of the Discussion Board Assignment**

There are ten Discussion Board Assignments (two assignments for each chapter that we cover.) Each Discussion Board assignment has a value of 10 points. Your answers are worth 8 points and your replies to your classmates are worth two points. A complete, accurate, thoughtful and well written answer and reply will receive 10 points. Points will be deducted as follows:

- One (1) to six (6) points will be deducted for any post in which the language in your answer or response is so muddled as to be unclear; or if words chosen are generally inaccurate or imprecise; or if errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage are highly distracting; or if there is disrespectful or inappropriate tone or language usage.
- One (1) to six (6) points will be deducted if parts of the question are not answered or are not answered completely.
- One (1) to six (6) points will be deducted if an answer is inaccurate, sloppy, unorganized, or appears composed without much forethought or consideration.
- Eight (8) points will be deducted if you fail to post an answer or if it is posted after the deadline.
- Two (2) points will be deducted if you fail to post at least one reply to a posting of your classmates or if your reply is posted after the deadline.

**Please note that this means that NO credit will be given for late postings.**

No more than ten (10) points will be deducted from a person's point total in any one assignment.

Exceptional answers or responses may receive bonus points.

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## **Example 2: Instructions Provided to Students**

There is one Discussion Board Topic each week. Discussion Board Topics give students the opportunity to strengthen their ability to communicate effectively in writing. Students should answer the question posted in the Discussion Board Topic and comment on responses made by other students. Students are expected to post contributions that are well thought out, well written, and that apply the principles of effective communication.

The instructor is expected to facilitate discussions between student and instructor, student and student, and groups of students. *The role of the instructor is not to answer every comment or question but to frame issues and extend the discussions through leading and directed questions.*

Here is what is expected of you:

(1.) Students are expected to log on and participate in weekly Discussion Board Topics at least twice a week. Participation at least twice a week is necessary if students are to meaningfully interact on topics presented in class (since we meet only once a week).

(2.) Post your answer to the Discussion Board Topic by Wednesday/Thursday midnight of each week.

(3.) Post one separate response to a classmate no later than Sunday night at 7pm. Your contributions to the Discussion Board Topic are worth 20 points for each week for a total of 30% of your final grade. There is NO MAKE-UP option for participation in the weekly Discussion Board Topics. Students cannot be given "other assignments" or extra credit to "make-up" for not being able to participate.

Your comments will be graded on their substance and thoughtfulness, and should reflect appropriate application of emerging knowledge and vocabulary in the topic area. Each posting should add value to the discussion. Adding value to the discussion would include things like a practitioner example, posting a web site, asking question of his/her fellow classmates, giving a personal example, bringing in something from the textbook, from the videos or podcasts, or from some outside reading to support his/her opinion.

The grading of Discussion Board Topics breaks down as follows:

<b>A. Grading Criteria</b>	<b>0 points</b>	<b>1-5 points</b>	<b>6-10 points</b>	
<u>Volume &amp; Frequency</u>  2 times/week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post your answer to the Discussion Board Topic by Wednesday/Thursday midnight of each week</li> <li>▪ Post your response to <u>one</u> classmate no later than Sunday night at 7pm</li> </ul>	0 posts	1 post	2 posts	
<b>B. Grading Criteria</b>	<b>0 points</b>	<b>1-3 points</b>	<b>4-6 points</b>	<b>7-10 points</b>
<u>Added Value</u>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses class concepts and terms</li> </ul>	No class concepts and	Limited use of class	Some use of class	Many class concepts and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses supporting details</li> </ul>	terms and supporting details used	concepts and terms  and supporting details	concepts and terms  and supporting details	terms and supporting details used
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For example, let's say you post your answer Wednesday, and respond to one classmate's answer on Friday, and you use many class concepts and supporting details from the textbook. For "Volume & Frequency" you would receive 10 points (posted twice for the week), and for "Added Value" you'd receive 10 points, for a total of 20 points for that week.