

# CE 401 FALL 2022 Group Discussion Procedures

## OVERVIEW

Each week, there will be discussion questions based on the reading and video assignments for the week. These discussion questions will provide one basis for in class discussions on Friday. The number of questions for the week, and the number of questions that each discussion group must address during the week vary. There will be 15 sets of discussion questions over the course of 14 weeks, and each set of discussion questions are worth up to 15 points. The grade will consist of the highest 14 discussion grades, with the lowest discussion set out of 15 being ignored, for a maximum possible 210 points for the semester.

This is an important activity for class preparation and is participation each week is mandatory, even when a student will be absent from class on the following Friday. **Please make every reasonable effort to understand and follow these procedures and meet the timing requirements because failure to do negatively affects your discussion group partners.**

## GROUP FORMATION

Depending upon the total enrollment in the section, there will be three to six (3-6) fixed groups consisting of three to five students for discussion question activities throughout the semester. I will randomly assign students to discussion groups for week 1's class session, and you will be able to form your own fixed groups to work together for the rest of the semester.

Since it will be better if you form your own discussion groups, you will have until Monday, August 29, 2022 at 5:00 PM to form a discussion group that will stand for the remainder of the semester. To create your own discussion group, send an email to [ce-401@windstream.net](mailto:ce-401@windstream.net) with the subject (Discussion Group Formation Request) no later than Monday, August 29, 2022 at 5 PM. **Your email must identify all prospective group members and have each prospective group member's email address in either the "From" or "Cc" boxes of the email so I can communicate with the entire group using the "Reply All" option.** I will acknowledge your email with a reply to all members in which provide your group's designation, e.g. Group A, B, C, D, E, or F.

Subject to change and based on current enrollment levels, both sections will have 6 groups. Groups will typically be four people, but could range in size from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 5, depending upon final enrollment levels. If enrollments indicate variable group sizes and if you want a specific size group within the available size range, you must be first to request it until all available groups of that size are fully subscribed. If you request a maximum sized group after these groups have been fully subscribed, I will notify you by return email that you must reform your group request to fit the group sizes still available at that time. If you request a minimum sized group, it could be necessary to add another student to your group if all students do not self-organize into groups. I will randomly assign any student who does not request a specific group prior to Monday, August 29, 2022 at 5 PM, to a group for the

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remainder of the semester. I will notify all students by 6 PM on Monday, August 29, 2022 via a CANVAS Announcement of the group assignments for the remainder of the semester.

### INTERIM GROUPS FOR FIRST CLASS MEETING

For the initial class meeting, I have randomly assigned each student to a group for the sole purpose of initiating the weekly group discussion process for our initial class session in Week 1, and I have randomly selected one group member to function as this group's "Leader" for each Week 01 discussion question. I will notify all students via a CANVAS Announcement of the Week 1 interim group assignments and leader assignments by August 20, 2022.

Each group will have a specific table for seating during class so the group members can sit together during class, even for Week 1. For Week 1, there are six (6) discussion questions, and I have assigned each Week 01 Interim Group to address three (3) of those questions.

### THE WEEKLY PROCESS

1. Each student should determine the group's assigned discussion questions for the upcoming week and confirm CANVAS access for your group's assigned questions.
  - CANVAS will release the activities for the upcoming week at 12:01 AM on Saturday.
  - I will post a matrix showing the group assignments on the CE-401 webpage at: [http://richardcheeks.com/professor/New%20Front%20Page%20Format/CE-401\\_Front\\_Page.htm](http://richardcheeks.com/professor/New%20Front%20Page%20Format/CE-401_Front_Page.htm) and the matrix will look like the example shown below:

Timely Initial Posts: 0.0%			Last Update 12-May-22 1:14 PM				
Section 1			Discussion Question Activity Report				
Question	Group	Leader	1	2	3	4	5
1	A	Avalos	Avalos	Clark	Latham	Tan	
1	D	Billings	Billings	Hale	Mineer	Willett	
1	F	Chism	Chism	Lane	Mullins	Young	
2	A	Clark	Avalos	Clark	Latham	Tan	
2	C	Beckman	Beckman	Gevedon	Mesta, III	Ward	
2	F	Lane	Chism	Lane	Mullins	Young	
3	A	Tan	Avalos	Clark	Latham	Tan	
3	C	Mesta, III	Beckman	Gevedon	Mesta, III	Ward	
3	E	Brown	Brown	Hawkins	Molitor	Williams	
4	B	Bailey	Bailey	Garner	Marinov	Thomas	
4	C	Gevedon	Beckman	Gevedon	Mesta, III	Ward	
4	E	Hawkins	Brown	Hawkins	Molitor	Williams	
5	B	Garner	Bailey	Garner	Marinov	Thomas	
5	D	Hale	Billings	Hale	Mineer	Willett	
5	E	Molitor	Brown	Hawkins	Molitor	Williams	
6	B	Marinov	Bailey	Garner	Marinov	Thomas	
6	D	Mineer	Billings	Hale	Mineer	Willett	
6	F	Lane	Chism	Lane	Mullins	Young	

Font Legend

non-bold No post made, time for posting remains	non-bold Late Post before consensus, 20% loss
<b>Bold Post made within Time</b>	<b>Bold Post is made after consensus, 60% loss</b>
Non-Bold Leader-No Consensus Posted, -5 Points	<i>Ital. non-bold No Post Made, 100% loss</i>

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Please note: The top section identifies the Section Number, Week Number, and a date and time stamp indicating the last update moment; the left frame shows the question number, the Group assignments for each question, and the Group Member who is the “Leader” for that question and group. The right frame shows the group members; and the bottom summarizes the meaning and significance of the color and font characteristics.

In the right frame, the font indicates the status of a member’s participation on the question as follows:

- Black-non bold: The starting condition before any activity.
- Black-Bold:** Member has posted on the question prior to the initial posting deadline for the week, midnight Tuesday.
- Red-Italics:* Member has not posted on the topic as of the initial posting deadline, midnight Tuesday.
- Red:** Member posted on the question after the initial posting deadline and before the Group Leader posts the group’s consensus.
- Red-Bold:** Member posted on the question after the Group Leader posted the group’s consensus.

In the left frame, the font indicates the status of the leader’s participation on the question as follows:

- Black-non bold: The leader has not posted a group consensus.
- Black-Bold:** The Leader has posted a Group Consensus.

- I will post the starting matrix for the upcoming week’s questions by Friday of the prior week.
  - I will update the matrix for the current discussion activities throughout the week, and the date and time stamp documents the most recent update.
  - I will remove the matrix for a completed week after the Friday class sessions.
  - The information on this matrix provides the basis for the week’s discussion question activities point totals.
2. Each student should complete the assigned readings and view the assigned videos for the week PRIOR to responding to the discussion questions. **It is essential that you respond to the questions ONLY after you have read and viewed all of the assigned materials.**

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**Otherwise, your posts will probably be non-responsive to the question and impede your group's progress toward consensus on the question.**

3. Each student should post an initial response to each assigned question ONLY in a group discussion thread created specifically for the Group's private conversation.
  - **DO NOT POST ANY REPLIES ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE DISCUSSION TOPIC AS I WILL DELETE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!! DELETED POSTS CANNOT BE RECOVERED.**
  - **IF YOU CANNOT ACCESS YOUR GROUP'S DISCUSSION THREAD, CONTACT ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN RESOLVE THE CANVAS ISSUE.**
4. Each student should write and post an initial response to each assigned question in cogent sentences and paragraphs. After a student has posted an initial response in the Group's Thread, CANVAS will allow that student to view the responses already submitted by other group members and participate in the conversation within the thread that follows the initial postings. **DO NOT POST EMPTY RESPONSES TO GAIN ACCESS TO OTHERS' POSTS. THIS PRACTICE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED WITH POINTS LOST!**
  - Each student should make the initial post into this group discussion thread (not the front page) no later than midnight Tuesday, unless otherwise noted. This will provide 2 days for the leader to bring the group to a consensus on the question.
    1. In addition, each group member should revisit the thread to understand the range of responses provided by the entire group membership, and
    2. If a group member wants to modify an initial response, the group member should do so in a new post that explains the change and why it occurs. **DO NOT EDIT YOUR POSTS!!!**
  - The Group Leader is responsible for leading the group to a consensus.
    1. **Consensus = Agreement.** The questions can elicit a range of views, and the discussion that occurs between members' initial posting and the leader's consensus posting should reveal how the group reconciled their differences in reaching agreement.
    2. The leader can initiate the consensus building process at any time after all group members have posted an initial response to the question or after the midnight Tuesday initial posting deadline, **whichever occurs first.**
    3. The consensus building process requires a discussion among and between the group members, with the leader's function to maintain focus and bring the group to agreement on the question.
      - While you could engage in these group discussions and consensus building activities outside the CANVAS environment, you should build the consensus within CANVAS, in a transparent process that includes responsive posts within the group discussion thread, so all members of the group can participate in the process and be completely aware of the group's ideas and the development of the consensus.

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- Each leader will apply his/her own leadership style to bring the group to a consensus.
  - Discussion and debate should continue until the leader brings the group to a consensus on the question or time for discussion expires late on Thursday, at which time the leader may find it necessary to post a majority-minority report as noted in 5 below.
4. When the leader has led the group to consensus, the leader should post the consensus into the group discussion thread to conclude the activity of that group for that question, clearly identifying the post as **THE CONSENSUS**.
  5. A Consensus is **NEITHER** a summary of the expressed points of view **NOR** the leader's point of view. A Consensus is the group's agreed upon conclusion. If the leader cannot bring the group to a consensus, the leader's final post should provide a detailed explanation why consensus is not possible, together with a majority and minority report.
    - For an even numbered group size (4 members), the majority-minority view should not be an even 2-2 split and can only reflect a 3-1 split. For odd numbered group sizes (3 or 5 members), the majority-minority view may be either a 2-1, 3-2, or 4-1 split.
    - If the leader cannot bring the group to a consensus position by 9 PM Thursday evening, the leader should then post the majority and minority report to the question within CANVAS, indicating the number of group members holding the majority and minority views.
    - I will neither accept a minority-majority report prior to 9 PM nor without enough evidence of the group's stalled discussion contained in the group thread. **A leader should not use the majority-minority report as an easy exit strategy when the leader did not work diligently to develop a consensus.**
  - In class on Friday, the leader shall serve as the primary, but not exclusive, spokesperson for the group on that question. If a leader cannot be present in class on Friday, the leader should delegate leader reporting responsibilities to another member of the group for that Friday's class session; and the leader should notify me of the anticipated absence and the name of the substitute in-class leader no later than 9 PM on Thursday
5. Weekly participation in these group discussion activities is worth a maximum of 15 points.
    - Each discussion question participation is worth at least 5 points, except:
      1. Two Modules will have only one question worth 15 points, and
      2. One Module will have one question worth 10 points and another question worth 5 points.
    - Posting on the front page of a discussion question will **NOT** earn points, and
    - Posting responses for unassigned questions will **NOT** earn points.
  6. Deductions from these maximum points will occur under the following circumstances:

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- If a student has not posted an initial response to a question in the discussion group thread by midnight on Tuesday, that student's participation will be "red-flagged" as late, and if a post occurs before the consensus post, the late posting student will lose 20% (1 of 5, 2 of 10, or 3 of 15) of the available points for that question.
  - If a student makes an initial post in the group's discussion thread after the Leader posts the consensus for that group, that student's participation will be "Bold Red-Flagged," losing 60% (3 of 5, 6 of 10, or 9 of 15) of the available points for that question.
  - If a student does not post into the group's discussion thread by midnight Thursday, that student will lose all points for that question.
  - In summary:
    1. 100% (5, 10, or 15 points) for timely initial participation
    2. 80% (4, 8, or 12 points) for late participation of initial posting
    3. 40% (2, 4, or 6 points) for very late participation of initial posting AFTER the leader posts the group's consensus, and
    4. 0% (0 points) for no participation.
  - If the leader does not post a consensus on the topic by Midnight Thursday, the leader loses five (5) points, despite the number of points the leader earned for the questions for the week in question. This could result in a negative score for the week.
  - No point deductions will occur based on the content of a student's initial response **UNLESS** I conclude that the student's initial posting is non-responsive to the question and indicates a failure to read the assigned materials prior to posting the response based solely on my subjective opinion.
    1. If I conclude that a student's initial post is non-responsive, I will notify that student with a CANVAS IM of the point deduction and the reason for the deduction.
    2. I will give the student time to supplement the initial posting to potentially earn some of the deducted points by posting a "reply" post to that student's initial posting.
7. As I read posts during the week, I may post comments and questions into a thread.
- These posts do not require a specific response from any student engaged in that discussion unless I ask for a reply to a specific question.
  - My posts may provide a different perspective or context for the issue under consideration.
  - When my posts occur within a Group's discussion thread, I am directing the post to the members of that specific group.
  - When my posts occur on the front page of the discussion question, I am directing the post to all groups assigned that specific question.
  - If I need to issue more information on any matter during the week to all students, I will use the Announcement process within CANVAS.