

Rubric to Assess Discussion Performance in an Upper-level Undergraduate or Graduate Seminar

Adapted from Relearning by Design, Inc., 2000

Component	Sophisticated	Competent	Not Yet Competent	Unacceptable
<i>Conduct</i>	Student shows respect for members of the class, both in speech and manner, and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Does not dominate discussion. Student challenges ideas respectfully, encourages and supports others to do the same.	Student shows respect for members of the class and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Participates regularly in the discussion but occasionally has difficulty accepting challenges to his/her ideas or maintaining respectful attitude when challenging others' ideas.	Student shows little respect for the class or the process as evidenced by speech and manner. Sometimes resorts to ad hominem attacks when in disagreement with others.	Student shows a lack of respect for members of the group and the discussion process. Often dominates the discussion or disengages from the process. When contributing, can be argumentative or dismissive of others' ideas, or resorts to ad hominem attacks.
<i>Ownership/Leadership</i>	Takes responsibility for maintaining the flow and quality of the discussion whenever needed. Helps to redirect or refocus discussion when it becomes sidetracked or unproductive. Makes efforts to engage reluctant participants. Provides constructive feedback and support to others.	Will take on responsibility for maintaining flow and quality of discussion, and encouraging others to participate but either is not always effective or is effective but does not regularly take on the responsibility.	Rarely takes an active role in maintaining the flow or direction of the discussion. When put in a leadership role, often acts as a guard rather than a facilitator: constrains or biases the content and flow of the discussion.	Does not play an active role in maintaining the flow of discussion or undermines the efforts of others who are trying to facilitate discussion.

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<i>Reasoning</i>	Arguments or positions are reasonable and supported with evidence from the readings. Often deepens the conversation by going beyond the text, recognizing implications and extensions of the text. Provides analysis of complex ideas that help deepen the inquiry and further the conversation.	Arguments or positions are reasonable and mostly supported by evidence from the readings. In general, the comments and ideas contribute to the group's understanding of the material and concepts.	Contributions to the discussion are more often based on opinion or unclear views than on reasoned arguments or positions based on the readings. Comments or questions suggest a difficulty in following complex lines of argument or student's arguments are convoluted and difficult to follow.	Comments are frequently so illogical or without substantiation that others are unable to critique or even follow them. Rather than critique the text the student may resort to ad hominem attacks on the author instead.
<i>Listening</i>	Always actively attends to what others say as evidenced by regularly building on, clarifying, or responding to their comments. Often reminds group of comments made by someone earlier that are pertinent.	Usually listens well and takes steps to check comprehension by asking clarifying and probing questions, and making connections to earlier comments. Responds to ideas and questions offered by other participants.	Does not regularly listen well as indicated by the repetition of comments or questions presented earlier, or frequent non sequiturs.	Behavior frequently reflects a failure to listen or attend to the discussion as indicated by repetition of comments and questions, non sequiturs, off-task activities.
<i>Reading</i>	Student has carefully read and understood the readings as evidenced by oral contributions; familiarity with main ideas, supporting evidence and secondary points. Comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings.	Student has read and understood the readings as evidenced by oral contributions. The work demonstrates a grasp of the main ideas and evidence but sometimes interpretations are questionable. Comes prepared with questions.	Student has read the material, but comments often indicate that he/she didn't read or think carefully about it, or misunderstood or forgot many points. Class conduct suggests inconsistent commitment to preparation.	Student either is unable to adequately understand and interpret the material or has frequently come to class unprepared, as indicated by serious errors or an inability to answer basic questions or contribute to discussion.