



## General Guidelines for Asynchronous Discussions

### Introduction

Discussion online is different than in the classroom. Participants read and make contributions when it is convenient. Usually, a discussion takes place over a number of days. Body language and tone of voice are lacking so clarity of intent is important. Discussion is generally less formal than written work but somewhat more formal than conversation. Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation may or may not be stressed.

### Guidelines

#### Tone

- Be respectful as you would in the classroom. You may not be able to ascertain race, age, or even gender of your classmates. Be sensitive to the likelihood of diversity and appreciate differences.
- Because body language and tone of voice are lacking online, it is very important to be clear about your intent. Use emoticons, avoid sarcasm (it can be misunderstood), and do not use all caps (it's considered shouting).
- The instructor reserves the right to delete messages that are disrespectful or contain profane language. If a message must be deleted, the instructor should provide an explanation to the author of the message.



See these site <http://scilnet.fortlewis.edu/edtech/webmail/Emoticons.html> or [http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/documents/email/com2g2\\_1.cfm](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/documents/email/com2g2_1.cfm) for common emoticons and abbreviations.

#### Clarity and Efficiency

- Read your classmates' messages before contributing your own. You can learn from others and avoid repetition.
- Use a short but clearly descriptive subject line for your messages.
- Avoid "me-too" messages. It takes time to click into these.
- Think before you write and proofread before you post. Messages are permanent.

#### Community

- Prepare for discussion carefully; be responsible for the group's learning as well as your own.
- Actively participate and reflect on the contributions of others.
- Present views clearly, but listen to reactions before pressing your point.
- Don't change your mind just to achieve harmony.

#### Privacy

- Discussion messages are confidential to the class. Do not reveal contents of discussion to anyone outside of the class unless you have the permission of the author(s) of the message(s).