

Journal Guidelines for MCOM 281

Journaling will play an important role in this course. Reflecting and writing responses in your journal will help you process the course material and to better understand and apply what you are learning.

Do not take this assignment lightly. If you do, you will deprive yourself of important learning experiences. You will be required to submit a copy of this journal as proof of your participation in the course. Your journal is worth **10 marks** of your participation grade, which is worth 20% of your course grade.

You will submit your journal four times in the term – for Units 1, 2, 4, and at the end of the course. You will be graded for these submissions according to the following:

Superior	You are exceeding expectations (Bravo!).	9-10 marks
Satisfactory	You are meeting expectations, but we hope you will add more detail and thoughtful responses.	6-8 marks
Unsatisfactory	You are not giving evidence that you are engaging with the materials and you need to submit more detailed responses. Please reread the guidelines below and make sure you are following them	1-5 marks

The following can help aid this process of journal writing.

- Be sure to read carefully all of the activity assignments and to make sure you understand what is required.
- Know the purpose of this journal: to help you better understand what you are studying and experiencing in the class. By definition it is subjective. Beyond proper definitions of terms and concepts and focusing on course content there is no right or wrong response. It is about how you are processing the material of the course and what you are learning or struggling with.
- There are no length requirements for your responses. Sometime you will have a lot to say and sometimes you won't. It is about quality not quantity.
- Take the time to “be” with the activity or question. That is, make sure you have the time to truly focus on what you are doing. Avoid distractions and fully concentrate. (Putting your cell phone away while studying can really help.)

- Sometimes you will write about a unit over several days. Be sure to date your entries with a title heading of Unit you are responding to. E.g., Unit 9 Persuasive Speeches.
- There is no official format for journaling. You can use full sentences, Bullet Points, drawing, doodling, etc. as you process your thoughts. However, sometimes you will be asked to share your thoughts and insights with your peers or Facilitator so make sure you express them well.
- Sometimes it helps to start out by quickly jotting down simple bullet point ideas and then go back and take a few of the important ones and explain them with more structure and detail.
- See if you can write one “essence” sentence (or several) that sums up what each unit meant to you. This can help cement and summarize the core learning for that unit.
- You can do your journal electronically on your computer, tablet device, or smart phone or you can write them by hand. If you do them by hand on paper or in a journal book you will be required to submit Jpeg images or photos of your pages at the end of the course to your Facilitator and Professor as part of the proof of your participation in the course.
- As part of the participatory grade, you are required to do this journal for marks, but you will not be punished for honest responses, as long as you are adequately following the guidelines. If you write some highly personal material in your journal, you do not have to submit this unless you want to.
- Don’t worry that you have to be perfect. You can make spelling, grammar, and syntax mistakes. Wonder and explore new ideas. This journal is for you to process what you are learning.
- If you find it difficult to start writing or feel “blocked,” try “free writing” where you set a timer for 5 minutes and just write anything that comes to mind. Don’t censor, don’t try to be right or correct. Just log your thoughts, feelings, and reactions in the moment for 5 minutes. If this does not jump start you, just describe your surroundings or the weather outside. If you are a doodler, begin drawing and morph the doodles into words and the words in sentences describing what you are drawing or doing. Find what works for you. These techniques will help loosen you up so that when you reflect on an activity or question you can launch into responding to it.
- If you find you are mentally blocked for this activity, or any other one in the course, because you have had a fight or conflict with someone and can only focus on that, write an “unsent letter” expressing your feelings of anger, hurt, love, etc. to that person. Vent

and let the emotions pour onto the page and then delete, burn, or tear up the response, especially if it is damaging to someone and see if this helps set you free to concentrate.

- There are many exercises to help you get warmed up and in the flow. Experiment and explore and find what works for you.
- Log questions you might have during your course readings and if they do not get answered as you journey through the course material, share them with your Facilitator, professor, or peers.
- As this is a university course, you will be exposed to new words and terms, such as Sophist. If you do not understand them, be sure to look up their definition or meaning, and keep a section in your journal for these and refer to them periodically to reinforce your understanding.
- Have fun. Have a mindset where this is an adventure – not a chore. Go deep and go far. There are many treasures to be had.