Discussions: the Online Discussion Board for Philosophy 104 Bioethics (Spring 2015)

From the syllabus:

✓ Discussions (3 points per week x 15 weeks = 45 points): Each week use the online discussion board to make your own original post reacting to the target question by midnight Wednesday (1 point), your own ratings and acknowledgments of each original post of each student in your small group by midnight Saturday (1 point), and your own two thoughtful replies to any two original posts of other students in your small group by midnight Saturday (1 point).

ORIGINAL POST (full compliance = 1 point; partial compliance = 0 points; no fractions given.)

First, for each part of our text Contemporary Debates in Bioethics, you are required to make an original post to the discussion board sharing your own reaction to the yes-or-no question that is the focus of the relevant part.

Each part of our text, of course, has an interesting debate on these target questions by the authors. You may agree with the answer given by one of these authors even if you do not agree with their arguments. Or you may be perfectly neutral or undecided or "on the fence" about the target question after doing the readings.

Make your original post to this target question as a comment in the relevant Blackboard ‘Discussion’ Forum as follows. On the main menu under ‘COMMUNICATION’ click on ‘Groups’, then ‘Group #’ (where # = your group number), then ‘Group Discussion Board.’ (Or, at the bottom of the main menu click ‘My Groups’ then ‘Group #’ then ‘Group Discussion Board.’) Click on the relevant Forum. Click “Create Thread.” Click on the “Subject” line. Type a title for your original post that begins with a single digit number from 1 (which represents "No, for sure!") to 9 (which represents "Yes, for sure!). The number 5 represents being perfectly undecided or "on the fence," not leaning even slightly towards a 'yes' answer (like 6, 7, 8, or 9) or a 'no' answer (like 4, 3, 2, or 1).

In the Message box, explain your answer to the yes-or-no target question in 200-300 words. Then click ‘Submit’.

RATINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (full compliance = 1 point; partial compliance = 0 points; no fractions given.)

Second, give each original post in your small group a rating by clicking on its “Overall rating” scale, and also click ‘reply’ to make one very short acknowledgement to each person in your small group indicating that you have read their original post (like ‘I just read your post.’ or ‘Nice work.’ or ‘Got it.’ or ‘Done.’).

On the “Overall Rating” scale, do not rate the post based on whether you agreed with it, but on whether it was satisfactory (=3 stars), unsatisfactory (=1 star), or the very best post (in your opinion) of your entire small group this week (= 5 stars). Give each post exactly 1, 3, or 5 stars (no 2s, no 4s, no zeros). Only give one ‘5-star’ rating each week. Only give a ‘1-star’ rating if the post was too short (<200 words), late (= after midnight Wednesday) or shows lack of effort (= the person clearly did not read the texts or did not put original thought into their post).

All students will see every student’s average “Overall rating” as it develops through the week. But each student only sees their average—no student sees what individual rating another student gives them.

The professor uses these Overall Ratings to monitor online group discussions and to give extra credit to students with the highest-rated original posts of their small group that week. You cannot rate your own original posts.

THOUGHTFUL REPLIES (full compliance = 1 point; partial compliance = 0 points; no fractions given.)

Third, make at least two thoughtful replies of 100+ words to two original posts of others in your small group.

While not required, it is good etiquette to respond to those who reply to your original post with a ‘thank you’ to acknowledge reading their reply.

Once the due date for a discussion board has passed, that discussion becomes unavailable until it is graded and re-opened with everyone’s status changed from 'participant' (who can add things) to 'reader' (who cannot add things). So submit your original posts, your ratings/acknowledgments, and your replies in on time.