

MGMT 630

How to Participate in Discussions

Purpose of Discussions

The purpose of our class Discussions is to *expand understanding* of the assigned course concepts by drawing on the *diversity and collective wisdom of class members' perspectives*, insights, and experiences.

As directed investigations of key course concepts, our “virtual” class discussions are the same as if we were in a face-to-face classroom.

What Discussions Are Not:

- simply repeating/telling what is in the readings or lecture as an essay response might
- an unstructured forum for opinions, likes, or dislikes

What Discussions Are:

- guided exploration of the meaning of concepts and topics from assigned readings (and lecture notes)
- points of view and questions that make reference to assigned readings without repeating them at length
- focused back and forth conversations with classmates about course concepts, sharing individual understandings, questions, and examples

Discussion Process

Evaluation and Grading - Participation in Discussions is essential and a part of your final grade for this course. Please refer to and carefully review this document (including Participation Grading Information at the end) and the Participation Grading Rubric to understand how your contribution to discussions will be evaluated. The guidelines here will be used in conjunction with the rubric to evaluate performance.

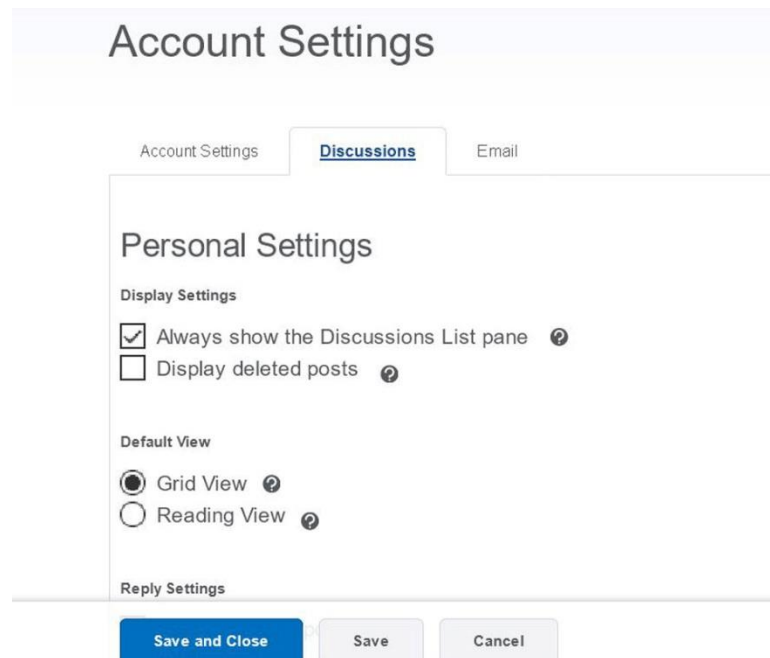
Deadlines - There are five (5) graded Discussions. Most topics unfold over a ten day period, followed by an ungraded but required Reflections topic for four days. Pay attention to when discussions begin and end because once a discussion topic closes, additional posts cannot be added. Each graded discussion runs from Monday of the first week through Wednesday of the following week. Posts must be staggered throughout this period and **will not earn full credit if they are on the last few days only**.

Process - Keep in mind that you are engaging in a discussion with your classmates and not with your professor. Your professor may interject from time to time, comment on a post, or ask questions by way of facilitating discussion, but she will not reply to all posts. That is not the

point so do not feel slighted if she does not reply individually to your post. Everyone's post is important to the class discussion.

Instructions for Setting Up Discussions in LEO

Click on your name in the upper right corner of your screen. Select Account Settings, Discussions. Then make sure that **Grid View** is selected as your default view. This will help ensure that your posts show up correctly in the discussion threads.



Account Settings

[Account Settings](#) [Discussions](#) [Email](#)

Personal Settings

Display Settings

☒ Always show the Discussions List pane ?

☐ Display deleted posts ?

Default View

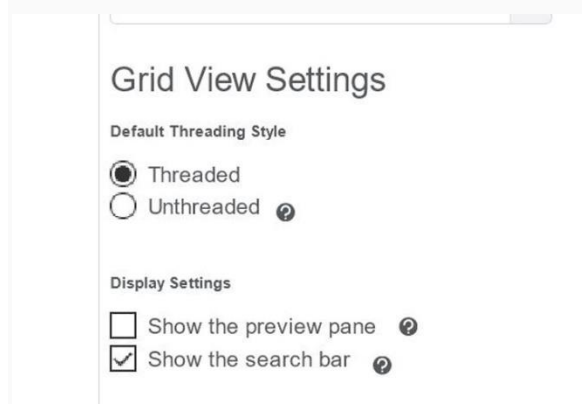
☒ Grid View ?

☐ Reading View ?

Reply Settings

Save and Close Save Cancel

After you have selected Grid View, scroll down and then also select the **Threaded** option.



Grid View Settings

Default Threading Style

☒ Threaded

☐ Unthreaded ?

Display Settings

☐ Show the preview pane ?

☒ Show the search bar ?

Instructions and Helpful Hints for Posting to Discussions

- Your professor will post a topic and main question for the class to discuss in each discussion forum. In some cases, more than one main question may be posted. You must post a reply to the main question before posting replies to classmates.
- When posting to the Discussion, first click on the thread started by your professor. Then always select “**Reply**” to this thread or to Replies posted by your colleagues. **Never** select “Start a New Thread”.
- **Timing, Cites, and Some Hints** - Post your initial response to the Discussion topic **early** - within the first 3-4 days. **Each student is expected to provide an initial response to the main question(s) before replying to other posts. The response (and all other posts) should include a citation to some portion of your assigned readings.** It’s recommended that you write your initial response **before** you read what others have posted so that it is original and expresses your own interpretation and voice. Don’t just copy what someone else already said – it’s obvious that’s what you’re doing and we will all see that. We want to hear what *you* have to say on the topic. (In contrast, for all subsequent replies, you should read what others have to say first before formulating your own unique interpretation.)
- By posting early, you enable others to reply to your post, allowing for a more productive and interesting back-and-forth discussion throughout the week.
- Once you have posted your initial response in the first few days of the forum, be sure to **check back regularly** for any questions/comments to your posting so that you can respond to a question if need be.
- **Late is Less** – Class members who post only on the last day of the discussion will earn credit for *only one post, no matter how many postings are made*. You should seek to post throughout the discussion period, spreading your posts on several different days.
- **Ideas for Replies** - After your initial post, you are expected to **reply to a significant number of your classmates’** posts. How? Rather than saying, “I agree” or “Great post”, here are some ideas for appropriate replies to your colleagues:
 - consider some other aspect of the topic that they discussed
 - ask a question about the topic
 - relate the topic to another course topic covered
 - provide an example
 - offer additional insight or facts on the issue
 - consider implications of this topic for your industry
 - share your experiences or perspective based on your past work
 - suggest a differing point of view
 - clarify or explain concepts as they apply to a given situation
 - **do any of the above plus an additional ending question that seeks to expand our collective understanding of the issues**

- **Focus** - Stay on-topic and try to make a substantive contribution that expands the class's understanding of the topic. Be sure to cite something from the readings. **Every post is expected to include an in-text citation to a concept from the lecture or readings.** For example: "The organization's design is flexible which fits the industry it is in (Rogers reading, 2015, p. 12)". Why? Because this gives credibility to your perspective and supports it.
- It is never enough to say, "I agree", or similar non-substantive replies to classmates' posts. **These will not be counted** toward your participation in the forum. You should seek to provide an argument rather than an opinion, as explained below:
 - An argument puts forth a claim supported by sound evidence (e.g., course readings) and logical reasoning. **YES!**
 - An opinion is an assertion unsupported by valid evidence and logic. **NO!**
- **Aim for Substance, not Length** - Posts can be brief if they are substantive. Aim for a concise, well written post. It should be **no more than 200 words**, preferably fewer. Remember: a post is not an essay. Posts need not be long!
- Pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar. **Use Spell Check** and review your work before hitting the **"Reply to Thread"** button.
- When referring to assigned sources in your posting, include the appropriate in-text **citations**, as well as the full reference (see the APA Manual for information on formatting citations and references). This is good practice using APA Style. However, some of our readings do not include a date or the author's name. In this case, use the first two to three words of the title and "n.d." which stands for no date available. For example, a citation might be: (History of Management, n.d.).
- **Sources Matter** - *Wikipedia* or any sources from the Internet (e.g., from a Google search) may not be used as citations or links. **Use only assigned readings or scholarly sources** from the UMUC virtual library databases. This requirement relates to credibility, mentioned above, so that you develop habits that later will help to build your reputation as a credible professional manager.
- **Please do not attach** additional files or add links to your posts. You are welcome to share such additional information in the Student Lounge area of the course.

PARTICIPATION GRADING INFORMATION

Please carefully review the Discussion Participation Rubric and this document "How to Participate in Discussions".

Your participation in discussions will be evaluated for each of five forums, each worth up to 20 points. Please see the following table for the **maximum possible points** that can be earned for each level of performance shown on the Discussion Rubric for each forum.

Note: Your forum participation scores are not summed and calculated into your course grade **until the end of the semester** so **be aware that the cumulative course grade/points you see in LEO up to that point does not include participation.**

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC

including possible points that can be earned

	Needs Improvement (Below "B" level)	Good ("B" level)	Excellent ("A" level)
Original Postings	0-9 Responses were submitted, on time, for none or a very few discussion topics. Comments were only <i>occasionally</i> responsive to the discussion assignments and at <i>times</i> enhanced the quality of the discussion (i.e., illustrated a point with examples, suggested new perspectives on an issue, asked questions that helped stimulate further discussion, etc.) Ideas were <i>rarely</i> expressed in a clear and coherent manner.	10 Responses were submitted, on time, for <i>some number of</i> discussion topics. Comments were <i>usually</i> responsive to the discussion assignments and <i>often</i> enhanced the quality of the discussion (i.e., illustrated a point with examples, suggested new perspectives on issues, asked questions that helped stimulate further discussion, etc.). Added new materials/ideas to the class related to course concepts. Ideas were <i>generally</i> expressed in a clear and coherent manner.	12 Responses were submitted, on time, for <i>all</i> discussion topics. Comments were <i>consistently</i> responsive to the discussion assignments and <i>significantly</i> enhanced the quality of the discussion (i.e., illustrated a point with examples, suggested new perspectives on an issue, asked questions that helped stimulate further discussion, etc.). Frequently added new materials/ideas to the course related to course concepts. Ideas were <i>always</i> expressed in a clear and coherent manner
Responses to other postings	0-6 Either no response is posted or comments or questions provided evidence that the participant had read and considered <i>minimal</i> classmate postings before responding	7 Substantive replies to postings of three (3) classmates. Comments or questions provided evidence that the participant had read and considered <i>several</i> classmate postings before responding.	8 Substantive replies to postings of four (4) or more classmates. Comments or questions provided evidence that the participant had read and considered a <i>substantial</i> number of classmates' postings before responding.

Note: 100 points total for the 12 week term divided by five (5) graded forums = 20 points possible per forum. Maximum possible points that can be earned for each level of performance are highlighted. This will be awarded to the extent that your participation in the class overall also is excellent. If your participation in other aspects of class, such as your timely replies to emails from your professor, etc. is not excellent, then your final participation grade for the course may be reduced accordingly.

In general there are two main criteria for the discussion portion of the participation grade:

1. Frequency of participation (number of responses)
2. Quality of participation (content of response)

The **quality** of participation has much more impact on your grade than the **frequency**. The number of responses is not significant without high quality content.

Updated 8/19/2019