

## **An asynchronous interactive method devised for discussion in Humanities 101 – Spring 2020**

**Sunday** – I exchange email with the THURS discussion leader to obtain a phone number and schedule a 1:1 call with that student for some time on Weds.

**Monday** – I have a 40-minute call with TUES discussion leader to plan their agenda (of questions, prompts) on Blackboard for Tuesday's readings. (I already created the Forum in Blackboard and this student will post the initial threads, which other students will then add to.)

**Tuesday** – By noon (often done early, after our call), TUES student discussion leader posts the agenda and uses the Send Email function to invite all classmates to post their responses on the Forum by Friday at noon (giving them 3 days). I think students like to go in and see what their classmate has given them.

**Wednesday** – 40-minute call with THURS discussion leader to plan the agenda for Thursday's readings.

**Thursday** – By noon (often done early, right after our call), THURS student discussion leader posts the agenda and uses Send Email function to invite all classmates to post their responses on the Forum by the next Tuesday at noon (giving them 3 business days). Today I also email the TUES discussion leader to obtain a phone number and schedule a 1:1 call with that student for some time on Monday.

**Friday** – At noon, I read through all the week's student comments on the Forum and I spend most of the afternoon creating a Summary Note (about 750 words) to send via email to the class. Students know this Summary Note will arrive in their In-Box by 5 p.m. CT every Friday. The note offers my own reflections on the Humanities readings and a synthesis of their posted comments. I point ahead to what they might focus on in the next week's readings, and I post Study Guides in the Documents tab on P-Web to help them understand the readings.

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From the start I made clear to students that to earn a satisfactory grade in class participation, they should post two concise but insightful comments (either their own or a response to another student's comment) on the Tuesday readings and two more comments on the Thursday readings. Discussion leaders are only required to post the agenda, but they may add comments if they wish.

I assigned the schedule of discussion leaders as part of the Revised Syllabus for Distance Learning.

In the interests of access and inclusiveness, I give students a window of three business days (Tuesday through Friday and Thursday through Tuesday) in which they can post. The two windows overlap, so even for students who can only get access to Internet once a week, it's fine for them to enter all four of their weekly posts (both sets of two comments) in a single work session, as long as that happens between Thursday noon and Friday noon, the time period when both "windows" are open.

I have had universal and energetic participation in the discussion. Everyone is meeting the deadlines. Even people who rarely talked in class (there are 20 students) are writing thoughtful comments. Students often build upon each other's comments or politely offer a different view, just like in class.

I am enjoying my phone calls with the discussion leaders, who are always well prepared by the time we talk. Often they send me a draft agenda ahead of our phone call. After they post the agenda and send out the class email, I check the Discussion Forum in case anything failed to appear or needs to be edited. If I can, I browse comments to see what's being posted just before I phone the next Discussion Leader.