# **Sample Forums**

Titles and Descriptions

**Introductions**

Please introduce yourselves here by the first Friday of class. Share your name, a photo, why you're taking the course, and one interesting fact about yourself that people might not know. I've started an introduction thread for myself; feel free to reply to my introduction, but remember to create your own thread to introduce yourself! The point of this forum is to get to know each other, so please take a moment to read everyone's intro, say "hello," and ask questions.

**Virtual Café** [*or some place for informal conversations]*

In a face-to-face class, you might get to know your classmates during breaks while grabbing coffee or drinks on break. In an online course, you need a virtual café. Use this discussion board to talk about anything and everything except this course. Use this discussion board however you want - announce parties, concerts, engagements, new babies, good television programs. It's all good here. Get to know each other.

**Course Q & A**

Use this forum to ask questions about the class, including questions about the syllabus, assignments, grading, or participation. I check this forum regularly [*at least every 48 hours / MWF of each week, etc.*], so if you have a question - especially one that others might have - I encourage you to ask it here. Feel free to answer questions your classmates might have; [subscribe to the forum](https://kb.siue.edu/page.php?id=63739) to get alerts when your classmates or I have posted back. If you have a personal question, feel free to email or call me instead.

**How’s it Going?** [*or some place to gather feedback – could be general mid-point feedback or a place to gather data on a specific assessment, piece of content, practice, etc.]*

I want to know how you really feel about the course. What’s working well? What seems “broken” or confusing? What do you enjoy most and what would you change to make it better? In this forum, you can check the “Anonymous” box before you post. Please be open and honest. I will use your feedback to make the class better. Feel free to reply to others here, as well (you can make your replies anonymous, too).

**Sample Weekly Assignment Forum**

Reflect on this week's reading, making sure to connect the concepts you've learned to your experiences as a professional and as a student. Did the reading conflict or line up with your personal experiences? Did it confuse you, bore you, or something else? Share your thoughts in 300-500 words. As stated in the syllabus, you must respond to at least two students by Saturday of each week for full discussion board participation points. Simply saying "I agree" will not count as participation. You must engage more deeply by sharing specific examples of why you agree or disagree with what your fellow students have said. See the syllabus for complete participation rubrics or reach out in the "Q & A" forum if you have any questions. I check that forum regularly. [*Instead of, or in addition to, summarizing your expectations here, you can also attach a rubric to the forum, which students can see before they post*.]

# **Sample of Discussion Expectations and Policies**

## **How to communicate on the Discussion Board:**

* + **Reflect** before you post an emotional response and re-read what you have written to be sure it is professional. Communicate as if your comments are printed in a newspaper.
  + **Communicate** effectively**.**
  + Do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ???, etc.), or else you might come across angrier than you intended.
  + Be sure to define or explain acronyms, jargon or uncommon terms so everyone can understand and participate in the discussion.
  + **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your comments to build a strong classroom community.
  + **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.Focus on providing clarity and moving the discussion toward understanding, even when you don't agree.
  + **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas and the course content, but do so in positive ways. It’s fine to disagree, but when done politely you stimulate and encourage helpful discussion, and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.
  + **Be on time.** See the syllabus for late-work policy. This applies to discussion posts, too.
  + **Keep the conversation** **on topic**. Online dialogue is like conversation. If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add to it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.

Link to full “Netiquette” rules: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

## **What Is Expected of You in the Discussion Board:**

* Post your original contribution to the discussion board each week by **[midweek].**
* Reply to at least **[two]** other students each week by **[end of week].**
* Check in on the Discussion Board frequently, at least **[three or four times]** a week.
* If someone has replied to any of your posts, you should answer them, just as you would in a face-to-face conversation. Be sure to pay attention to what is happening on the Discussion Board.
* At the same time, you should not feel obligated to re-read everyone’s posts multiple times a week just to be sure you’re not missing something. Once you’ve read your peers’ responses, make note of which threads you are actively participating in – focus on monitoring *those* conversations.
* When the deadline for posting has passed for one week, we will move on to the next topic. No one is obligated to reply to past-due posts (but you are welcome to do so, if you are interested).
* Make sure the content of your posts follows what is outlined in the discussion rubric and addresses the discussion prompt for the week.
* Pay attention to minimum and maximum word limits as noted in the syllabus.
* In general, you should spend about **[4]** hours a week participating in class discussions – that includes, writing your original contribution, reading others’ posts, and responding.
* Please know that, although I will not reply to every post, I will be an active participant in our weekly discussions. This means that I will be reading what you write and will contribute when, for instance, a particularly salient point was made or when I can offer a summary of your thoughts that “ties” up the main ideas for the week.
* Remember, the point of using the Discussion Board is to have a real conversation! You should be going back and forth with each other, asking questions for clarity, agreeing/disagreeing (using course resources to support your points), and all of the things we do in a discussion on campus.

# **Sample Grading Criteria and Rubrics**

## **Sample 1**

## **Discussion Board Assignment Description with Evaluation Criteria**

Class participation is an important expectation of this course. Students are expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question that have been posed for each module as well as to classmate postings. Students are expected to actively participate in EACH module's discussion **EACH week** throughout the semester. The faculty role is as an observer and facilitator. I will be reading all messages and I will participate in the discussion as appropriate. Students may work ahead on the discussion boards but posting on past week's boards will not allow for stimulating discussions with your classmates.

**Evaluation of Assignment:**

Postings will be evaluated on the quality of the postings and the degree that the postings promote discussion with classmates. Participation on 15 boards is required (13 modules, Breaking the Ice and Web Sites) and postings will be evaluated per board on the below scale. Students can earn the 5 additional points by showing good effort to engage classmates in discussion comparing activities done on other graded assignments. The discussion assignment will be worth a total of 50 points.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 Point | 2 points | 3 points |
| Minimal response to the module question | Posting responds to the question but does not stimulate further class discussion. | Posting fully addresses the module question and stimulates at least one substantial follow-up posting |

## **Sample 2**

## **Discussion Board Evaluation Criteria**

The following points are what is looked for in your original postings to the Discussion Board and your replies to others postings (Total of 10 points for each Discussion Board assignment).

**Original Posting (7 points)**

1. Mentions at least **2 specific points** from the article or reading. (1 point)
2. Relation of **new information** to **old information** learned in the course to date. (1 point)
3. Relation of information in article or reading to **personal experience**. (1 point)
4. Discussion at a **critical level**, not just recitation of facts from the article. (3 points)
5. Length of posting approximately 1 word processing page. (1 point)

**Replies to Others’ Postings (3 points)**

1. Discuss one point you like/agree with, and one point you dislike/disagree with and explain why.
2. Length should be about ½ page in length.

## **Sample 3 Discussion Board Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | A (90-100)  Outstanding | B (80-89) Proficient | C (70-79) Basic | D/F (0-69) Below Expectations |
| **Critical Thinking** | * rich in content * full of thought, insight, and analysis | * substantial information * thought, insight, and analysis has taken place | * generally competent * information is thin and commonplace | * rudimentary and superficial * no analysis or insight is displayed |
| **Connections** | Clear connections to previous or current and/or to real-life situations | * new ideas or connections * lack depth and/or detail | * limited, if any connections * vague generalities | * no connections are made * off topic |
| **Uniqueness** | * new ideas * new connections * made with depth and detail | * new ideas or connections * lack depth and/or detail | * few, if any new ideas or connections * rehash or summarize other postings | * no new ideas * “I agree with…” statements |
| **Timeliness** | * All required postings * Early into the discussion * Throughout the discussion | * All required postings * Some not in time for others to read and respond | * All required postings * Most at the last minute without allowing for response time | * Some, or all, required postings missing |
| **Stylistics** | * Few grammatical or stylistic errors | * Several grammatical or stylistic errors | * Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors * Errors interfere with content | * Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors * Makes understanding impossible |

## **Sample 4 Discussion Board Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Very Good - Good** | **Satisfactory** | **Unsatisfactory** |
| **Content** | Discussed thoughtfully and with insight;  Key issues from the prompt are identified and answered;  Clear discussion with no digressions. | Discussed at surface level:  Key issues from the prompt are identified but not all are answered;  Clear discussion most of the time. | Difficult to follow;  Key issues from the prompt are not identified or answered. |
| **Context** | Posted by the assigned due date;  Few or  no stylistic errors;  Organized with direct & clear communication. | Posted by the assigned due date;  Several stylistic errors;  Weak organization, not always direct & clear communication. | Posted by the assigned due date (or late);  Many stylistic errors:  Not organized, no direct & clear communication. |
| **Resources to Extend the Discussion** | Resources that extend the discussion are added;  Link included;  Website title and 2 sentence annotation clearly explaining the content included. | Resources that extends the discussion are added;  Link included;  Website title and annotation added. | No resource added |
| **Community Responses** | Two peer responses Indicating understanding of the other author’s comments. | 1 peer response indicating understanding of the other author’s comments. | No peer response |

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## **Sample 5**

## **Discussion Board Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Promptness and Initiative** | Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely | Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion;  limited initiative | Responds to most postings within a 24-hour period; requires occasional  prompting to post | Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates  good self- initiative |
| **Delivery of Post** | Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts  appear “hasty” | Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts | Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts | Consistently uses grammatically correct posts  with rare misspellings |
| **Relevance of Post** | Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes  short or irrelevant remarks | Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no  further insight into the topic | Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts  further discussion of topic | Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional  references related to topic. |
| **Expression within the post** | Does not express opinions or ideas clearly, no connection to  topic | Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal  express of opinions or ideas | Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack  of connection to topic. | Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise  manner with obvious connection to topic |
| **Contribution to the Learning Community** | Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent | Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group’s efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group | Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts  freely | Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to  topic |