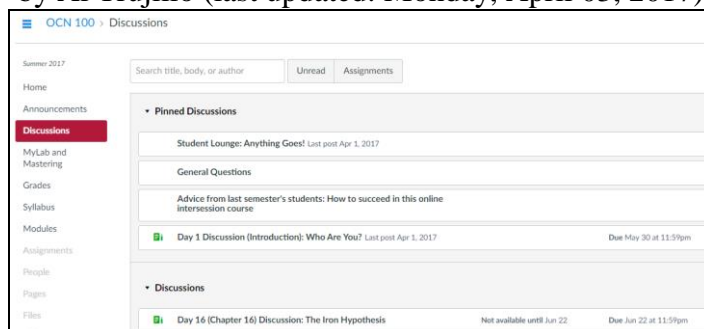# FAQ: Discussion Assignment Posts and Replies
Oceanography 100 Online (Intersession Classes - Canvas)
by Al Trujillo (last updated: Monday, April 03, 2017)
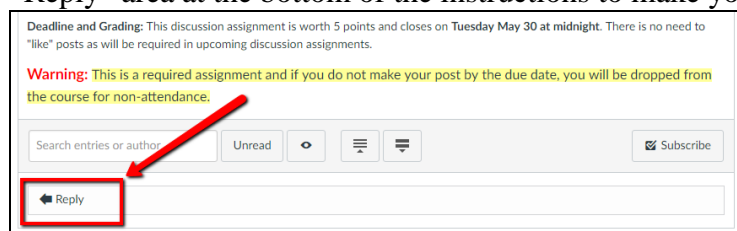

What Is a Discussion?

A "Discussion" is a feature in Canvas that allows everyone in class to discuss, debate, or answer class questions. You might think about it like a real bulletin board where questions and replies are posted on sheets of paper. At various times during the semester, will be asked to reflect on and respond to discussion questions posed by your instructor. You will need to post your contribution to the topic at the course Canvas site. Your contribution to the topic should be clear, complete, and accurate. Each discussion assignment also requires that you read the posts submitted by your classmates, reply to at least two of those postings, and "like" at least three other students' posts. In summary, most discussions require you to make 1 initial post, 2 replies, and 3 "likes."

The types of things that make good posts add value to the discussion and include such items as:
- a real-world, practical example
- posting a content-related Website or images from the Web
- giving a personal example (something related to the topic that happened to you)
- asking questions of your fellow classmates
- bringing in some information or images from the textbook, from the videos at the course Canvas site, from the Internet, or from some outside reading to support your opinion

How Do I Make My Post?

To make a post to a discussion, enter the "Discussions" area of the course. For each discussion assignment, click on the appropriate discussion, read the assigned instructions, and click on the "Reply" area at the bottom of the instructions to make your post.

Please make sure you completely answer all the questions. Also, make sure you check your posts for errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammar (this is not a text message!). When you are ready to make your post, click on the red "Post Reply" button in the lower right. You will then see your post in the "thread" in the discussion of the topic. You may go back at any time to edit your post.

I strongly recommend that you carefully compose your posts on a word processing program. Before

making your post, check it for punctuation, spelling, and grammatical errors; then save it and copy and paste it into your discussion post. It is important that you save your document in your word processing program before you paste it into the discussion. If, for whatever reason, Canvas "eats" or "loses" your post, you can then just copy and paste it into the discussion again from your word processing document. Note that *"The online discussion/computer/ Canvas ate my post!"* is not a legitimate excuse in this class!

Lastly, do not attach a document file by using the paper clip option because not everybody will be able to open it. Rather, copy and paste your text into your post instead.

How Do I Make A Reply to Another Student's Post?
When you are ready to reply to a post by one of your classmates, go to the discussion and click on the post of the person to which you want to reply. Then click on the "Reply" area below and compose (or, preferably, copy and paste) your post. Click "Submit Reply" when you are done. You will then see your reply as a "thread" in the discussion of the topic.

In your replies to other students' posts, you can:
- Expand on or clarify a point made in the student's post
- Offer an additional argument to support a position taken in the post
- Suggest ways in which an idea could be more clearly expressed
- Identify passages where you think the writer misunderstood a concept or applied it incorrectly
- Disagree with a point or position made in a post

As in all discussions that require replies to other students' posts, **always use that student's name in your reply** (Ex: *"John, your post made me think differently about this topic because..."*). Note that you must also "like" 3 other students' posts.

In some discussions, you won't be able to see other students' posts until you make your own initial post.

How Do I "Like" Other Students' Posts?

To "like" other students' posts, thoroughly read the post and if you believe it's a strong and thoughtful post, then click on the "thumbs up" symbol near the bottom of the post. This affects the "Overall Rating," which is a combined rating of everyone who has "liked" the post. Note that you cannot "like" your own posts.

When Should I Make My Post?
Most discussion assignments will be posted on 12:00 am (wee hours of the morning) when a new module is released. Your discussion post must be submitted no later than **midnight** of the same day. In addition, you must make at least two replies to other students' posts and you must "like" at least 3 other students' posts by the **following day at noon**. Late discussion posts will be marked down -5 points per day or fraction thereof! Do not wait until the last minute to make your posts. Posting early allows you to write thoughtful answers and to be the first one to select a particular Website or initiate important dialogue (and thus earn more points for the assignment). In addition, posting early ensures that you will not miss the deadline.

What Guidelines for Posts Are There?
The class discussions are not an informal chat room. Your posts and replies should be thoughtful,

considerate, and must use appropriate college-level language and grammar (texting abbreviations are not acceptable):

Unacceptable	Acceptable English and grammar
i think ur post is gr8	*I think your post is great.*
me too when i c wtr on da ground i go GRRRRR	*Me, too. When I see water on the ground, it makes me angry about the wasted water.*

Posts and replies that use vulgar language, seek to degrade others, or are blatantly offensive will be removed from the system and the author of those posts will be given 0 points for the assignment.

If you disagree with the views of another student, please be constructive and respectful (as if you were talking to them face-to-face). You may criticize a position but not the author. For example, just writing *"Your position on marine pollution is lame"* will not do! Rather, state precisely the point in which you disagree and make sure you have not misinterpreted the other student's position. Offer reasons why you think their view is incorrect and support your position by citing the textbook or other sources.

A good discussion post and reply will have some of all of the following characteristics:
- There are virtually no errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, or English usage
- All parts of the original question are completely answered
- Sentences are smooth and carefully constructed; words chosen are clear, accurate, and precise
- Uses class concepts and terms
- Clearly defined vague or ambiguous terms (including acronyms or abbreviations)
- The post avoids triteness and unsupported generalizations
- The post uses supporting information that clearly supports the position and the information is sufficient and specific to the topic
- The ideas reflect critical thinking and insight
- The content has depth and substance; there is some originality and the post or reply holds the reader's interest

Lastly, a reply that reads something to the effect of "*I agree*," "*Nice*," "*YES!!!*" or is generally a short, weak statement that expresses no insight will receive 0 points.

What Are the Students' Responsibilities in Discussion Posts?
The purpose of the discussion assignments is for students to reflect thoughtfully and exchange ideas on the topics covered in this course. As a class, you will benefit from discussion assignments only as much as you put into it. Last minute posts that are inaccurate, sloppy, unorganized, and unclear help no one. If you find that a post is unclear or inaccurate, it is your role to ask you classmate for further clarification or to point out the inaccuracy. If someone replies to your post with a question, you owe him or her the courtesy of a reply. You are also responsible for making your initial post and replies before the deadline.

What Are the Instructor's Responsibilities in Discussion Posts?
During the day that the assignment is active, I will read <u>all</u> the posts and the replies on the discussion. The role of the instructor is not to answer every comment or question but to frame issues and extend the discussions through leading and directed questions. I may comment, where appropriate, on those posts or discussion threads that contain inaccuracies or where there seems to be some confusion. I will also point out those posts or discussions that I consider to be particularly thoughtful, insightful, or well-written.

How Are the Discussion Posts Graded?

Each discussion assignment has a value of 10 points (note that not every day has a discussion assignment). Your initial post to the questions is worth up to 7 points, your replies to other students' post are worth up to 2 points, and your "like" of at least 3 other students' posts is worth 1 point. A complete, accurate, thoughtful, and well-written initial post and replies will receive 10 points. Points will be deducted based on the following criteria or rubric:

- **Clarity and Usage**: 1 to 5 points will be deducted for any post in which the language in your post or reply is so muddled as to be unclear; or if words chosen are generally inaccurate or imprecise; or if there are errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar that are highly distracting; or if English usage is not at an appropriate college level (this is not texting!); or if there is a disrespectful or inappropriate tone or language.
- **Content and Completeness**: 1 to 5 points will be deducted if no class concepts and/or terms are used; or if there are a lack of supporting details; if parts of the initial questions are not answered or not answered completely; or if you make a weak post or reply.
- **Accuracy**: 1 to 5 points will be deducted if a post is inaccurate, sloppy, unorganized, or appears to be composed without much forethought or consideration.
- **No attached document file as your post**: 2 points will be deducted if you use the paper clip icon to attach your post as a file; you must copy and paste your text into your post instead (but note that including or attaching images is fine).
- **Using student names when replying to other students' posts**: 2 points will be deducted if you do not use a student's name in your replies to other students' posts. As in all discussions that require replies to other students' posts, always use that student's name in your reply (Ex: *"John, your post made me think differently about this topic because..."*).
- **Timeliness**: 7 points will be deducted if you fail to make a post more than 24 hours past the deadline; up to 5 points will be deducted for late posts (late posts are marked down -5 points per day or fraction thereof); 2 points will be deducted if you fail to post replies to two other students' posts by the deadline (0 points for late replies); 1 point will be deducted if you fail to "like" at least 3 other students' posts by the deadline (0 points for late "likes"). This means that NO credit (0 points) will be given for any post or reply that is made 24 hours past the usual deadline. Note that there are no "make-ups" for missed discussion assignments.

No more than ten (10) points will be deducted from a person's point total.

Note that exceptional posts or replies may receive Extra Credit bonus points.