CE 401 FALL 2021 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 15 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 total of 210 points for the semester.

This is an important activity for class preparation and is mandatory, even when a student may be absent from class on Friday. **Please make reasonable efforts to understand and follow these procedures.**

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 for the duration of the semester, beginning with week 2. I will assign students to discussion groups week 1's class session.

Since it will be better if you form your own discussion groups, you will have until Monday, August 30, 2021 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 with the subject (Discussion Group Formation) by Monday, August 30, 2021 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, and I will notify you of your group's designation, e.g. Group A, B, C, D, E, or F.

Based on current enrollment levels and subject to change, section 1 will have either 4 or 5 groups and section 2 will probably have six groups. Groups will range in size from a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4. If you want a specific size group, 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 satisfy remaining group sizes available at that time. If you request a minimum sized group, it may be necessary to add another student to your group if all students do not organize into groups. I will randomly assign any student who does not request a specific group prior to Monday, August 30, 2021 at 5 PM, to a group for the remainder of the semester. I will notify all students by 6 PM on Monday, August 30, 2021 by CANVAS Announcement of the group assignments for the remainder of the semester.

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INTERIM GROUPS FOR FIRST CLASS MEETING

For the first class meeting, I have randomly assigned each student to a group for the sole purpose of initiating the weekly group discussion process for our first 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 with a CANVAS Announcement of the Week 1 interim group assignments and leader assignments by August 21, 2021.

Each group will have a specific table or seating location during class so the groups 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 on the 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 and the matrix will look like the example shown below:

Timely Initial Posts: 0.0% Last Update 23-Jul-21 4:48 PM

Section 1 Week 1 Discussion Question Activity Report

Question	Group	Leader	1	2	3	4	5
1	A	Arnold	Arnold	Heyer	Oldfield IV		
1	D	Dillon	Dillon	Klass	Sickles		
1	F						
2	A	Heyer	Arnold	Heyer	Oldfield IV		
2	C	DeNeve	DeNeve	Kiser	Shivers		
2	F						
3	A	Oldfield IV	Arnold	Heyer	Oldfield IV		
3	C	Shivers	DeNeve	Kiser	Shivers		
3	E	Figueroa Rodriguez	Figueroa Rodı	Mendez Herna	Walton		
4	B	Clark	Clark	Jaggers	Ross		
4	C	Kiser	DeNeve	Kiser	Shivers		
4	E	Mendez Hernandez	Figueroa Rodı	Mendez Herna	Walton		
5	B	Jaggers	Clark	Jaggers	Ross		
5	D	Klass	Dillon	Klass	Sickles		
5	E	Walton	Figueroa Rodı	Mendez Herna	Walton		
6	B	Ross	Clark	Jaggers	Ross		
6	D	Sickles	Dillon	Klass	Sickles		
6	F						

Font Legend

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

Please note: The top section provides 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 identification, 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 member 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.
Red:	Member posted on the question after midnight Tuesday 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 leader 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 stamps memorialize 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 <u>PRIOR</u> to responding to the discussion questions.**
   - **It is essential that you respond to the questions <u>ONLY</u> after you have read and viewed all of the assigned materials. Otherwise, your posts will probably be unresponsive to the question.**
   - If you identify which discussion questions you must address before you read and watch, you can read and watch the material with a better focus; however,
   - It is also essential that you read and view the assigned materials from a broader perspective than only the assigned discussion questions because the quizzes and in class discussions will expand beyond your specific discussion questions.
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.
   - **<u>DO NOT POST ANY REPLIES ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE DISCUSSION TOPIC AS I WILL DELETE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!</u>**

- **IF YOU CANNOT ACCESS YOUR GROUP'S DISCUSSION THREAD, CONTACT ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THE CANVAS ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED.**

4. Each student should write an initial response to the 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!**
    - 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 should initiate the consensus building process either after all group members have posted an initial response to the question or after midnight Tuesday, **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 a unified answer for 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.
            - Each leader will adopt his/her own process to bring the group to a consensus. However, one approach the leader may adopt would include a post that summarizes the scope of initial agreement and disagreement among the group members based on the group members' initial postings on the question. This summary could form the road map for consensus building.
            - 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. 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 not accept a minority-majority report prior to 9 PM or 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 do two things:
    1. The leader should delegate leader reporting responsibilities to another member of the group for that Friday's class session; and
    2. 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 weeks will have only one question worth 15 points, and
        2. One week 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:
    - If a student has not posted 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.