

BIO 358 - GROUP DISCUSSIONS

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CLASS PARTICIPATION Through the Blackboard System

One option for 25% of Final Grade (see the Grading System section of course syllabus)

NOTICE that the DISCUSSION GROUPS will not begin until the third week of the course.

The use of Discussion Groups will be demonstrated in lecture on Tuesday, February 10th

Class participation is a valuable tool for both you as the student and we as the instructors. We will be using the group discussion tools available through the blackboard system to accomplish this portion of communication with you as well as to provide grading for this 25% option of your final grade (see Grading System, above).

OBJECTIVES of the group discussions are as follows:

-To give you an opportunity to let us know what exactly it is you did not understand or missed during lecture.

- -To give you, as the students, an opportunity to answer each other's questions.
- -To give you a forum to test and to attempt to break the theory of human uniqueness we will be exploring in lecture. This testing is the essence of the scientific method – and you will have the opportunity herein to sharpen your scientific and intellectual-critical skills.

METHOD

- -Each student will be assigned to a group of approximately 30 students total. You will find your assignment listed under Course Documents on Blackboard by your last name. Any student who has not been assigned to a group should contact Mrs. Souza (Adjunct Instructor) through e-mail at Monastra@aol.com or during her office hours.
- -Each group will be mentored by a TA who will answer any questions you cannot answer between yourselves. The TA will also monitor the content of the discussion as well as provide guidance as to the formulating of your questions, replies and views. Your TA will also have access to other TA's to assist him/her in this task. As well, TAs will refer any unusually difficult or ambiguous questions to Prof. Bingham and/or Instructor Souza. TAs will also provide Prof. Bingham with digests of your questions to help guide the lectures toward clarifying any confusion or uncertainty.

Bio 358 – Group Discussion Guidelines

- -You will submit your contributions under the Group Discussions button on Blackboard. Find your group, click on it, then click on Group Discussion Board on this screen. You can answer other students' posts by responding under their thread. You can create your own thread to post a new question or view by clicking on "add thread".

GRADING

Participation in this part of the course is a very time-efficient way to keep up with the course and prepare for exams. You can achieve up to 250 points for this portion of the course as follows.

1. 10 points will be given for confirming your email address on the course Blackboard site. The remaining 240 points will be awarded as 80 points for participation during each of the three exam periods. [Notice that credit cannot be carried over from one exam period to another. So its important to begin participating from the beginning, during the third week of the class.]

2. You will receive 30 points for any one of the following *if it is substantive*: a question, an answer to another student's question, a critique of the theory or the evidence for the theory.

3. You will receive 10 points for any attempt at one of the items listed under 2 that is judged less substantive – for example, because it is largely redundant with a question already asked by another student in your Discussion Group. [Notice also here that administrative questions – like “when is the next exam?” – are given no credit.]

RULES OF THE GAME

Please be aware that the information provided by other students in your group is not necessarily correct information. The purpose of discussion groups is to give you the chance to clarify your understanding and sharpen your intellectual skills. Authoritative factual information comes from lecture, the textbook (including study questions) and office hours with either Prof. Bingham or Instructor Souza. This is important to remember when studying for exams.

1. All questions should be first directed to your TA through the group discussion. This is where the bulk of your effort and attention for Discussion Group should go.
2. You can also contact your TA directly by private email if necessary.
3. Your TA or yourself may then contact Mrs. Souza if the question cannot be resolved.

Bio 358 – Group Discussion Guidelines

The following behaviors during Group Discussion are unacceptable and will result in your being excluded from Discussion Group.

- Using abusive, disrespectful or foul language
- Using sexually suggestive language (either explicit or implicit) that could be perceived as offensive or harassing.
- Threatening others
- Insulting others or denigrating the opinions of others. Of course, you may respectfully, even strongly, disagree or challenge the opinions of others, but please do not post personal attacks.

If any inappropriate behavior of the sort listed above should occur, the offender will be issued one and only one warning. A second offense will be grounds excluding the offender from Discussion Group and his/her forfeiting all credit for this requirement.

We look forward to your questions and discussions of the course material!