**Discussion Board Rubric**

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| **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory-Beginning** | **Developing** | **Accomplished** | **Exemplary** | **Total** |
| **Ideas, Arguments, & Analysis** | **0-30 points** | **35-39 points** | **40-44 points** | **45-50 points** | /50 |
| Ideas expressed lack an understanding of the discussion topic. Comments are irrelevant, off-topic, and/or confusing to follow. Viewpoint, if given, is not supported with evidence or examples. | Ideas expressed in discussion posts show a minimal understanding of the discussion topic. Comments are general in nature and/or occasionally may not be relevant. Rehashes or summarizes ideas with limited analysis, original thought, and/or supported viewpoints. | Ideas expressed in discussion posts are mostly substantive and relevant to topic; some original thought. Demonstrates logical thinking, reasoning, and/or analysis for most part. Viewpoint is supported with evidence and/or examples. | Ideas expressed in discussion posts include original thought, substantial depth, and are relevant to topic. Viewpoint shows strong logical thinking, reasoning, and analysis with evidence and examples. Construction of new meaning and insights are evident. |
| **Connection to Course Materials** | **0-13 points** | **14-15 points** | **16-17 points** | **18-20 points** | /20 |
| No connections are made to readings or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.), and/or if made, are not clearly stated and are largely personal opinions. | Minimal direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.). Connections are largely inferred and somewhat unclear at times. | Some direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated for the most part. | Strong, direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated. |
| **Contribution to Learning Community** | **0-13 points** | **14-15 points** | **16-17 points** | **18-20 points** | /20 |
| Negligible contribution to the learning community. Rarely engages with students and generally ignores others’ posts and/or has a negative effect through misrepresenting content in other posts, inappropriate comments made, and/or attempts to dominate the discussion. | Somewhat contributes to the learning community but the focus is generally on own posts. Occasionally interacts with others’ postings but little attempt to involve other students in the discussion. Short statements such as “I agree with…”. | Contributes to the learning community. Often attempts to direct group discussion to present relevant viewpoints and meaningful reflection by others. Interacts respectfully with students. | Effectively contributes to the learning community. Frequently initiates dialogue and motivates group discussion by providing feedback to students’ postings, asking follow-up questions, and through thoughtful, reflective comments. Respectfully encourages a variety of viewpoints and invites contributions from others. |

**Discussion Board Rubric (continued)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory-Beginning** | **Developing** | **Accomplished** | **Exemplary** | **Total** |
| **Writing Quality** | **0-6 points** | **7 points** | **8 points** | **9-10 points** | /10 |
| Posts show a below average/poor writing style that lacks standard English, and/or is difficult for readers to follow. Contains frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling. | Posts show an average and/or casual writing style using standard English that is generally clear but contains some errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling. | Discussion posts show above average writing style that is clear using standard English with minor errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and/or spelling. | Discussion posts are well written and clearly articulated using standard English, characterized by elements of a strong writing style with correct grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling. |
| **Required Postings/ Timeliness** | **Deduct 4 points-overall failing** | **Deduct 1-3 points** | **No points deducted** | **1 bonus point** | /-- |
| Some required postings missing by deadline &/or there was not adequate time for others to read and respond to postings prior to deadline. | All required postings by deadline; however there was not adequate time for others to read and respond to some postings prior to deadline. | All required postings by deadline (required=1 posting + 2 replies to classmates); adequate time for others to read and respond prior to deadline. | Exceeds required postings; postings are early into the discussion and throughout the discussion; provides more than enough time for classmates to read and respond prior to deadline. |
| **TOTAL POINTS (sum of 5 Criteria)** | | | | | **/100** |

**Instructor Guide and Notes**

* Sharing and discussing your Discussion Board Rubric with students is a good idea so that you can all come to a common understanding of what is expected and how students’ participation will be graded. Students should be able to visibly see a link to the Discussion Board Rubric at the beginning of each Discussion Board in web-enhanced, hybrid, or fully online courses.
* Rubrics make the process of grading more objective, consistent, and quicker (in the long run).
* Rubrics can also be used when reviewing any grade appeals.
* When grading:
  + Pick three students’ discussion posts at random and “practice” grading them using the Rubric so you get a better feel for it.
  + Focus on the “Exemplary” mastery level (category) on each criterion before the other mastery levels (i.e., Accomplished, Developing, Beginning-Unsatisfactory) when evaluating and grading each student’s discussion posts. The Exemplary mastery level articulates the highest learning outcome.
* If the rubric doesn’t do what you want, adjust it, if needed. However, be careful to maintain a similar “weighting” of criteria (i.e., “content” should be a significantly higher weighting than the “mechanics” of discussion posts). Also, be aware that the “points” assigned for each mastery level have been mathematically calculated and proportioned as follows: Exemplary is ~ 90-100%; Accomplished is ~80-89%; Developing is ~ 70-79%; and Beginning-Unsatisfactory is ~ 0-69%.
* This Discussion Board Rubric will work with both “percentage-based” grading systems and “points-based” grading systems. For percentage-based grading systems, it is important that the overall points add up to 100 points to work properly with the Gradebook in the course management system (e.g., eCollege, Sakai, etc.).
* It is recommended that instructors include a “model” of an Exemplary “original” post and an Exemplary “reply” so students have a frame of reference.