

Before & After: Discussion Board Prompt

The discussion board lies at the heart of the online learning experience. Research shows that getting students to work together, collaboratively, in discussions provides an opportunity for community building and engagement.

Below is an annotated look at a common discussion board prompt, followed by one that purposively incorporates key elements of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. The discussion, in each case, is intended to get students further acquainted with one another and thinking about the personal relevance of the course.

Discussion prompt BEFORE Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm revisions:

We covered a lot of ground in this introductory module. We examined the intricacies of world politics, different types of actors on the world stage, the historical evolution of the international system, and International Relations theory. The complexity of this system has often resulted in conflict, yet we see areas of cooperation involving both state and non-state actors in areas of “low politics” (health, disease, trade, etc.).

What are your thoughts about the module content? How are you impacted by world politics, both directly and indirectly? Why?

Submit a 250-word post by 11:59 pm on Thursday, January 30 and comment on two posts by your fellow classmates by Sunday, February 3 (11:59 pm). Include relevant sources from the module readings and materials in your original and peer responses.

Discussion prompts AFTER Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm revisions:

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players,” William Shakespeare wrote in *As You Like It*.

Shakespeare’s lines are used here because they help convey the complicated nature of world politics. Along with various state and non-state actors, we, as individuals, are very much on this stage, no matter how distant the world may seem or how much we may want to ignore it. Events throughout the world directly impact our security, wallets, job prospects, personal relationships, and well-being, often in varied ways.

Connect the readings, video recordings, and case studies presented in this introductory module with the various identities you fill on a daily basis. These identities may include: student, daughter/son, parent, caregiver, consumer, voter, St. Louis City resident, on-campus worker, athlete, student government representative, amongst other things. In your post, identify three examples of the ways in which you are directly impacted by events in the world, and three ways in which you affect the nature of world politics. To jog your thinking, what effect, for example,

Commented [ER1]: This is a typical discussion prompt for an introductory module in a World Politics course. The ability of students to understand and apply basic concepts, such as state and non-state actors, trends, and theory, are important building-blocks for later course topics and themes.

Commented [ER2]: These questions are broad enough to allow for student discussion (they move beyond “yes” or “no” responses), but not targeted enough to create a coherent, meaningful discussion.

Commented [ER3]: While the intent for this discussion is to have students reflect on module materials, relate to the material on an individual level, and create a space for dialogue between them, there’ll likely be a disconnect between intent and resulting posts. The prompt, itself, feels distant and unrelatable to students. They’re asked to comment on how world politics impacts them, but not in concrete or tangible ways. This may lead to superficial and off-topic discussions.

Commented [ER4]: This is a way to engage students in **experience** (connecting past experiences with learned information) by having students think about their prior or existing identities in relation to current events and new course content.

Commented [ER5]: Incorporating this focus on identities gives the instructor (and fellow students) an opportunity to learn more about the **context** of each individual student (i.e., what they bring to the course, and where they’re coming from).

Commented [ER6]: Asking students to provide these six examples is a further way to engage students in **reflection**; they’re provided with a space to think directly about the ways in which the content impacts them, increasing relevance and meaning.

does the case study on the deepening trade war between the US and China have on you as a consumer? Flipping this around, how do your actions and choices as a consumer affect others around the world when thinking about the case study on conflict minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

Your original post is due on Thursday, January 30 by 11:59 pm and you need to comment on two posts by your fellow classmates by Sunday, February 3 (11:59 pm). Aim for at least 250-words in your original post, and connect the module materials in your peer responses. The attached rubric provides additional categories and expectations.

Commented [ER7]: Connecting their responses to the case studies in the module encourages students to apply, and act on, their learning, which provides meaning to new information.