

DISCUSSION BOARDS

We will use the class discussion boards to explore the assigned readings, assignments, and cases. It is essential that you prepare for these discussions by completing the the assigned readings and activities before each discussion begins. Your participation in these discussions is a key part of your overall evaluation.

Discussion Boards typically last one week. They begin on Monday and end on Sunday, midnight of the same week. You are required to make at least 1 posting of substance on 3 different days for each discussion board assignment. You are advised to go onto the discussion board early in the week to respond to the instructor's initial postings, then mid-week and at the end of the week to continue the conversation and interact with your fellow students and your instructor. You should plan on reviewing the discussion board near the end of the final day that it is active to catch all of the postings.

Here's how the discussions work:

The instructor will start the discussion at the beginning of the week by posting one or more questions on the board on that week's topic. The instructor will typically send out some readings in advance that will provide a background of the topic or issue to be discussed.

We'd like you to focus on the questions posted, either by responding directly to the instructor or to another student. This doesn't mean you can't bring in related thoughts and material, other readings, or questions that occur to you from the ongoing discussion.

You are expected to post at least one message on 3 different days for each discussion board assignment. Your postings should reflect an understanding of the readings.

Remember to revise the subject line, particularly if your posting changes topics. The subject line can help others follow the progression of the discussion.

Your postings should advance the group's negotiation of ideas and meanings about the material; that is, your contributions should go beyond a "ditto." Some ways you can further the discussion include:

- expressing opinions or observations. These should be offered in depth and supported by more than personal opinion.
- making a connection between the current discussion and previous discussions, a personal experience, or concepts from the readings,
- commenting on or asking for clarification of another student's statement,
- synthesizing other students' responses,
- or posing a substantive question aimed at furthering the group's understanding.

Please refrain from posting brief comments of agreement or approval (or even encouragement) only. Although this might make the discussion seem a bit dry or cold, we've found that it keeps the number of messages on the board more manageable, and thus makes it easier for all of us to follow the discussion. You can always include such comments as part of a longer message in which you are also continuing the thread of the discussion.

Each discussion board will normally be active for one week and then closed at midnight Pacific Time on the following Sunday. Only postings made prior to the closing time on a Sunday will receive credit. The mechanics (grammar, spelling) of your postings will also be evaluated as part of your grade as this is an important part of written communications.