



# UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

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## Sample Discussion Guidelines and Grading

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(Dr. Rick King, ENHP)  
University of Hartford

### Discussion Guidelines

Weekly "attendance" is also mandatory. This presence is determined by your postings to the class discussion board. You are expected to make a minimum of three substantive postings per week. (For a rubric of "substantiative postings" see the online discussion rubric in this section.)

In order to keep the discussion flowing and not have everyone "lurking" until the last day, the three postings cannot all be made on the same day. Though it would be optimal to have the minimum three postings occur on three different days, the minimum number of posting days per week will be two. Obviously, both quality and quantity will be considered in the computation of the participation score.

Most of you will find that in order to keep up with this class you will need to logon regularly - four or five times a week. You need not make posting every time you logon, but frequent logons will keep you up-to-date with the discussions and allow you to make more meaningful postings.

Discussions for the week begin on the day after the Class date for that week and end the following Wednesday (in our case class is on Wednesday so the discussion will begin on Thursday and end the following Wednesday). For example, on February 5th the new discussion questions will be posted for the "Information Processing" discussion. (The readings for that week, Information Processing, should have been read prior to that day so that the discussion can begin immediately and not be delayed because the material has not been read.) I, or the discussion leader for the week, will post the lead off questions for consideration at the beginning of each week. The end of the active discussion will be on the following Wednesday at midnight (in our example that would be February 11th).

Once a discussion has been opened, it remains open for the remainder of the semester. If you choose to make updated postings to past discussion areas one posting can count toward your "attendance" requirements for the class that week. That means that you will still be required to make a minimum of two posting to the current discussion.

Three qualitative postings are the minimum requirement. It means that you get a passing grade for that week, it does not mean that you get the maximum possible. Grading is a combination of quantity and quality of the postings, with quality weighing more heavily. (See the Discussion Grading Rubric section below.)

## Discussion Grading Rubric

The purpose of both in-class and electronic discussions is for whole class "participation in discussions" in relation to achieving the stated goals of the course. The key word here is "discussions." Discussions should not be viewed, simply, as recitation or question/answer exercises (although questions should definitely be asked if there is content that is not understood). Rather, discussions are dialogues that probe all aspects of the topic under discussion in which each participant qualitatively contributes to the dialogue. The following rubric will be used to evaluate participant's contributions to the topic discussion.

<b>Level 1</b>	Contributions explore the topic or issue by identifying and organizing relevant facts, formulating conclusions, and presenting them.
<b>Level 2</b>	In addition to Level 1, examples are provided that are relative to the topic and may support or challenge the ideas that others have proposed.
<b>Level 3</b>	In addition to Level 2, the participant initiates new threads of related discussion in the context of the current discussion dialogue. The participant explains how a new or previous concept connects to the current concept or how their daily experiences relate to class content and discussion.

Obviously, a discussion cannot begin at Level 3, it must begin at Level 1. Therefore, it would seem that a participant could earn more "participation credit": by "lurking" until the topic under discussion was well established and then join the dialogue by adding a Level 3 comment. Yes and No!

To attempt to keep the participation at a constant, qualitative level throughout the dialogue, the instructor will take into account the consistency of participation. A participant who consistently joins the discussion on a quality level, adding to the discussion at all stages of development, will receive more credit than a participant who waits until the discussion is well established before joining in the dialogue, for example, does all of their postings on Monday and Tuesday.