Course Communication

Professor Randy Gordon

**Tips for Discussion Boards**

Discussion Board (DB) posts should be respectful. While you may argue a classmate’s point of view, you should never “attack” a classmate personally. Write your discussion posts for an academic audience, and pay attention to the content, grammar, spelling, and punctuation in your post. Because DB posts are not informal emails or casual text messages, refrain from using abbreviations such as “LOL” and “BTW” or informal punctuation such as “i” for the pronoun “I.”

**Initial Post Content**

Your initial posting should provide 1) evidence that you have read and comprehended the assignment and 2) evidence of critical thinking. Your post should be original and thought provoking. For example, mention specific points from the source, provide examples, state your opinion, or point out inconsistencies and/or consistencies you may have noticed.

**Response Posts Content**

Responses to classmates’ posts, when required, should do more than simply say, “I agree with what you have said. I feel the same way” or just recite a classmate’s post. The response post must be substantive. Expand on the classmate’s post. Perhaps you have a slightly different perspective on the topic or can supply a different example. If the post provoked a question, ask it. Each of your response posts must be original. Do not copy a response you made to one student and re-use it with slight modifications to respond to another student’s post. “Re-used” posts are not original and will receive no points; they will not be counted as one of your required responses.

**Recycled Posts**

Do not “recycle” the content from another classmate’s discussion post with the implication that it is your own. This is plagiarism and will cause you to receive a zero for the entire DB (both for the initial post and the response posts). To earn a grade for a DB post, you must do your own work.

**Word Count**

There is no minimum word count, but consider that your original posts should be at least fifty words. This will allow you to actually make and back up a reasonable statement with information that will allow commentary by your colleagues.

**MLA**

For discussion board posts, cite all paraphrases, summaries, and direct quotations from outside sources, including the reading assignment, according to current [Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines](https://valenciacollege.edu/students/library/mla-apa-chicago-guides/index.php). Failing to do so will cause your posting to receive a zero.

**Attachments**

Do not attach documents to your posts, unless I specifically request it. Attachments will not be read, and you will not receive any credit for your post.

**Instructions**

When I review your DB posts, I consider whether or not you followed the instructions for the assignment. Did you address the questions and the subject for the week. Did you provide responses to your colleagues.

**Due Dates**

Post responses for each DB during the specified time periods. When a DB closes, it will not be reopened..

**Number of Responses**

All required responses must be made to receive any of the response points. For example, if you are to respond to only one classmate, you will not receive full credit for the DB for that week.

**Tips for Substantial Posts**

An important part of your assessment for this course will be in how *substantive*your responses are to your peers' comments. *Substantive* means that your message has substance and helps to further the discussion of course content. Substantive messages often include contributions of additional ideas and sources, insights or questions about classmates’ comments, connections to the course readings, or ways of applying the lessons from the course. As a rule of thumb, your substantive comments should be at least several sentences in length.

Short comments, such as “Good idea” or “I agree,” do not constitute substantive posts on their own. Neither do comments that are unrelated to the topics at hand (for example, “I saw that movie, too!”) If you say you agree about something, please explain why you agree, and add an additional insight or question.

**Tips for Creating Substantive Participation**

* Explain why you agree or disagree and add some examples to support your belief.
* Relate your experiences to the topic at hand.
* Ask additional questions of your classmates.
* Make connections between the topics at hand and the readings in the text.
* Add ways you can apply the lessons from the class in your work and educational life.