Discussion Forum Guidelines

### As stated in the syllabus, part of your class participation grade will come from your posting regular responses to the assigned readings. There are a couple reasons why I am asking you to do this. At a minimum level, it is one way to help you stay on schedule with the readings. On a more profound level, this is a way for you to engage more deeply with the readings. Writing—even informal writing—is a form of thinking: we frequently don’t know what we think about something until we reflect on it in writing. Finally, these responses become a record of our thoughts as a class and can become a written “conversation.” Your posts, or entries, will follow the form defined below.

### **Original Posts** (approximately 150 words)

These should focus directly on some aspect of the assigned readings and can be anything you think is worth remembering, discussing, or thinking about. I will provide possible questions to consider, although sometimes I will simply ask you to make one or two observations and draw a conclusion from them. The main criterion for a comment is that it must be something that someone else could reasonably respond to--in other words, simply summarizing the reading would not be a sufficient comment.

### **Responses to Posts by Others** (approximately 50 words)

These are entries you write after reading the entries of your fellow students. Your response should deal in some *specific* way with the posts you have read. You may want to quote part of someone else’s post and then respond to it, or you may want to respond to the way several members of the class have approached a question. While I do not expect you to read every single post written by your fellow classmates, you should read enough that you have some idea of what others are thinking. Depending on when you post, you may want to write your response to the response someone else had to someone else’s original post—get the idea? It should resemble something of a conversation.

## Submission Requirements

I am not requiring that these be posted by a particular time on a particular day—I expect you to be keeping up with these on your own. Your postings should correspond with where we are in our readings and discussion. Ideally, you should post an Original Post as soon as you have completed the reading assignments, which are always in the first week of each unit. You can then post your Response after reading others’ posts.

## Grading Standards

Your participation in the discussion forum will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. I will use the following criteria in this assessment:

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| Relevance and Timeliness | Does not meet minimum requirements.  0 points | Posting may be lacking in relevance to the discussion or may be posted after discussion is over.  1-2 points | Posting is relevant but is slightly tardy—the discussion has already peaked.  3 points | Posting is both timely and is relevant to the discussion at hand.  4 points |
| Substance | Does not meet minimum requirements.  0 points | Posting minimally satisfies requirements but lacks substance.  1-2 points | Posting is competent and contributes to the discussion.  3 points | Posting shows substantial understanding of the readings and topics under discussion.  4 points |