Discussion Board Guidelines

GOVT E-1368
Savings Schools: History, Politics, and Policy in US Education
Prof. Paul Peterson

Procedure:

Every Monday morning, the teaching assistants will start two new threads on the discussion board. These threads will be related to the themes being studied in the video lectures and readings for that week and will include question prompts to promote deep thinking and analysis of the topics in question. Students are free to select the thread that is most appealing to them.

Students are required to upload TWO posts every week. Their initial post must be uploaded by WEDNESDAY at midnight. A second post in response to another student must be uploaded by SUNDAY at midnight. At that time, the threads for that week will be considered closed.

Completing the two posts on time every week is required and will be factored into the class participation grade.

While you can expect the teaching assistants to be actively involved in the discussion board, they will hold back on many of their comments so that the conversation can be primarily among students rather than simply being a series of conversations between the teaching assistants and individual students that everyone else observes. If a fellow student poses a question or seeks clarification on the discussion board, students shouldn’t hesitate to answer it.

Student Expectations:

Positive, constructive participation on the class discussion board is essential to the success of this course.

Students are expected to:

- Contribute interesting and insightful observations
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the readings and classmates’ comments
- Present examples that are relevant to the discussion topics
- Paraphrase the readings and classmates’ comments and build upon them
- Cite the readings and video lectures (informal citations that are not in APA style are acceptable)
- Refer to outside materials such as topical news stories or current policy debates when appropriate
- Raise thoughtful questions
- Listen and respond appropriately and respectfully to others
### How will my Discussion Board Participation be Evaluated?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory - 1</th>
<th>Average – 2</th>
<th>Exemplary – 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Follows directions for timing and frequency of posts</strong></td>
<td>Does not follow directions for the timing of initial post and follow-up. Posts are generally infrequent or rare.</td>
<td>Follows directions for timing of initial posts and follow-up.</td>
<td>Engages with classmates early in the discussion and replies to direct questions or posts that extend/challenge their ideas in a timely fashion. Postings reflect participation throughout the discussion period.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Demonstrates comprehension of content</strong></td>
<td>Posts information that is off-topic, factually incorrect, or irrelevant to the discussion.</td>
<td>Posts information that is factually correct, and verifiable. Shows reflection and understanding of the concept in question.</td>
<td>Posts are factually correct, deeply reflective, and make a substantive contribution to the discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>3. Connects and synthesizes learning</strong></td>
<td>Includes no references to readings or video lectures or supporting evidence from outside sources. Argument does not support conclusions reached. Relies exclusively on personal experience.</td>
<td>Incorporates some references from readings and video lectures. If real-life examples are cited, they are relevant to the topic under discussion. Conclusions are reasonable, given the logic of the argument.</td>
<td>Uses highly relevant references to readings, video lectures, and/or personal experience to support comments. Posts integrate learning from multiple sources—including the contributions of classmates—to advance the discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Generates and promotes learning among peers</strong></td>
<td>Posts shallow, superficial contributions that don’t enrich the class discussion.</td>
<td>Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation.</td>
<td>Demonstrates analysis of others’ posts and extends meaningful discussion by building on what has already been said.</td>
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<td><strong>5. Communicates clearly with proper etiquette, and mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Does not value or respect the contributions of classmates. Uses a tone that is unprofessional. Postings are disorganized and contain multiple grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Communicates in a friendly and courteous manner with few errors in clarity or mechanics. Student shows sensitivity to classmates and clearly values their contributions.</td>
<td>Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in a style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors. Communication is always professional and shows sensitivity towards classmates.</td>
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