Weekly Discussion Forums are the place in our online learning community where you will engage in dialogue with each other about course readings and assignments. Class discussion is an essential part of your learning process in this class. By posting our comments on readings, we challenge ourselves to reflect on these readings and articulate our ideas in writing. By “listening” and interacting with each other, it allows us an opportunity to expand our thinking.

Each post should be at least five (5) complete sentences and each comment and reply should be at least three (3) complete sentences. All written paragraph-style.

Be curious about the things we read, and about the ideas you encounter in these readings. Remember, ‘critical thinking’ does not mean solving the puzzle, getting the right answer, or somehow conquering confusion. Rather, it is the process of interacting with a text, to figure it out in some ways but to also figure out specifically how it confuses or challenges you. Our Discussion Forums are the place to engage with each other about this stuff!

To ensure a vibrant learning community, everybody is expected to participate actively in these discussion forums. Being active will mean checking in every day. Your participation consists of three different components:

1. An initial post that answers the prompt given in the directions to the discussion forum.

2. Replies to at least two classmates’ initial posts, that respond to, incorporate, extend, or ask questions about those classmates’ ideas.

3. Replies to each person who replies to you.
Often, there will be specific instructions for our Discussion Forums, though they will always be oriented around these basic ideas:

- Post the ideas that most intrigued you about the course texts for the week.
- Post a question about something in the reading that caused you confusion or provoked a strong reaction.
- Post topic ideas, questions, or tips for essay assignments.
- Post a comment on a particular strategy used in one of our readings.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

- All posts are completed on time and follow any specific directions given.
- Posts demonstrate active reading of all readings/texts assigned for each week.
- Posts push beyond the obvious or superficial to ask probing questions and frequently attempt to examine the questions posed by you and classmates; successful posts often make clear connections among ideas from our reading, writing, and discussion.
- Posts show evidence of engagement and thoughtfulness: they are written for a sustained period of time (not hurried to get done before the post is due).
- Posts provide details/examples to illustrate ideas and cite specific examples or quotes properly in parentheses. Example: Trimble writes, "A beginning chess player faces many of the same problems" (4).
- Posts are respectful and maintain a civil tone even when disagreeing.