

Preparation and Engagement (total = 20 pts)

As a seminar course, this class relies heavily on discussions. In the first class of the semester, we will discuss what participation can look like and create community guidelines for discussion. Once this is agreed upon by all participants, I will add this to our syllabus. We will remind ourselves of these guidelines throughout the semester. While we all aim to support and participate in constructive ways, there may be times when we (me included) make mistakes. In such situations, we will call back to our community guidelines.

To ensure that everyone is accountable for thoroughly engaging with the readings and presentations (and for skill-building for future seminars or professional meetings!), your active engagement and participation during class will contribute to your final grade. There are different ways of participating and engaging constructively in classroom discussions. You will typically find that there are no clear right or wrong answers - just different ways of making arguments for/against a finding. Generally speaking, effective engagement could include:

- Asking clarifying questions;
- Connecting the reading to other readings you've done either for this course or for any other purposes;
- Drawing parallels and/or contrasts between findings from different readings;
- Offering thoughtful critiques of the research methodology and/or interpretation and providing suggestions for how it might be improved;
- Bringing in outside sources that contribute to the findings, or the way they are interpreted and applied;
- Actively listening to classmates and responding to their ideas
- Summarizing your thoughts on the notecards at the end of the class
- Attending drop-in hours and engaging in discussions about any lingering thoughts you had or have after the class (Note: You cannot get full engagement points by solely using this to show your engagement, but it can add to your points from using other ways).

There may be some of you who find it difficult to participate regularly in class discussions. If you are concerned about your ability to contribute to class discussions or if your style of participation doesn't match the above, please see me during drop-in hours by Week 2 (i.e. by Sept 14, 2023). We can come up with other peer-to-peer engagement strategies, but I need to approve this by email before it can count towards your engagement points.

Engagement and participation is an essential component of this course and of your grade, and you are expected to attend and actively engage in each class period. There are no points for attendance, but unexcused absences will count against your participation grade (please see Excused Absence under Class Attendance on pg 10 for more details). You can find a rubric for how I will assess participation and engagement in Syllabus Appendix A.

Since it can be worrying to not receive any feedback until the end of the semester, we will have regular self-reflection and check-ins with my feedback.

Self-Reflection (1 pt)

You will complete a quick self-reflection and set goals for your participation in Week 4 of the semester (by Sept 29th, 11:59 p.m.; see Syllabus Appendix A for the rubric and self-reflection prompts). I will read your reflection, and provide my feedback on whether you meet the participation criteria and if there are ways for you to better engage in the class discussions. This will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis: if you have completed an honest and thoughtful self-reflection, you can expect to get the 1 pt.

Midterm Check-In (3 pts)

I will provide midterm check-in points based on your preparation and engagement during Weeks 1-7 (before midterm). Importantly, the grades will be based on whether you have incorporated the feedback I provided during the self-reflection in Week 4 and whether you have begun working towards the goals you set. I will also provide further feedback here on whether you are on the right track or whether you need to change how you are engaging.

Week 9 Check-In (6 pts)

You will complete another self-reflection and answer some prompts about your own engagement and participation skill-building journey. This is due by Week 9 (by Nov 2nd, 11:59 p.m.; see Syllabus Appendix A for the rubric and check-in prompts). Completing an honest and thoughtful self-reflection will get you the 2 pts. The rest of the 4 pts will be based on your participation from Weeks 1-9 of the semester. I will weigh the later weeks more strongly if you have improved your engagement in response to my feedback and if you're on track to meet your goals by the end of the semester.

Final Grade (10 pts)

I will grade your engagement throughout the entire semester for this final grade. If you improve your participation and engagement in response to my feedback at the self-reflection and check-ins, I will weigh that more strongly in your final grade. Meeting the engagement goals set by you in Week 4 of the semester will also factor into this grade.

Why am I doing this?

Effective engagement and participation is a skill that takes time and effort to build. Regardless of the career you choose to pursue, you will need to effectively communicate and engage with your colleagues and peers. All of you have different strengths, but also different areas with room for improvement. Thus, the preparation and engagement assessment is structured to help you improve your skills through self-reflection with instructor feedback at regular intervals.