

ENGLISH 1302: Advanced College Rhetoric: Writing in Engineering Texas Tech University

Discussion Board Expectations

Conversations that we have via discussion forums will make up a major part of the work in this course. In most cases, I will pose a question or issue to you, and then you will respond to me or to your colleagues in the class. The responses will form a useful conversation about the issues we are addressing in the course. Please read the following material carefully:

We will have 17 required initial posts throughout the course, each of which require 2 responses to your classmates' posts. This means that you will write, at a minimum, 17 required initial entries and 34 responses in the discussion forums this term.

Each initial post will be awarded up to 10 points. Each response will be awarded up to 5 points. In addition, submitting your results from the online learning quiz on the first week of class will constitute another 10 points. An extra 10 points will be awarded for completing all initial posts and responses.

- 17 required initial posts x 10 points each = 170 points
- 34 required responses x 5 points each = 170 points
- Posting results from online quiz = 10 points
- Completing all posts = 10 points
- *Total = 360 points*

Requirements for Initial Posts

Reasoned Thought: I expect initial posts to reflect some reasoned thought on your part, thought beyond what you might put into a normal email or chat response. Think of them as mini-essays that help you make a clear, focused points. These posts should move beyond one simple paragraph. Remember, you're trying to develop your writing; these posts are great practice.

Detailed: Each of these primary posts should be at least 150 words, though many will probably need to be 200-300 words. (Note: I am not as interested in the actual word count as I am in the depth of your ideas. Forums for peer feedback will likely include longer posts.)

Semiformal: Your posts should contain some degree of formality: proofread, organized, etc. However, they will also be part of a dialogue, so in that regard, they will differ from an essay you turn in for a class. It is inevitable that we will take some time to reach a mutual understanding of the appropriate level of formality.

Referenced: While you won't always need formal citations in your posts, you should look for opportunities to build your argument by referencing our readings, other sources, or your colleagues' comments.

Civil: There will sometimes be disagreement in our discussion forums; it is important to use that disagreement usefully and be civil in your engagement with ideas and with each other.

Grading for Initial Posts

I will evaluate your initial posts on a 10-point scale:

- If you complete them adequately, you will receive 8s.

- If you go above and beyond the basic requirements, you will receive 9s.
- Very good—completed with a great deal of effort and thought—posts will receive 10s.

An initial post will receive a 7 or below if it

- is too short
- shows little thought
- is excessively sloppy in terms of grammar, spelling, or mechanics, especially to the point that it is difficult to understand
- lacks civility, like personal attacks
- is late

Some initial points will have slightly different criteria, like your initial introduction forum post or when we use discussion forums for peer feedback. These explanations will be provided in the prompts for those forums.

Requirements for Responses

You are responsible for reading all the posts in the class, although you can obviously focus your attention on the threads in which you are directly engaged.

Responses to classmates' posts can be shorter posts than initial posts. I will grade these similarly as secondary posts, but on a 5-point scale. Adequate posts will receive 4s, and going above and beyond the basic requirements will receive 5s. Scores of 3 or below will be earned if secondary posts show little thought, are excessively sloppy, lacks civility, or are late.

Additional Posts

You are not limited to the 34 required responses: Feel free to post as many shorter, informal comments on the message threads as you like; for instance, a couple of lines to clarify a point or to state your agreement with another author's point of view.

Those of you who are diligent and become active members of these conversations will find that you will receive a high grade for the message board component of the course. If you post more than the minimum required posts, you will be eligible for extra credit in the course (some of you may naturally find that you have more to say on some of our topics this term, so I want to reward you if you put in extra work on some of the message boards).

Staying Current

One of your responsibilities in taking an online version of a writing course is that you will make it a daily habit to check the message boards and stay current on the conversations taking there.