

SAMPLE BLOG DESCRIPTION FROM AN UNDERGRADUATE WRITING COURSE SYLLABUS

Blog participation

The blog is a central space for you to wrestle with the ideas from the class. Participation on the blog will not be graded per blog post, but instead in a blog portfolio of your best writing, worth 15% of your final grade for the course. This portfolio will include two posts and two responses of your choice, plus a cover letter addressed to Prof. Vee reflecting on your blog writing.

You will be split into two groups:

Group 1=last names A-K

Group 2=last names L-Z

Each week, one group will post to the blog and the other group will comment. Posts and comments should be at least 250 words long. They are due at 11:59pm on their due date, which is the night before class. [The UTA] and I will also occasionally post to the blog to offer you additional ways to reflect on the readings and ideas from class.

The blog will be hosted on our class website, which is public and uses the Wordpress platform. Wordpress is a free and open source blog platform; it may benefit you professionally to know how to use it since some companies and nonprofits use it, plus, it offers a similar interface to many other blog platforms. I'll add you to the blog as an author so that you can post to it. I'll have to approve your first comment on the blog, but after that, your comments will show up automatically (this helps combat spam comments).

Blog posts (around 250 words) should ask probing questions about the readings or ideas from class; alternatively, they may extend an idea from class or point to a current event that connects to our discussions. I encourage you to do a little additional research on technologies or Pittsburgh to extend the ideas from our class. **Blog comments** (around 150 words) should respond to a post by answering a posted question in a complex, thoughtful way or by extending the connection posted even further or in different directions.

You are welcome and encouraged to post more often than you are required to. The goal is for the blog to be a conversation about our ideas, not a series of monologues (as class discussion boards often are). Do not simply agree or disagree with your peers. Instead, comment on specific points and extend ideas and complicate theories. If you're doing it right, the word minimum shouldn't be your primary motivation; instead, you should think about spending the time and space necessary to reflect on complex ideas. Although you should generate and reflect on difficult ideas in your post, you are encouraged to write in a relatively informal, online style. Include links and images to illustrate your points and to make it more engaging! The blog is public (although your name will be anonymized) and so you should consider your posts carefully.