

CANVAS DISCUSSION POSTS - ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

For every text that we read or watch this semester, you will write a 250-word discussion post, to be submitted on the appropriate Canvas discussion board by 4:30pm on the day that the reading due, i.e. before the start of class. On the days when we have asynchronous classes, our class discussion will take place via the comments function on the discussion boards. For asynchronous classes, you should post at least three comments in response to your classmates' posts (three comments total, not three for every post). These can be either in direct response to someone's post or in a thread that someone else has started. I do not expect you to spend all day monitoring the discussion board, or respond to every comment that is directed towards you, but you might want to check back in once to twice, a few hours after leaving your first comments to see whether any of your comments or questions have been answered. The key to a great discussion is back and forth dialogue.

Grading

You will not get marked down for grammar or spelling errors in discussion posts or comments. You will, however, earn points for demonstrating that you have carefully read the text and begun to develop your own ideas about it. Individual posts will not receive letter grades or written feedback. Rather, at the end of the semester you will receive a grade for participation, which will take into account your discussion posts and comments as well as your attendance, punctuality and contribution to live class discussions on Zoom.

Tips for writing your post

- Consider the writer's choices: You are welcome to discuss the content of the article, and you might indicate whether or not you agree with the writer's views. Your post, however, must also pay attention to how the writer communicates their ideas. What tone are they using, what kind of evidence, language, structure, or rhetorical strategies? Most importantly, how do these techniques make the writing more or less effective? Do these strategies help to convince you to agree with the writer, or do they turn you off? Why?
- Provide evidence for your claims: Support what you say using quotations from the text. (You are not expected to cite these, although a page number can be helpful.)
- Some questions you might consider: How does the visual or written text present the idea of social "norm"? How do they present those who deviate from that norm? Who do you think the text is intended for, and how does the writer or creator make it appropriate for that audience? Does the writer use evocative description, emotional language, or metaphor, and what do these do for the piece? Note: You should not try to answer all of these questions in one post. You can—and I encourage you to—choose your own question rather than one from this list. Your posts should vary from week to week to consider different aspects of writing style and composition.

Tips for commenting on others' posts

- Engage meaningfully: Whilst a "like" or a comment that compliments the writer is great, your comment should also help to develop the writer's ideas. Can you find another example or

quotation from the text that supports your classmate's point? What have they not thought about that might help to develop their argument?

- Be positive: no trolling please! Whilst you may disagree with your classmate's interpretation of the reading, any disagreement should be framed in a constructive way. Remember that there is often no "correct" interpretation of a written text. Try to frame your comment as an alternative interpretation: "Here's another possibility..."
- Compare and contrast: Have you noticed similarities between several of the reading responses? How about trying to synthesise some of the main themes that are coming up? Alternatively, you might compare two classmates' interpretations of the same quotation or note interesting differences in their approach to the text.