EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION POSTS
KEYS TO WRITING ACADEMIC DISCUSSION POSTS

THE BIG PICTURE
Writing substantial academic discussion posts is a key skill for any modern college student. When done correctly these forums enable you to organize your thoughts effectively, interact with fellow students in a meaningful way, and synthesize the material that you are learning.

1 IDENTIFY & DEFINE
Before writing your forum post be sure to identify the goal of the assignment, what the required pre-forum work entails (such as readings, online lectures, etc.) and what your main argument is. Define your argument into a thesis and place it at the beginning of your post.

2 EXPLAIN & EXPLORE
Explain your thesis thoroughly by directly referencing and citing your class material. Answer questions the reader might have and charitably refute opposing views. Then, explore the implications of your argument by referencing supporting sources, data, or personal examples. When supporting your argument ensure that you continue to fulfill your instructor’s prompt.

3 CONCLUDE & CONNECT
After stating your argument and adequately supporting it, conclude your post by connecting it back to the class material. Based on the type of assignment, connect your thesis to yourself or the area of study.

4 REVISE & RESPOND
Before hitting the submit button, revise through your forum post. Check for correct use of grammar, clear communication and an academic tone. Most classes will require you to respond to your fellow student’s posts. Carefully choose respectful language while still supporting your argument clearly. Post your initial forum early in the week to make your class discussion more in-depth and meaningful.

Forum post thesis may contain the following ideas:
- Processing information
- Adding to information
- Expanding on information

Types of support for your argument:
- Personal (examples, stories)
- Primary sources (class texts)
- Secondary sources (sources referenced by original author)

Conclusion signal words:
- As a result, consequently, therefore, in conclusion, finally, from this we see...

When revising pay careful attention to:
- Citations (unless otherwise noted use MLA format)
- Spelling, grammar, spacing and flow of argument