

Creating Community In Your Sakai Group Discussion Forum

In the Seminar's Sakai Group discussion forum, you will have opportunities to learn how to be effective as an online group participant, learn how virtual groups develop, and help your class become more cohesive and productive.

How to use Sakai

- To log-in to Sakai go to: <https://sakai.unc.edu> .
- ONYEN log-in is in the upper right corner.
- At the top of the page you will see tabs for all Sakai courses you are enrolled in. Click: SOWO523.0##.FA11 (the ## will be the class section number).
- When you arrive at your field course page, you should see a welcome message from your field advisor and a place for recent announcements.
- On the left side of the page you will see *Forums*. Click on this *Forums* link and you will see each seminar session listed by number or date.
- To post your substantive finding to your question: Click the appropriate seminar session, click *Post New Thread*. In the subject line, write the question you are answering in **question form**. Type your answer (finding) to the question in the message box.
- To read other's posted substantive findings: Click on the appropriate seminar session, click the thread title. When you select which one you want to respond to (your substantive response) click on that thread and then click *Reply*.
- You will find several course tool links on the left side of the screen. You will find the course syllabus under *Syllabus*. Under *Gradebook*, you will find your grades based on the assignment grading rubric in the syllabus.

Be an effective participant

- *Be courteous and encouraging to other forum members.*
 - Don't use CAPITAL LETTERS in posts. ALL CAPS is considered "shouting" and makes your message harder to read.
- *Write in standard English*
 - Write as you would to a professional colleague whom you don't know well. Do not use slang or IM abbreviations.
- *Be concise*

Nurture group cohesiveness

In cohesive groups, members regularly express appreciation for each other's contributions.

- When you respond to a message, even if you disagree with parts of it, first mention something about how it furthered the discussion. If you are going to disagree with anyone else's statements, provide evidence to justify your viewpoint.
- Have realistic expectations about how many replies you will get to your "answer/findings" posts.

If you don't get any replies to one of your substantive findings, it does not mean that it is not a valuable contribution to the discussion. Remember, the minimum requirement is 1 response during the second week between seminar sessions. Each student has to choose among many substantive findings when deciding which ones to reply to. However, if you find that you are only replying to the same few people over several weeks, ask yourself what you could contribute to another thread.

Create continuity in the development of ideas.

Take advantage of opportunities to carry ideas and issues back and forth between your online and in-class discussions.

Confidentiality

Even though email often seems like private communication, in the world of virtual communication it is about as "private as a postcard." Email messages can go astray or be monitored. When you compose your messages, do not include any identifying information about clients or agencies.