In each module, you will participate in a graded discussion. You will be asked to submit an original post, and to respond to at least two (2) of the posts submitted by your classmates. Of course, you are encouraged to post more, it will only make the discussion more informative. You are also responsible for reading what your classmates are posting.

**Grading:**
Your discussion grade will depend mostly on how well your original post follows, then on the quality of your response to a classmate’s post, and then on how many of the other students’ postings you read. You will receive a score over 100 points for each discussion, but BEWARE: when you final grade is computed, discussions will represent a total of 15% of your grade. So having very high scores on discussions is no guarantee of a very high final grade.

**How do you answer a classmate’s post?**
You have to make a substantial contribution to the discussion. You get credit for showing that you are thinking hard about how to relate what your classmate is saying to the content of the module. You may agree, or disagree, with what a classmate is saying, but you always have to justify your reaction, using what we are learning in the course. Other valid strategies include bringing and discussing outside, valid resources to supposed your point (making sure you reference them appropriately), providing examples, asking questions that push your classmates to think further, answering another student’s questions, or reacting to others’ suggestions.

You do not get credit for one-sentence posts such as “Good point!” or “I agree.” You do not get credit for disrespectful comments. You do not get credit for simply copying and pasting paragraphs from a website or from your textbook, even if you cite your source. The above paragraph states that you have to discuss them, to explain to us why you think they are relevant. You do not get credit for social posts, such as “Hey man, I didn’t know you were taking this class, how have you been?” We have a non-graded discussion for that.

Make sure to include a descriptive subject. “Hello” or “Module 1” are not descriptive titles, because they don’t announce what you are going to talk about. We’re all going to get very confused if every post is labeled “Module 1,” then “Module 2,” etc.

In terms of tone, make sure to respect others, but don’t be shy about giving your opinion. Discussions where everybody just agrees with everybody else are boring, not very informative, and show a lack of depth in thinking. Don’t think that you’ll get credit for trying to be nice and conciliatory. If you disagree, say so. Just do it politely! Feel free to use emoticons to add some feelings to what you are saying. Avoid offensive language, unless you are quoting from a situation in real life, or from a source. Postings that are offensive will be deleted.

You may feel awkward at first, not knowing what you are talking about, but remember that everyone in this class is in the same boat. This is a collective learning experience, where you learn by asking and by teaching: If you don’t know, ask a question of the group, and someone will probably be able to answer you. If no one else from the class can, well, I’m logged in every day, and I’m sure I can contribute something:)”

**Discussion Rubric:**
The following is a provided rubric for you to use to assess your participation. Please take the time throughout the course to check and see where your participation level falls.

It is recommended you review this early in the course to see what is expected of you, and then again near module 4 so you can judge for yourself just how well you have been doing, but please feel free to use it as often as you feel necessary. This document is for your use, so you know what is expected of you and how your instructor will be grading you.
Level 4
- provides concrete examples from the readings to support postings
- integrates prior readings in postings
- integrates personal observations and knowledge in an accurate and highly insightful way
- presents new observations
- constructively responds to classmates’ postings
- participates in all module discussions
- posts are organized and information is presented in a logical sequence
- word choice and sentence structure are suitable

Level 3
- refers to examples from the readings to support postings
- integrates personal observations and knowledge in an accurate way
- presents new observations
- constructively responds to classmates’ postings
- participates in all module discussions
- posts are organized, and information is presented in a logical sequence
- word choice and sentence structure are suitable

Level 2
- alludes to the readings to support postings
- integrates personal observations and knowledge in a cursory manner
- does not present new observations
- constructively responds to classmates’ postings
- posts are somewhat disorganized and information is not presented in a logical sequence
- word choice and sentence structure are not suitable

Level 1
- does not refer to the readings to support postings
- does not integrate personal observations or knowledge
- does not present new observations
- responds in a cursory manner to classmates’ postings
- posts are disorganized and information is not presented in a logical sequence
- word choice and sentence structure are not suitable