

# COMM 211 – Fundamentals of Human Communication Syllabus for Online Course

## Contents

Instructor Contact Information .....	2
Course Description .....	2
Required Materials .....	2
Technical Requirements .....	2
Learning Outcomes .....	3
Nature of this course.....	3
Course Policies .....	3
How to Submit Videos .....	4
Organization of Course: .....	5
Assignment Descriptions.....	6
Course Assessments .....	6
Mini-tests:.....	6
Discussion Board Guidelines:.....	6
Speeches .....	7
Analysis Paper .....	7
Grading Scale .....	8
Expectations .....	8
Time.....	8
Communication .....	8
Reading.....	9
Academic Integrity .....	9
Recording Policy .....	9
Late Policy.....	9
Student Support .....	10
Withdrawing .....	10
Special Learning Needs .....	10
Library .....	10
Technical Support.....	10
Personal Support.....	10
Institutional Policies .....	10
Financial and Registration Issues .....	10
The College’s Policy Regarding Students with Disabilities .....	11
Statement of Social Justice/ Non-Discrimination Policy .....	11
Appendix.....	12

## Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Jessica Fabbricatore  
Online Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Friday 10:00 AM —1:00 PM  
Phone: (304) 613-6730 (for quick questions)  
Email: [fabbricatore\\_j@wvwc.edu](mailto:fabbricatore_j@wvwc.edu)

## Course Description

This course introduces students to an overview of appropriate and effective communication techniques in a variety of settings. The course emphasizes students' ability to communicate messages to different audiences. Students demonstrate audience analysis, delivery speaking skills, writing and organizing a speech, and self-reflection on their communication techniques. While primarily performance based, students also critique memorable speeches and embody communication skills in a small group setting.

Prerequisites: **ENGL 102**

Special Note

***Students are required to earn a C or better in this course in order to graduate.***

## Required Materials

### Required Readings

Rothwell, J. D. (2016). *Practically speaking* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.

Purdue Online Writing Lab APA website. Link [here](#).

Supplemental Readings/videos will be provided in various formats.

## Technical Requirements

- Reliable Internet access (often Wi-Fi hotspots will not be steady enough).
- Stopwatch (usually an app already on your phone).
- Steady supply of 3x5 notecards.
- Access to a video recording device (as long as I can clearly see & hear the content of the video, you're good).
- **Audience of at least 5 members for each speech (see course policies below).** *You will be placed in groups at the beginning of the semester.*
- Microsoft Office programs: Word and PowerPoint.
- YouTube account for uploading speeches (additional info on Blackboard & later in syllabus).

Given that all of the course materials will be accessed via Blackboard, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you regularly log in and check the course page as well as your WVWC email for any announcements, course changes, course materials, etc.

## Learning Outcomes

### Department of Communication:

- 1) Employ communication theories, principles, and concepts.
- 2) Construct messages appropriate to the audiences, purposes, and contexts.
- 3) Analyze messages utilizing critical thinking skills, media literacy skills, and self-efficacy.
- 4) Influence public discourse through well-reasoned oral and written arguments.

### **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Articulate an appropriate and effective message tailored to their specific audience.
- 2) Demonstrate critical thinking to send informative and persuasive messages to a specific type of audience and in a particular situation.
- 3) Utilize effective delivery techniques, including eye contact, gestures, movement, posture, facial expressions, and vocal delivery.
- 4) Organize and support their message using an organizational pattern, supporting credible evidence, and implementing effective use of visual aids.

## Nature of this course

Online courses are not easy. They require a great deal of responsibility and time management. Prepare accordingly. The activities in this course include textbook readings and mini tests, discussions surrounding the content, papers, and four speeches (**including one group speech**). I will include PowerPoints or other materials with each chapter. In the notes section of my PowerPoints, you will find supplemental information including actual notes and videos that will help with comprehension. When faced with a concept you do not understand, make your first step identifying all that you do know about the problem. Identify resources that can help you fill the gaps in your understanding. These will include your text, your classmates, online academic support resources and your instructor. Many times as you try to put your understanding into writing, the light will dawn.

## Course Policies

1. **Computer Literacy:** Enrollment in this class assumes a moderate level of computer literacy. It is unlike many other online courses in that you must record video of your presentations and convert the video to a web-ready format in order to make your presentations available (some instructions on how to do this are provided below). Therefore, your computer skills must be suitable for this task. If you do need additional instructions on how to use Blackboard, you can find some training instructions [here](#) (after logging into Blackboard). Additionally, there is more information on WVWC Information Technology (including the WVWC Help Desk) [here](#).
2. **Technology Instructions:** The following information are basic directions for how to submit assignments and videos on Blackboard.

### How to Submit an Assignment (e.g., Activities, Analysis Papers, Outlines)

- Save your document in one of the acceptable file formats: .doc, .docx, .odt, .pdf, .ppt, and .pptx. Go to the class page in Blackboard and click on the correct assignment.
  - **NOTE:** I cannot open documents submitted as .pages, so be sure your document is submitted as one of the acceptable file formats. Assignments submitted in any other

format will not be graded (because I cannot open them). Assignments **must** be submitted to Blackboard. I will not accept Google Docs.

- Click on the Browse My Computer button and a file upload box will appear.
- Choose the correct file and click on Open.
- Click Submit. Make sure that you wait until you arrive at the next screen, which will have a green bar toward the top of the page that says “This assignment is complete. Review the Submission History.” You will be able to see what was submitted.

#### How to Submit Videos

You will submit your speech videos one of two ways depending on the assignment. One way is by uploading your speech to Blackboard’s discussion board to allow for peer evaluations. The second way is by submitting the video via an assignment link on Blackboard. You will be notified where to submit each speech in the weekly folders. You will have some flexibility in how you record your videos, but you will use YouTube to upload your videos. [This link](#) provides directions for uploading videos to YouTube.

- Record your video. When recording, you can use your phone, laptop, or other recording device, but keep the following aspects in mind:
  - Audio: make sure that we can hear the video (don’t cover the microphone) & eliminate ambient noise (try to find a quiet space)
  - Background: try not to have a lot of lighting coming from behind you (lights or windows) & make sure your background isn’t distracting
  - Height: be sure to have your whole body in the shot & try to angle the camera so we’re not looking up your nostrils or at the top of your head
- **You should not edit your videos. All speeches in this class should be one, seamless video, not an edited video.**

For detailed directions on uploading and submitting your videos, see the “Submitting Videos” document on Blackboard.

**\*\*\*Uploading the video will take time. Do not wait until the last minute to upload these.\*\*\***

3. **Failure to Complete Major Assignments:** All major assignments must be completed. Failure to complete any exam or any presentation project will result in an F for the final course grade. Here, “major assignments” refers to the speeches and assignments related to those speeches.
4. **Grading:** You must wait twenty-four hours after receiving a grade to discuss it with me. In addition, discussion about a grade must occur within one week of receiving the grade from the instructor. A time must be scheduled between the instructor and student.
5. **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy:** Academic honesty is **expected**. Student work must be original, and all material used from other sources must be properly credited. Also, sharing work with others on non-collaborative assignments is also a violation. Student violations of academic integrity are considered grounds for instructor action, and sanctions range from a minimum of zero on the assignment in question to failure of the course. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College. See the *WVWC Student Handbook*.

## Organization of Course:

The organization of this course is in modules. Each module has its own set of modular outcomes. Each module is located in a separate folder in the Content section of the course. To begin the course, go to the Content section at the left of the course home page. **Click on the Start Here folder.** This first folder sets the stage for the class and must be finished by end-of-day (11:59 PM) on the second day of class. Specific due dates for all remaining activities are specified within the instructions and also noted on the calendar for the course.

Below, you will find the tentative course schedule including readings, assignments, and due dates. More detailed assignment specifications are located within the Blackboard folders marked by the week they are assigned. Any videos and media that you are assigned to watch will be noted in weekly announcements.

**Assignments are always due by 11:59pm (EST) on the date they are due.** Experiencing technical difficulties is not an excuse for a missed deadline. This is an online course and will require self-regulation. Due dates will approach extremely quickly. It is your responsibility to stay informed and mindful of coursework deadlines.

Week #	Topics	Assignments Due
Start Here!	Introduction to the course & the people in it	SMT   DB
1	Ch. 2: Speech anxiety <i>Assign Speech 1</i>	MT   DB
2	Ch. 8: Outlining and organizing	MT   DB
3	Ch. 14: Informative speaking	MT   DB
4	Ch. 7: Introductions and conclusions	MT   DB <b>S1</b>
5	Ch. 4: Gathering information <i>Assign Speech 2</i>	MT   DB <b>S2: Contract</b>
6	Ch. 13: Argument, reasoning, and evidence	MT   DB <b>S2: Outline</b>
7	Ch. 15: Foundations of persuasive speaking	MT   DB <b>S2</b>
8	Ch. 3: Audience analysis & topic selection <i>Assign Speech 3</i> <b>(3/19- Last day to withdraw)</b>	MT   DB
9	Ch. 17: Speeches for special occasions	MT   DB
10	Ch. 10: Delivering your speech	MT   DB <b>S3</b>
11	Ch. 6: Getting people to listen	MT   DB
12	Ch. 12: Critical thinking speakers and listeners	MT   DB <b>LA</b>
13	Ch. 5: Using information	MT   DB
14	Ch. 11: Visual aids	MT   DB
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last day of classes: Saturday, May 1</li> <li>• Reading Day: Sunday, May 2</li> <li>• <b>Speech 4 due Monday, May 3</b></li> </ul>	<b>S4</b>

## Assignment Descriptions

Course Assessments	Points Per Assignment	Number of Assignments	Percent of Total Grade	Total Points	Complete?
Mini-Tests (including syllabus mini-test)	8	15	20%	<b>120</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussion Board	10	15	25%	<b>150</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening Analysis Paper (LA)	60	1	10%	<b>60</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech 1: <i>Informative Speech</i>			11%	<b>65</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Speech Video	55				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Outline w/ references	10				<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech 2: <i>Persuasive Group Speech</i>			14%	<b>85</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Speech Video	60				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Contract	4				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Outline	20				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Group Evaluation	1				<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech 3: <i>Ceremonial Speech</i>			11%	<b>65</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Speech Video	55				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Outline w/ references (if needed)	10				<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech 4: <i>Introductory Speech</i>			9%	<b>55</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Speech Video	50				<input type="checkbox"/>
• Outline	5				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<b>600</b>	

### Mini-tests:

The mini-tests will be based on the assigned textbook readings and PowerPoints that correspond with the chapters. There are a total of 15 mini-tests, including the syllabus mini-test. These are due by **Saturday at 11:59 pm** of each module week. I am not looking over your shoulder to determine if you are using your learning materials when you take your quizzes. Push yourself to rely on your own brain as a diagnostic.

### Discussion Board Guidelines:

Due Dates: Original posts are due each **Wednesday by 11:59 pm**. Responses to your posts and to two other classmates are due each Friday by 11:59 pm.

### Discussion Board Etiquette:

How you post a message to a topic is just as important as what you post. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer.

- The instructor reserves the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content. Do not use offensive language.
- Rudeness or slamming will not be tolerated.
- Show respect for your fellow students, even if you disagree with something that was stated.
- Clearly state what you believe, even if it means that you're disagreeing with someone. Never, however, respond in anger – take care to discuss ideas, not the person.

#### Grading:

Topic discussion posts will be graded during the week following the date that the discussions are due. Ten (10) total points are possible for each discussion topic. You will post one (1) original post and respond to at least two (2) classmate's posts each week. **Responses to classmates should be at least 75 words.** The discussion topic will be provided in each module. In determining your grade, the following components are considered (see the *Grading Rubric for Discussions* in the Appendix).

**To review your rubric once a grade has been entered, click "Tools" in the left column of the class page. Scroll down to "My Grades" (everything is in alphabetical order). Next, find the assignment you're interested in viewing, then click "View Rubric."**

## Speeches

**Informative Speech:** Each student will give a 3-5 minute speech of exposition—that is, explanation, description, reportage or instruction on an audience-centered topic. In addition to preparing and delivering the speech, students will prepare and turn in a clear outline (with list of works cited).

**Group Persuasive Speech (Group Shark Tank Pitch):** Groups will produce a 16-20 minute speech (4 minutes per person) in which the group will sell a product to the rest of the class. This assignment will also include a contract, outline, and group evaluation.

**Ceremonial Speech:** Each student will give a 3-5-minute speech designed to pay tribute to or honor a person, group, institution, object, place, or event. Specifically, students will give an epideictic speech in the form of a toast, commemoration, eulogy, or presentation. Students will prepare and turn in a typewritten manuscript of their remarks.

**Elevator Speech:** Each student will give a 2-3-minute speech designed to describe why she or he should be considered for a job opportunity or career pathway. The precise goal in this speech is to produce a message that conveys professionalism and competence to a general audience of potential employers. Ultimately, this video could be added to the student's LinkedIn profile or online portfolio. In addition to preparing and delivering the speech, students will prepare and turn in a clear speech outline.

## Analysis Paper

**Papers must be submitted as a Word document. Assignments submitted in any other format will not be graded (because I cannot open them), and will adhere to the late assignment policy. I'm looking at you, Mac users.**

You will write a listening analysis paper. Specific details will be available on Blackboard.

#### **Quality of Written Work:**

Part of performing at a competent level is submitting work that is coherent, neat, complete and timely. No one writes a perfect first draft, so students are expected to submit papers that have been edited and checked for basic errors.

**5 Error Rule:** Errors in grammar, spelling, word usage and punctuation will result in a lower grade. Papers with five or more basic errors will earn a grade of zero. Written assignments receiving a zero because of five or more basic errors may be resubmitted after correction but are subject to late penalties as outlined above. Errors include but are not limited to the following: misspelled words, improper subject/verb agreement, pluralizing the term “communication”, using “alot” (if you must use it, it is two words – a lot) and using the incorrect form of their/there/they’re, to/too/two, your/you’re, affect/effect, through/threw, its/it’s, are/our/hour, hear/here, then/than and except/accept.

**Length of Written Assignments:** Each written assignment should be at least 2 and no more than 4 typed pages. Papers substantially shorter than this specified length typically lack specific explanation and will earn lower grades. Be sure to address **ALL** parts of assignments.

**Formatting Guidelines:**

Be sure to adhere to the following guidelines for all submitted assignments. Failure to follow any one of these guidelines will result in a loss of one point per mistake:

- All assignments should be submitted in a Microsoft Word file type (either .doc or .docx)
- Set margins to 1” on all four sides
- Place first and last name, and section # or class time, and assignment title (e.g., Analysis Assignment #1 Nonverbal Paper) in the upper right corner
- Use appropriate font type and size (e.g. Times New Roman and 10-12 pt)
- Use double line spacing
- Use appropriate paragraphs as needed
- Check for 5 Error Rule, coherence, and neatness

## Grading Scale

To calculate your grade, divide the number of points you have by 540 (the total number of points in the class).

93% & up	A	83-86.99%	B	73-76.99%	C	63-66.99%	D
90-92.99	A-	80-82.99%	B-	70-72.99%	C-	60-62.99%	D-
87-89.99%	B+	77-79.99%	C+	67-69.99%	D+	59.99% & below	F

## Expectations

### Time

While the organization and the actual activities of this course may be different for a session offered during a regular semester, the expected learning outcomes and the time commitment required to meet those outcomes is the same. This is a full semester course being taught completely online. This means that all the time you would normally spend in class meetings. To be successful in this course, you should plan to allot 3-4 hours per week for “in-class” time which does not include reading the textbook or completing assignments. **I strongly recommend setting aside the same one or two time slots each week to treat as your class time in the same location.**

### Communication

You are expected to communicate respectfully. Using formal English. Texting short-cuts not acceptable. Emoticons may be used to help convey feelings, but they are not a substitutes for clearly written statements. Because I will be eight hours away, the best way to reach me is by email. We can arrange a time to connect by phone, or by video conference if you want to talk through some particular aspect of the course. I will monitor my email daily up until 8:30 (EST) at night. If I receive an email from you, you can expect a response within 48 hours.



It may be sooner if received during online office hours. If a question is asked that is answered in the syllabus or on Blackboard, I reserve the right to not respond, or reply with "Please see the syllabus."

## Reading

There will be a significant amount of reading in this course. Some the reading will be in the assigned textbook, but some may require you to read an article online. When you are reading these materials, you are expected to connect the information read to concepts we are discussing and things you already know. You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding through mini tests and discussion boards. There will be no videos of lectures.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity violations (including cheating, plagiarism, and facilitating either) are serious matters and will not be tolerated. See the West Virginia Wesleyan College Student Handbook for further discussion. Any violations of academic integrity in will result in, at minimum, failure of the assignment and likely failure in the course. All incidents are reported to the Dean of the College. **MAKE SURE YOU CITE ALL OF YOUR WORK.**

## Recording Policy

Each assignment will be explained in detail on Blackboard. For two of the four presentations, you will be required to assemble your own audience (in addition to recording the speech). This audience can be composed of **your group members**, colleagues at work, church members, civic groups, fraternity or sorority members, family, or friends. These audience members can join via Zoom or be in-person. **All audiences must be comprised at least 5 people. Failure to assemble an audience that meets this criterion will result in a reduction equal to 30% of the total points the assignment is worth (equivalent to a 3 letter grade deduction).** Additionally, if you fail to film your audience in the prescribed manner (**a single, continuous video that 1) includes both your audience and you during the full speech OR 2) that pans from the audience to you at the beginning of the speech and back to the audience at the end of the speech with no camera stops in between**) the 30% penalty will be assessed since I have no way of verifying the presence of the audience.

## Late Policy

You will notice that there are generally two due dates for each week: Wednesday and Saturday (see course schedule for more information). You are expected to turn in assignments and deliver/upload your speeches on time. In order to remove any potential confusion about deadlines, please note that all deadlines for your assignments and class work will be in adherence to Eastern Standard Time (EST). **There are no exceptions. Computer or equipment failure/access is not an excuse. You are expected to complete and turn in your work by the due date.** There will be a 10% deduction from the total possible points each day that passes until the assignment is submitted. There are no partial days. For example, if your work is due at 11:59PM on Saturday, but you submit your assignment at 3:00PM the following Tuesday, you will have 20% deducted and the assignment will be graded out of the remaining points. **Assignments will not be accepted after five days past the due date.** This means that if the assignment is due on Saturday at 11:59PM, I will no longer accept it after 11:59PM the following Thursday.

Allowances may be made based on the following criteria:

- Serious illness or injury resulting in an emergency visit to a physician or hospital that is accompanied by a valid, signed doctor's note or other official medical document, and results in the student's physical inability to complete weekly assignments.
- Absence due to death of a family member.

In order for allowances to be made, you must notify me of your personal situation well in advance. For a grief-related allowance, you should notify me as soon as you become aware of the situation. For a serious medical situation that leaves you unable to satisfactorily complete coursework, you must notify me as soon as physically

possible. If you wait until the end of the semester to notify me of a problem that arose earlier in the semester, no accommodations can be retroactively made to help you work through that situation.

## Student Support

I realize that a variety of academic and non-academic issues may arise during the time of this course. What follows are brief descriptions of the types of support available to you during the semester. More details and specific resources can be found in the Student Support course link at the left. It is just below the Content course link.

### Withdrawing

Throughout the duration of the semester, you can email the professor and the registrar when you want to withdraw. The add/drop period is during the first week of the semester. If you want to withdraw from the class after that period, you will need to retrieve a withdraw form from the registrar, fill it out, and return it to the registrar.

### Special Learning Needs

If you have a physical, medical, psychological, or learning disability that is going to or require accommodation, please let me know immediately. More information is found in the Academic Support and the Accessibility folders in the Student Support course link at the left.

### Library

The WVWC Library offers information resources for students at all levels and all disciplines. Library resources are a key component of academic success. Google and Wikipedia as research tools will not lead to acceptable research assignments, papers, or presentations. The library's reference and instructional staff is available by phone, by email, by text, and via reference chat on the library homepage to assist students with research inquiries. Starting place for accessing library resources is [here](#).

### Technical Support

Use the "Technical Support" folder for computer or internet issues. If you cannot find the answer to your issue, contact the HelpDesk. Their contact information can be found [here](#). For troubleshooting and information in general about Blackboard, follow this [link](#) or click the "Help with Blackboard" link in column on the left-hand side of our class.

### Personal Support

Should you become overwhelmed during this course, there are a variety of avenues for working through this difficulty. Feel free to contact me by email or telephone. Also, at the Student Support course link at the left side of each page, you can find a folder titled "Personal Support." In that folder you have contact information for advisors who can help you. There are also a variety of links to guidance and practices which may help you manage this demanding period of time.

### Institutional Policies

The Student Handbook is here along with direct links to the institutional policies on non-discrimination, students with disabilities and academic integrity.

### Financial and Registration Issues

This gives you the contact information for issues relating to billing and financial aid.

## The College's Policy Regarding Students with Disabilities

West Virginia Wesleyan College ensures that no qualified person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied access to, excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of any program or activity operated by the College or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities. The College shall make reasonable accommodations to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student with a disability to enable the qualified student with the disability to have equal access to educational opportunities, programs and activities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [29 U.S.C. 794(a)] and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) [42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.].

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements, according to our Student Handbook <http://www.wvwc.edu/MCEUploads/PDFs/Life%20@%20WVWC/Campus%20Life/student-handbook-15-16.pdf>, with the Director of the Learning Center (473-8499).

## Statement of Social Justice/ Non-Discrimination Policy

The College fully subscribes to the development of individuals as worthy persons who should be nurtured to their fullest potential regardless of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, genetic predisposition, national or ethnic origin, or physical or mental disability. I concur with the College's commitment to social justice and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

## Appendix

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Critical Analysis - 4 pts max possible</b>	<b>Relevance to Post - 2 pts max possible</b>	<b>Contribution to Learning Community - 2 pts max possible</b>	<b>Quality of Writing - 1 pt max possible</b>	<b>Timeliness - 1 pt max possible</b>
<b>Exemplary</b>	Response goes beyond the understanding of the content and includes relevant information from outside sources to support the main points.	Post is relevant to the discussion content and discusses other outside sources relevant to the content.	Attempts to motivate further discussion beyond the required participation. Interacts freely.	Free of grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Writing style promotes communication.	Original posts are added during the first half of the discussion period.
<b>Proficient</b>	Response indicates an understanding of the content including concepts and terminology. Proper citation.	Post is related to the content of the discussion content.	Responses contribute to the discussion by asking related questions, elaborating on relevant topics discussed in post, or making an educated oppositional statement.	Mostly free of grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Writing style mostly promotes communication.	Original posts are present, but may have been posted during the last half of the discussion period.
<b>Limited</b>	Response does not go beyond summarizing the reading. Little or no reference to outside sources or relevant current applications. Incorrect or no citations.	Responses mention the reading, but does not discuss any points from the reading. Response is short and/or irrelevant to the post.	Responses sometimes contribute to the discussion by asking related questions, elaborating on relevant topics discussed in post, or making an educated oppositional statement.	Some grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors.	Original posts are added at the last minute, leaving no time for classmates to respond.
<b>Incorrect</b>	Little or no evidence that the readings were completed or understood.	Response is all opinion-based or anecdotal evidence. Does not reference the content.	Feedback is irrelevant or says something along the lines of, "I agree with her."	Use of texting/informal language; several grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors.	Post is made after the deadline

<b>Unacceptable</b>	No post.	No post.	No feedback to fellow student.	No post.	No post.
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