

### **Discussion Board Instructions**

For Discussion Boards 2-15, it will be necessary that you provide the minimum of an initial post (300-600 words) responding to the discussion prompt, as well as respond three (3) times (100-300 words) to the posts of other students. The following four steps detail exactly how to complete these tasks:

1. Review the discussion and assigned material in the weekly course module.
2. Read the assigned and recommended material carefully. It is advised that you take your own notes on the assigned readings, noting passages relevant to answering the discussion prompt. It may also be necessary for you to communicate with the instructor or other students for assistance.
3. Using the assigned material and your notes, create a new discussion thread to the discussion prompt. Your initial response to the discussion prompt should be 300-600 words.
  - a. The minimum word count must be met for your submission to be considered for a grade. Any work that is significantly under 300 words will not be considered and receive a score of "0". With regards to work which is submitted that is in gross excess of 600 words – *Quantity does not equal quality*. In the interest of efficiency, the instructor stops reading any work that is in gross excess of 600 words once that mark has been reached. Proofread and consider carefully how the material you submit will answer the discussion prompt or challenge the position of your fellow students. A few words over, or under, will not count against you.
  - b. All discussion posts should be formatted using Calibri font, 11pt size; Single spaced; and no special headings or formatting.
4. Using the same specifications in Step 3, respond to the initial post of at least three other students. Responses to other students should be at least 100-300 words each and raise a reasonable issue within the discussion thread. You may agree, disagree, or raise an issue with any of the material presented.
  - a. Your responses to other students need not be limited only to an initial post, but may also consist of a response to another student's post on your thread. You should also consider defending or supporting the responses to the initial posts of other students.
  - b. Do not simply pose questions as a means to facilitating a discussion response. You have enough room to make substantive observations to the material other students present.
  - c. Simply because someone has already indicated a point you intended to make does not mean you cannot rephrase the question, or pose it elsewhere in the discussion topic.
  - d. Finally, three (3) responses to other students is the minimum requirement for each week's Discussion Board. It would be advisable for you to go beyond this minimum during the course of the semester.

**Remember:** Discussion board posts can be made only once! Think carefully about what you are willing to say and how you will respond to other students. Additionally, you should be mindful of the information outlined in the “Student Behavior Expectations” section of the Course Syllabus, as a failure to abide by these policies can result in negative consequences.

### **Grading Criteria**

The following five (5) items are considered when grading Discussion Boards each week:

- I. *Spelling and Grammar* – Submitted work is free of, or contains only a reasonable amount of spelling or grammatical errors. The easiest way to avoid these errors is to type and proofread submitted work in MS Word prior to posting.
- II. *Formatting* – Submitted work adheres to the instructions for formatting and word count (e.g.; submitted work is not grossly over, or under, word count; there are indents or spaces between paragraphs.)
- III. *Composition* – Submitted work adequately employs elements of basic composition, as well as command of the English language.
- IV. *Accuracy* – Submitted work addresses each part of the discussion prompt in a relevant manner, or addresses a specific question in a nuanced way.
- V. *Citations* – Submitted work adheres to the prescribed method for citation (e.g.; MLA, end of sentence parenthetical citations.)
  - o To cite material from the text, it is only necessary to place a parenthetical citation with the page number at the end of the sentence, or citation in question:
    - Embedded Quote - Ex., *May last point is clearly demonstrated by Locke’s statement that, “... it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done”(Locke, Pg. 230).*
    - Paraphrase – Ex., *Unlike Nagel, I do not think that Feinberg makes an especially compelling observation using the case of the incompetent assassin (Nagel, Pg. 299).*
    - Under no circumstance should you use block quotes in you discussion board posts.
  - o To cite material from outside the textbook, it is necessary that you use MLA guidelines to create a parenthetical citation at the end of your sentence (as demonstrated above), as well as provide a Works Cited at the end of your post.

Work that is awarded a grade of 0—1 points is extremely substandard, provides no insight, demonstrates a lack of comprehension of the material assigned, and/or failure to follow assignment instructions. In contrast to this, work awarded a grade of 5 points is considered to have extremely high comprehension of the material, follows assignment instruction, and provides insight into the assigned material. Spelling and grammar will count against your grade in the event that the work you submit is unintelligible. This means that your fellow students were not able to respond to your discussion post.

### **Grading Scale**

**0** – You have provided grossly insufficient material to constitute a discussion response, and/or have ignored the instructions to the essay prompt. Or, you submitted no work to be graded.

**1** – Your discussion posts lacked a basic understanding of the assigned material. Reread the material and follow the instructions closely. Make sure to provide more thoroughly organized responses in the future.

**2** – It is clear that you have some understanding of the assigned material. However, your essay missed some key points, and/or you failed to follow instructions in a sufficient manner.

**3** – It is clear that you understand the assigned material, but have missed key points in the argument or your posts were not well composed.

**4** – You have a clear understanding of the material, but factual errors on your part lead to insufficient discussion posts.

**5** – You gave an accurate reconstruction of the argument in the dialogue; and using this provided a well-reasoned response to the discussion prompt and posts of other students.

### **Deadlines**

This is an online course with a smooth pace. However, make sure you complete the assignments and readings in a timely manner. Please make sure that before beginning the assigned coursework that you read the syllabus and course schedule closely. The purpose of conducting discussions boards in this manner is to emulate a discussion that would take place in the class. Therefore, you should be mindful of when you make posts on other student's threads allowing them and other students enough time to read and respond to your post.

*Important:* I do monitor when students log on to the course, as well as the content of their posts. Do not wait until the last day of the discussion board to begin making posts – This will have a profoundly negative impact on your grade. There is no late work accepted, as per the policies set forth in the Course Syllabus. That being said, if you encounter technical issues and I do not respond immediately, please do not hesitate to contact the [Online Help Desk](#). For specific information regarding technical support and obtaining a copy of MS Word, please see the Course Syllabus, or contact me directly.

Finally, you should always communicate with the instructor regarding any issues you are having with the course. Keep an eye on the Course Announcements section of the course website! There will be important information regarding weekly assignments, updates to the course syllabus, and help resolving technical issues.