

The current section of the course is a blended one, meaning instruction occurs both in person and online. To ensure that each component of the course matters, both in person and online discussion will be assessed. How they will be assessed throughout the term is outlined below.

The Overall Breakdown

The standard syllabus for ENGL 216 at DeVry stipulates that 260 of the 1,000 points available in the course will come from discussions. Within that 260-point chunk, 20 are given to the graded discussions in each of the first through fifth weeks, and 80 are given to graded discussions in each of the sixth and seventh weeks. Grades are determined within the threads of discussion as detailed below, and incentives for in-class attendance are noted.

Handling Online Discussions

The regular policies for online discussions at DeVry will apply, of course. An atmosphere of civility and professionalism is necessary to ensure cross-comprehension and to permit the kind of free inquiry from which intellectual and academic advancement proceed. Practice with the conventions of academic American English and of appropriate crediting of outside information, as articulated in the current style guide of the American Psychological Association, is also advisable.

Additionally, a distribution of online discussion posts is desirable; a student's contributions ought not to all come on the same day, and they ought not all to be in the same thread. Responding to and engaging with a number of voices and opinions is to the benefit of all, as is having response and engagement from such a plurality of voices. As such, online discussions will need to occur across multiple days:

- At least one post in each graded thread needs to be made on each of three separate days,
- At least one post in needs to be made on or before Wednesday, and
- At least one needs to be made after Wednesday.

Posting during scheduled class time is inadvisable, as it argues against being engaged appropriately with what is going on in the classroom while it is going on.

Further, both the offering of new material and response to the materials of others is desirable; students benefit from practice in both advancing ideas and helping others refine ideas. As such, **each student should start at least one new thread in each graded discussion, and each should respond to at least one already in progress.**

Finally, online discussion posts each need to have a certain amount of material to be able to promote engagement by others or to offer usefully detailed responses to others. Although it is the case that firm word counts are arbitrary, and circumstances may admit of case-by-case adjustments, a useful guideline will ask for a **minimum of 100 words (or 30-45 seconds of quality Voice Thread) for a graded post.** More will not necessarily be better, as padded prose is generally annoying, but fewer will not typically have enough heft to be useful.

Discussion posts of exceptional quality may be rewarded at a higher rate.

About On-Site Work

This session, in the hopes of prompting on-site attendance, points will be awarded in the weekly discussion for active, engaged attendance. Further, to prompt attendance, the following policies will apply:

- No exceptional quality rewards will be available for students who miss the on-site class meeting in a given week.
- Lecture notes will not be made available outside of class time.

If class is cancelled, an alternative assignment will likely be offered; its submission will be assessed holistically as equivalent to active and engaged attendance. If no alternative assignment is offered, all students will be awarded attendance points.

Other issues may apply, as well, and exceptional in-class performance may earn additional rewards.

How the Numbers Play Out

The tables below lay out how discussion grades will be calculated for each graded discussion. Please note what table goes with what week/s—and that comments will be appended to the scoring to help guide better performance in discussions and in written assignments.

Table 1: Discussion Grading, Weeks 1-5

Criterion	Points Available
Active and engaged on-site attendance	5
At least four quality posts, minimum 100 words each	8 (2 per post)
At least one quality post on each of three separate days	3 (1 per day)
At least one quality post on or before Wednesday	1
At least one quality post after Wednesday	1
At least one new discussion thread begun	1
At least one response to a thread in progress	1
Total	20

Table 2: Discussion Grading, Week 6

Criterion	Points Available
Active and engaged on-site attendance	20
At least four quality posts, including an initial draft and two responses of a minimum 100 words each	32 (8 per post)
At least one quality post on each of three separate days	12 (4 per day)
At least one quality post on or before Wednesday	4
At least one quality post after Wednesday	4
At least one new discussion thread begun	4
At least one response to a thread in progress	4
Total	80

Table 3: Discussion Grading, Week 7

Criterion	Points Available
Active and engaged on-site attendance	20
At least four quality posts, including a draft, two responses of a minimum 100 words each, and a summation of a minimum 100 words	32 (8 per post)
At least one quality post on each of three separate days	12 (4 per day)
At least one quality post on or before Wednesday	4
At least one quality post after Wednesday	4
At least one new discussion thread begun	4
At least one response to a thread in progress	4
Total	80