



WR 121: College Composition I

WR 121: CRN 25418/25420

Winter 2021

WEB

Table of Contents

<u>Course Overview</u>	2
<u>Course Readings</u>	3
<u>Navigating this Course</u>	3
<u>Assignments + Grading</u>	4
<u>Late Work</u>	5
<u>Plagiarism + Resources for Success</u>	6
<u>Netiquette</u>	7
<u>Technical Requirements</u>	8
<u>Course Schedule</u>	9

What Students Say

- "I learned to be a deep thinker in this class. As an academic college-level reader and writer, you cannot gloss over, you cannot rush. You have to be able to take your time and really investigate a topic."
- "In Dr. Clevinger's class, we help each other. Hearing other students' perspectives and using them to shed light on topics has made me a stronger writer."
- "I used to believe that a paper is the work of a single person, so there is no need to interact with others. However, this course changes my established point of view. A successful paper needs to be revised many times by taking in your instructor and peers' advice."
- "I learned that writing is not just writing, it is a way to express your story, your experience to others."

Instructor: Dr. Kara B. Clevinger

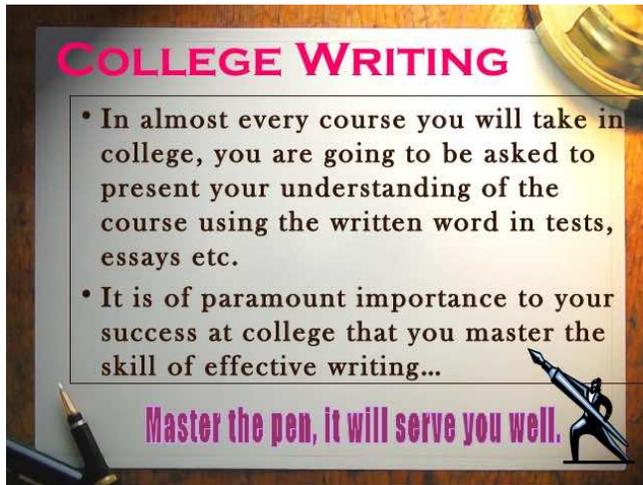
Office: 266 PLC (6-1514) (unavailable)

Drop-in Office Hours: T 1-3PM; W 2-3PM

<https://uoregon.zoom.us/my/clev.dropin.hours>

Email: kclev@uoregon.edu (allow 24 hours and except weekends)

Course Overview: Why, What, How



Why are you here? I know you're here because WR 121 is a required course. I hope you're here because you are curious about your college experience and enjoy lively intellectual discussions as you hone your deep reading and written communication skills. I also hope you're interested in discovering more about your process for reading, writing, and inquiry. We'll use narrative and reflective writing with the goal of making your labor and process visible.

What work will you do? The learning outcomes give an abstract overview of what you'll do here. More specifically: 1) Writing is a process that involves asking questions in order to explore and learn more about a topic so that you can formulate and express your own ideas—you are part of the production of knowledge at the university! 2) Writing is not merely a solitary activity done in the dark corner of a library or hunched over the desk of your room; it involves engaging other perspectives—those you read and those of your peers—as well as getting and giving feedback. 3) College writing is about discovering and expressing your point of view, buuuut you must also be open to other points of view—learning is pushing the boundaries of what you know and believe! 4) Good writing is purposeful and clear, and keeping your reader in mind will ignite your purpose and clarify your thoughts. 5) You'll learn MLA style to format your essays, and you'll work on improving your vocabulary and sentences as you develop your distinct voice and style.

Learning Outcomes

What skills, experiences, and knowledge do I hope you will get out of this course? By the end of the term, my goals for your learning are that you will improve your proficiency and artistry to:

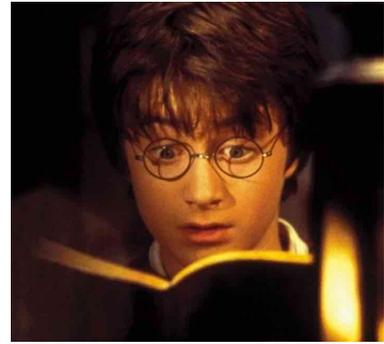
1. describe and practice writing as a multi-faceted **process of inquiry**, learning, and expression;
2. practice writing as a **social process** through compassionate and critical response to your peers' work and revision of your writing in response to peer and instructor feedback;
3. practice **ethical argumentation** in discussion and writing through open and curious engagement with multiple perspectives;
4. develop **audience awareness** and practice respectful treatment of audience;
5. identify and critically apply **style** requirements for writing in an academic context.

***In our first week of class, we may add to this list of learning outcomes based on what you think is important in your writing education and would like to get out of the course.

How will you accomplish these learning outcomes? By doing lots of reading and writing! Good writers are good readers, so we'll begin by developing your critical reading skills, then learn how to move from questions you wonder about to questions you can write about, and practice thesis and writing skills using the essay form. Our topic—what we read and write on—will be on higher education. . . a topic we all have in common and know firsthand!

Our Course Readings

What will we read in this course? We will read and discuss texts on the theme of higher ed and the college campus. I will post these readings on Canvas with the weekly modules. Your writing and your colleagues' writing will also be primary texts for the course. The writing handbooks we'll use are ebooks listed with our Course Resources. **There is no textbook you need to purchase for the course!**



Navigating this Course

This course is fully online and asynchronous. This course was designed as a WEB course, not a "remote" course (which has synchronous elements like Zoom class sessions). In other words, I've set up the course to fully engage with you online, and I hope you have signed on to do the same.

Paced Modules: The course is organized in 10 modules, following the 10-week term. We'll read texts related to writing and the theme of our course and complete discussion board posts and a writing assignment each week. Some weeks will also have you collaborate with your peers in a writing lab. Although some online courses can be completed in a flurry of activity at the very end of the term, this course asks for consistent and regular participation in different activities and assignments each week. **You cannot wait until the end of the term to complete the work for the course. To succeed in the course, you will need to follow the weekly schedule of readings and assignments.**

To help you manage your time, each week's content unlocks on Sundays (at midnight), and only if you've completed a primary discussion post by then. E.g. if you've posted to the discussion board for Week 1, then Week 2's module will become available on Sunday, January 10 at midnight. The course follows that pattern each week.

Turn on Canvas Notifications + Check your UO Email! Remaining engaged also requires you to check your university email at least once a day. In an online course, that will still be my primary method of contact with you, and announcements made to the entire class will also notify in your university email's inbox. **Double check your Canvas Notification settings and ensure that Announcements will go to your email immediately by confirming that the check mark next to Announcements is highlighted. Make sure if you have your university email forwarded to a personal email client that all relevant emails from me and/or Canvas are making it to your inbox.** Let me know if you have questions about communications and notifications for this class.

I care about your success! Success in any online course requires keen time management and organization, as well as the ability to work both diligently and independently. Your success and the success of the course depend on your timely participation and submission of assignments. **If at any time you find yourself struggling to keep up with the readings and assignments, reach out to me as soon as possible. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. The quicker you make contact with me, the more helpful I can be.**

Assignments + Grading

The following is a brief overview of the work for the course. I provide more detailed guidelines with each assignment on Canvas.

Discussion Board Posts (25%) are the lifeblood of our course. Refer to the "Guidelines for Discussion" for instructions on primary and secondary posts and peeps. Primary posts are due each week by Thursday at 11:59PM, and are how I keep the course paced; each week's discussion board must be completed in order to unlock the next week's module and content. Secondary posts and peeps are due each week by Sunday at 11:59PM.

Essays (40%) in this course are written in cycles. This means that you'll be building parts of the essay with some of the weekly writing assignments, as well as using feedback from your peers and me to add to and revise your writing. Essays will be due on Sundays by 11:59PM, and further instructions for content and requirements of formal essays will be provided later in the term.

Weekly Writing Assignments (25%) will help you work through course concepts and readings, practice specific writing skills, and give you an opportunity to experiment with different writing styles in a lower-stakes way. Becoming comfortable and confident writers requires practice (putting in the hours and the effort) and play (a willingness to experiment with style and process), which are the purposes behind these assignments. WWAs will be due each week by Sunday at 11:59PM. Note: Weekly Writing Assignments and essays are submitted through SimCheck, plagiarism prevention software.

Writing Labs (10%) are collaborative activities where you work with your peers to practice specific writing skills. There will be writing labs on even weeks and these group assignments will be due by Friday at 11:59PM.

NOTE: You will need to earn a 70% (a C-) in order to pass the class and enroll in WR 122 or WR 123. Grading scale: A: 94-100; A-: 90-93.99; B+: 88-89.99; B: 84-87.99; B-: 80-83.99; C+: 78-79.99; C: 74-77.99; C-: 70-73.99.

How do I assess your work and contributions to the course and our community? Discussion board posts, weekly writing assignments, and essays have a list of core criteria. If your work meets the core criteria, then it will earn a "B." Assignments that are not adequately meeting the criteria will earn a "B-." Assignments that are missing any of the criteria will earn a "C" or below. Contact me if you are struggling to meet criteria, and want help improving your work.

Discussion Board work. To achieve our goal of lively, interesting discussions, I ask students to post a "primary post" each week. A primary post each week will earn students a "C" for the discussion board grade. A primary post each week and eight secondary posts across the course will earn students a "B" for the discussion board grade, provided posts meet core criteria. A primary and secondary post each week, plus 12 "peeps" across the course will earn an "A" for the discussion board grade, provided posts meet core criteria. Refer to the "Guidelines for Discussion" page.

Peer review is an essential part of the writing and revising process. We benefit from reading other writers' work as well as having someone else read and give feedback on our writing. Peer review for the two major essay assignments will take the form of small-group discussion board conversations and written feedback that will be part of the discussion board, writing lab, and weekly writing assignment grades.

“How do I get an A?” So you want to strive for Jedi mastery, do you, my young padawan? Along with the core criteria for discussion board posts, weekly writing assignments, and essays, I list criteria for excellence. In some cases, this will include advanced labor tasks intended to show you how students achieve mastery. Attempting advanced labor tasks is not the same as meeting the criteria for excellence and does not guarantee an “A”! Contact me if you would like help achieving excellence.

Late Work

Submitting assignments on time helps you to manage your time and the workload. It helps your colleagues, who will benefit from your voice and perspective in the discussions. It helps me give you timely and useful feedback on your work. However, life happens. . . and sometimes technology happens, too. Submissions are due at 11:59PM, and there is a one-hour grace period for technical difficulties. Please review the items below for how late work affects the final grade.

What is “Late” work? Late work is defined as any discussion post, assignment, or essay that is submitted after the due date/time BUT within 48 hours of that due date/time. To keep things fair and equitable for everyone, I do not accept work beyond 48 hours after the due date/time; it gets a zero.

Every student is allowed 2 late assignments without penalty. To earn an “A” in the course, you cannot have more than 1 late assignment. Late assignments are marked in blue on Canvas.

Exceeding the number of late assignments allowable will lower your final grade by -3% (1/3 of a letter grade) for each late assignment or post. Example: A student with a B in the course who has 3 late assignments will earn a B-.

Students must submit all assigned work to earn a passing grade.

The “Oh Dear” Clause: Can I make up work I have missed?

If it’s 1-2 missed posts or assignments, I am happy to work with students on a case-by-case basis close to the missed deadline, i.e. we can’t do this all at the end of the course.

A student may request additional accommodation for any reason that is related to rare and unusual circumstances out of their control, but only once in the term. The “oh dear” clause is NOT an “opt out clause” for anyone who happens to not fulfill the course requirements in some way.

My job is to make sure that whatever agreement we come to will be fair to others in class. The student must contact me as soon as possible, usually *before they are unable to meet the course requirements*, so that we can determine an equitable arrangement, one that will be fair to all in the class and still meet the university’s expectations for student engagement hours, conduct, and workload.

Exemplary Labor

If by the end of the course, you have no late assignments, posts, or essays, have posted 15 peeps on the discussion boards throughout the term, and have not exercised the “oh dear” clause, then your course grade will increase by 1/3, e.g. from a B to a B+.

Academic Honesty, Authorship, and Plagiarism

What is plagiarism? It's important to understand 'authorship' and 'ownership of ideas and words' in academic writing. This helps writers give the correct credit to other writers, thinkers, and sources for their words and ideas. When you use someone else's or another source's words or ideas without telling your reader where they come from, you are PLAGIARIZING. Common examples of plagiarism include incorrect citation of sources and copying and pasting parts of an assignment from the internet or other students. Copying from unauthored webpages is plagiarism. Getting too much help from someone editing your writing is also a form of academic dishonesty.

I am looking to help you improve and gain important experience in analytic writing. I am not expecting perfect writing. If you have a question about using ideas and words from other sources in your work, please ask!

Submit original work and cite the sources you consult! All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course without permission. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to our e-handbooks as well as the [Library Citation and Plagiarism guide](#) and the [Student Conduct Code](#) on the Office of the Dean of Students website.

What are the consequences of plagiarizing? In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of up to an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the Composition Program. Please see me BEFORE you submit your work if you have questions about your use of sources.

The student registered for the course must be the person taking the course.

Academic Misconduct Procedures: See <https://composition.uoregon.edu/program-policies/>

Resources for Success

I am here to help you succeed; don't hesitate to e-mail me! I will make every effort to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours. In addition, you have many UO resources to help you with writing and studying. The Knight Library and Tykeson tutors also provide online tutoring.

- The [Writing Associates Program](#) offers free, remote one-on-one peer tutoring appointments for students in Composition classes. Tutors are advanced English majors and graduate students who have been trained to tutor writing. They are available to help students with any aspect of their writing for this course, from brainstorming to crafting clearer and more effective arguments.
- The [Teaching and Learning Center's Writing Lab](#) also offers free, remote synchronous and asynchronous access to a writing tutor for any subject. See also [UO Online Writing Lab](#).
- The [Multicultural Center \(MCC\)](#) offers many resources for students, and the [Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence \(CMAE\)](#) offers [writing tutoring](#) as well as advising. Both centers also offer many other mentoring services for students from all backgrounds in the utilization of all resources available regarding financial aid, scholarships, internships, career development, professionalization, food and shelter, and ultimately academic success!
- [Student Support Services \(SSS\)](#) is also taking qualified students. They offer advising, tutoring, a study lounge with computers and free printing, as well as personal counseling.
- You can find additional sources of academic support on the [Undergraduate Education](#) webpage.
- Writing handbooks: [Purdue OWL](#) [UNC Writing Center Tips + Tools](#) [Writing for Success](#)

Other Policies + Expectations

Incompletes: A request for the grade “Incomplete” must be placed in advance of the end of the term and approved by the Director of Composition. Such approval will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by a student through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

Access: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Composition Program Policies: <https://composition.uoregon.edu/program-policies/>

Netiquette

To create a safe, productive working environment, be mindful when you communicate with both your colleagues and professors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

- Respect the privacy of your classmates and what they share in class. It is prohibited to screenshot and repost posts or material from this course on social media.
- Ask classmates for clarification if you find a discussion posting offensive or difficult to understand.
- Avoid sweeping generalizations. Back up your stated opinions with facts and reliable sources. Stay focused on the text and topic.
- Understand that we may disagree and that exposure to other people’s opinions is part of the learning experience.
- Be respectful of each other. We’re all in this together. Before posting a comment, ask whether you would be willing to make the same comment to a person’s face.
- Keep in mind that you are taking a college class. Something that would be inappropriate in a traditional classroom is also inappropriate in an online classroom.
- Remember that all college-level communication should be in complete sentences and proofread for clarity. Tip: Start in Word and use the spell and grammar check.
- Avoid abbreviations used in texting such as “u” instead of “you.”
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and other’s).
- When emailing your professors or peers, use a descriptive subject line and don’t forget to sign your message with your name.
- Think before you send the e-mail to more than one person. Does everyone really need to see your message?
- Be aware that typing in all capital letters indicates shouting.

Technical Requirements + Knowledge

If you are taking a course online you will need to have stable internet access and a basic knowledge of computer and internet skills in order to be successful.

- Basic computer/web knowledge, such as:
 - Using software applications, like MS Word, Google Docs, PowerPoint, email clients
 - Copying and pasting, spell-checking, saving files in different formats
 - Sending and downloading attachments
- Checking UO email and Canvas Messenger at least once a day
- A functional microphone and webcam (usually built in to laptops and computers) to participate in conferences, chats, and for some assignments
- Participation in required video conferences
- Submission of all formal written work to SimCheck-enabled assignment portals on Canvas
 - SimCheck is a plagiarism prevention tool. All work submitted for this course must be created by you, submitted by you, and be original to this course. See more about my Academic Honesty, Authorship, and Plagiarism policies
- Respectful interactions with other students and the instructor, including respecting the privacy of classmates and their shared materials. See Netiquette guidelines.

*****Technology problems:** Technology can be tricky, but you need to be organized enough to anticipate computer problems. Submissions are due at 11:59PM, and there is a one-hour grace period for technical difficulties. Because everything will be turned in online, be sure to back up your hard drive regularly.

Need Canvas help? See the [Student Technology Support](#) page.

Academic Fraud

Students enrolled in an online class may not allow any other individual to submit work on their behalf. Doing so constitutes a form of cheating known as **academic fraud**. In order to ensure that the individual submitting the work to Canvas is the enrolled student, I may require a synchronous conference with a student. These conferences may be held by webcam or by telephone so long as both the student and me agree to the conference format. Email correspondence or text-based chat/communication cannot be used for these conferences. Refusal to participate in a required conference as requested by me can be evidence of academic fraud and the student's case will be forwarded to [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) as potential academic misconduct.

Course Schedule

- Week 1 Introductions + Intentions
Discussion: The What, How, and Why of Writing
Syllabus Quiz and Introduction Post due by Wednesday, January 6
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, January 7
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Writing Assignment due by Sunday, January 10
- Week 2 Developing a deep reading practice
Discussion: Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar"
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, January 14
Writing Lab due by Friday, January 15
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Writing Assignment due by Sunday, January 17
- Week 3 Synthesizing multiple perspectives
Discussion: Audre Lorde's "Difference and Survival"
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, January 21
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Essay 1.1 due by Sunday, January 24
- Week 4 Question at issue
Discussion: Audience awareness
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, January 28
Writing Lab due by Friday, January 29
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Writing Assignment due by Sunday, January 31
- Week 5 Citing Sources + MLA Formatting
Discussion: Revision + reflection
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, February 4
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Essay 1.2 due by Sunday, February 7
- Week 6 Can I use "I" in my writing?
Discussion: Institutional Autobiography
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, February 11
Writing Lab due by Friday, February 12
Secondary Post and Peeps due by Sunday, February 14 *Writing break!*
- Week 7 Deciding what is at issue
Discussion: The College Campus
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, February 18
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Writing Assignment due by Sunday, February 21
- Week 8 Finding stasis
Discussion: The UO Campus
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, February 25
Writing Lab due by Friday, February 26
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Essay 2.1 due by Sunday, February 28
- Week 9 Shaping your writing
Discussion: Reader review
Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, March 4
Secondary Post, Peeps, and Writing Assignment due by Sunday, March 7
- Week 10 Wrap up
Discussion: Final revisions

Primary Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, March 11

Writing Lab due by Friday, March 12

Secondary Post, Peeps, and Final Reflection due by Sunday, March 14

Final

Essay 2.2 due by midnight on Monday, March 15



Hello! I am excited that you've signed up for WR 121 on college writing. I love sharing my passion for reading and writing with my students.

What can you expect from me as a fellow reader and writer?

I approach analyzing texts with a formal background in nineteenth-century American literature and feminist theory, over 15 years of experience teaching college writing, and a lifelong love of reading of writing. As a writer of fiction and essays, I also enjoy reading with an eye toward how texts are formally constructed and styled. Ultimately, I'm an idealist, and I believe reading and writing can transport and transform us, which is what I love exploring with my students.

What can you expect from our readings?

A challenge! And a diverse set of ideas and issues about higher education. We'll kick things off with the ideals of a college education. Then we'll flash forward to your experience and the realities of being a college student today. Hint: it's not just taking classes!

What can you expect from this course?

A lot of reading and writing! Expect to develop cognitive patience and read deeply as you engage others' writing and ideas. Good writers are good readers, so we spend time practicing and discussing critical reading skills. In your writing, we'll focus more on developing good questions and strong thesis statements and less on grammar.

I use a holistic and criteria-based grading system that honors the labor of reading and writing. The core criteria for each assignment offers a straightforward path to success and earning a B. If your goal is to achieve mastery, then expect to develop more complex analysis and arguments.

When contacting me. . .

Kara, Dr. Clevinger, Professor Clevinger, or Your Royal Highness are all fine with me! Not "Mrs." "Ms." "Miss" or "Hey." My pronouns are she/her as well as they/their.

Guidelines for Discussion Board Participation

overview: Conversations that we have via the Canvas discussion boards will make up a good part of the work in this course. Whether you are responding to a question or issue I've raised or you are collaborating with your peers, we will be working on your thinking—and your close reading and writing. A few general matters:

- **Read all posts.** Part of your responsibility as a student in this class is to read everything on the discussion boards. *All of them.* At the end of the week, you should have *no highlighted, unread posts.*
- **Check the discussion boards regularly.** You want to start good habits in Week 1, and the discussion boards will be a great source of ideas, questions, and different points of view on topics you may end up writing on in your weekly writing assignments and essays.
- **Build a conversation.** As I describe below, you will write primary, secondary, and peep posts. The goal is to create lively discussion, not a wall of disconnected comments. Primary posts are due on Thursday to get conversation going.

To help us maintain a civil, respectful, and safe learning environment, please read and follow the Netiquette guidelines as you post.

writing posts: You will write three types of posts: primary, secondary, and peeps. To earn a C or P grade, you'll write primary posts. To earn a B grade, you'll write primary and secondary posts. To earn an A, you'll write primary and secondary posts as well as peeps.

Primary Posts should be:

- **Mini-essays.** Primary posts should be a well-developed paragraph, and I expect them to reflect some reasoned thought on your part. My students and I have found that these mini-essays present many excellent opportunities to refine the ability to make a clear, focused point when writing. In other words, these posts are great practice.
- **Detailed.** Each primary post must be at least *150 words*, unless otherwise specified. I am interested in the depth of your ideas, which is what drives interesting conversation.
- **Semiformal.** Your posts should contain some degree of formality: spell-checked, organized, complete sentences, etc. However, they will also be part of a dialogue, so in that regard they will differ from writing assignments. I understand that it will take some time for us to reach a mutual understanding of the appropriate level of formality.
- **Referenced.** Your posts should be rooted in the reading. You'll either select a passage to analyze or use a passage to support your point. Use MLA citation rules to provide the page or source of the passage you reference or quote. Avoid relying on broad generalizations or too many abstract statements to support your point.
- **Courteous.** We don't always have to agree, but no one should resort to flaming attacks.

Secondary Posts should respond to the question in one of your peers' posts with a thoughtful analysis that returns to the text. They differ from primary posts by being:

- **Less structured:** Response posts do not need as much detail and may be more conversational.
- **Shorter:** Response posts only need to be about 75 words.

Peeps are simply very short posts—a few sentences—between you and another student. They serve as the conversational “glue” in the course. Keep the conversation going! Use peeps to clarify a point, state your agreement with a peer’s point of view, or pose a question. To be considered for an “A,” students post primary and secondary posts each week, and 12 peeps over the term. You cannot make up all peeps at the end of the term. Do two or three a week.

“Wait, what’s the difference between a secondary post and a peep?” A secondary post is slightly more substantive than a peep, i.e. it should refer directly back to the reading, ideally to a new, relevant passage. The goal is to push the discussion to deeper readings, meanings, and thinking, and it may take the discussion in a new direction rather than sticking with the question in the initial prompt. A peep is addressed directly to a peer with the goal of agreeing, disagreeing, or asking for clarification. A peep should not simply repeat what you or your peers have said, i.e. disagree and explain why or agree and add something new.

You can earn credit for ONE primary and ONE secondary post each week, and up to THREE peeps each week.

reading: You are responsible for reading all posts in the class.

- Don’t “post and run.” Once you post, you’re obligated to see what people say. In some cases, weary students abandon their ideas after they post. More specifically, if someone responds to you, you should follow up with a response, however brief. Our goal is a lively dialogue rather than a wall of disconnected comments.
- Don’t “post ignorant.” Be original. Don’t say the same thing as many other posts on a thread. Read before you post. Part of the job in the class is to “up the ante” with each post.

grading: To achieve our goal of lively, interesting discussions, I ask students to post a primary post each week. A primary post each week will earn students a “C” for the discussion board grade. A primary post each week and eight secondary posts across the course will earn students a “B” for the discussion board grade, provided posts meet core criteria. A primary and secondary post each week, plus 12 peeps across the course will earn an “A” for the discussion board grade, provided posts meet core criteria.

Guide to Crafting Specific, Open-Ended Questions

1. What is an **open-ended** question?

- Open-ended questions do not have a single "right" answer. Instead, they have many possible answers and can't be settled simply.

2. What is a **specific** question?

- Unlike more general questions like, "What does Emerson mean by X?," specific questions should be contextualized in the text that sparked the question and/or in relation to the larger concerns of our class, i.e. themes of gaining and using knowledge.
- Specific questions invite your peers to grapple with the ideas you highlight.
- Specific questions will use specific references—quotations or paraphrases—to the reading.

3. Remember to ask yourself, "Would I be interested in reading and responding to this question, even if it weren't for class?"

Models for Crafting Specific, Open-ended Questions

Here are some models for writing a specific, open-ended question. You may choose to use one of these or craft your own specific, open-ended structure.

What is your opinion of the writer's point that ____ ?

How would you justify the writer's view that ____?

How is the writer's point about _____ related to the idea that ____?

How would you solve the problem of ____ using what the writer suggests about ____?

How do you assess the value or importance of ____?

What judgment would you make about ____?

Based on what you know, how would you explain ____?

What inference can you make or conclusions can you draw about ____?

What is the relationship between ____ and ____?

How would you use the concept ____ to understand ____?

Why do you think the writer states/uses ____ to convey the idea ____?