

Teaching Online (During Weather Emergencies) Fall 2011 - Spring 2012

When Students Don't Do the Reading

The article below from *The Teaching Professor* states that instructors who review the readings in class make students' close readings of the material before class unnecessary.

<http://www.teachingprofessor.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/when-students-don%E2%80%99t-do-the-reading>

One possible solution is to adopt a strategy used by professors at American University who have taught their courses online for the last five summers. Their strategy seems to have several parts.

- They require written responses to the readings in weekly discussion forums. (In a face-to-face class, these responses could be due before a face-to-face class meets in order for credit to be received.)
- Faculty also participate in the online forums occasionally to model what a reflective response to a reading looks like.
- Faculty offer a variety of prompts about the readings so that all students do not have to respond to the same question. This gives all of your students something interesting to write about, not just the early arrivals to your questions.

Examples of prompts used in an online course in the History Department, College of Arts and Sciences: (Professor April Shelford)

Discussion Board 5: Religion and social roles and functions in Reformation Nuremberg
How did religion and social roles and functions relate to each other in Reformation Nuremberg?

How are Martin Luther's Treatise on Good Works and Hans Sachs' poetry and play different from and / or alike as primary sources? (If necessary, refresh your memory by taking another look at "How to Read a Primary Source" from our first week.) Then write about the relationship between religion and social roles and functions in Reformation Nuremberg. You might consider the following questions: Do the two authors express similar or different views on what it means to be a human being in the world? Do they reinforce each other's views of how people should function in relation to society? Do they reinforce social and / or gender hierarchy? Do you see any disagreements between the two about the appropriate relationship between serving God and serving society through activities such as work? Would you characterize either or both as revolutionary, that is, challenging the social norms of a German city? Do they encourage people to strike out on their own and develop their own values and social roles? Remember: You can't answer all of these questions! And you can't discuss all of Sachs' works!

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Examples of prompts from an online Justice, Law and Society course in the School of Public Affairs.(Professor Meg Weekes)

Week Four

Q1. Discuss the possibility that war is a just response to terror. In your discussion, provide examples from our readings, from your knowledge of wars in history, and from any other sources with which you are familiar. Give citations to all sources.

Q2. How could international law and judicial tribunals function to resolve the problems being fought over in war and terror situations and the problems caused in the aftermath of war and terror? Give examples to support your discussion.

Q3. Analyze just war theory and apply the theory to a conflict in contemporary world or national events.

Q4. What does Walzer mean by "the war convention?" How does this convention affect how soldiers fight or whether they fight justly? Explain Sidgwick's utilitarian statement of the convention and Walzer's criticism of it. Analyze their differing conceptions of the convention, and then apply the convention to at least one example.

Q5. How does the intertwining of civilians with guerillas in civil strife or war affect the war convention? How did the United States address this problem during the Vietnam War? How is this problem being addressed in the war in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, or in another conflict which you have studied?

Additional Resources for the Start of the Semester:

If you need to copy content between semesters, please see instructions here:

<http://www.american.edu/library/technology/blackboard/features.cfm#copy>

If you would like to merge sections of your course before you add your discussion boards, see this site:

<http://www.american.edu/library/technology/blackboard/features.cfm#combine>

Learn How to use LinkMaker—the single most powerful feature in Blackboard:

http://www.aladin.wrlc.org/bb/au/LinkMaker_help.pdf

Clean up your Blackboard site to make your courses easier to see and differentiate.

<http://www.american.edu/library/technology/blackboard/cleanup.cfm>

Please call the Blackboard Support Center with your questions at 202-885-3904, email them at blackboard@american.edu or stop by their new offices in the Library, third floor, Room 321.