

Group Review and Discussion Guidelines and Rubric

The assignment

At the end of each thematic unit, we are going to hand our class discussions over to (teams of) students for the following reasons:

- a) To provide opportunities for students to share their expertise and interests
- b) To give students more control over the content and direction of the course
- c) To increase class participation
- d) To make students accountable for discussions
- e) To develop skills necessary for leading quality discussions
- f) To work on the development of students' effective speaking and presentation skills

You (and your team members) will need to come to class prepared to lead approximately 40 minutes of discussion. All members of your team must take an active role in leading the discussion. The details of the assignment and grading criteria are outlined below:

Your discussion plan should engage us in a group and/or individual activity. Feel free to come up with creative ideas for class! You are all very capable of coming up with fun and exciting activities for our class. If you have any questions, feel free to talk to me (in person or through e-mail).

When preparing for the Group Discussion, think of the Unit that you are assigned to summarize and review, as well as have the general student learning goals of the course in mind.

Steps of the assignment

Step 1: Meet with your team members and brainstorm some ideas for the activity and the discussion.

Step 2: Arrange to meet with your instructor well ahead of time to share your ideas and when/if necessary, take your instructor's comments and suggestions into account. The meeting will only take 15 to 20 minutes, but it will help you plan for the discussion.

Step 3: Finalize your plans.

- a) Design an activity that is well planned and executed. It should be creative, original and educational for your classmates. It should also allow us to practice identifying or analyzing idea relevant to our class and to the discussion that follows.
- b) Think of the discussion questions. Discussion questions should be open-ended and require students to draw from the material covered in class. Discussion questions should invite personal opinions as well as critical analysis. The discussion should be lively and you, as discussion leaders should be prepared to keep the discussion moving by asking additional questions and providing additional thought to add to student analysis. Ideally, the discussion questions should address the course learning goals and themes.

Rubric

	Excellent (A-B)	Average (C)	Poor/unsatisfactory (D)
Meeting with the instructor 20 points	All team members met with the instructor early enough to have time to make changes in their plan. They took instructor's comments and suggestions into consideration.	All team members met with the instructor, but not early enough to be able to make all the necessary changes in their plan. They took most of instructor's comments and suggestions into account.	Only some team members met with the instructor. They did not make any changes in their plan. They did not take any comments or suggestions made by the instructor into account.
Activity 30 points	Activity is well planned and executed. It is creative, original and educational for class. Activity allows us to practice identifying or analyzing ideas relevant to our class and to the discussion that follows.	Students have thought of an activity, but it is not very well planned or executed. There are some creative and original elements in the activity, but it lacks educational value. Activity allows us to practice ideas somewhat relevant to class, but there is no clear connection made to the class material, nor the discussion that follows.	Students have planned an activity, but it is poorly conceived and executed. The activity is not creative, nor original. It is not educational. Activity does not allow us to practice ideas relevant to the class material and there is no connection between the activity and the discussion that follows.
Discussion questions 50 points	Discussion questions are open-ended and require students to draw from present and past material. They invite personal opinions as well as critical analysis. Discussion is lively and discussion leaders keep discussion moving by asking follow-up questions. Discussion questions address the course learning goals and themes.	Discussion questions are open-ended and in some cases require students to draw from present and past material. They invite personal opinions, but do not require critical analysis. Discussion is slow; discussion leaders struggle to engage the class. Discussion questions address the material covered in the Unit, but do not address overall course learning goals and themes.	Students have hard time coming up with discussion questions. Questions invite yes or no answers, instead of inviting personal opinions and/or critical analysis. Discussion is slow; discussion leaders are unable to engage the class. The questions address some of the material covered in the Unit, but do not address overall course learning goals and themes.