GUIDE TO USING THE DISCUSSION BOARD

Introduction
Your use of the discussion board is a very important component of this course. You will use the discussion board to discuss the weekly case with your fellow students. The discussion board will also be a valuable resource to the student, particularly for the mid-term and final exercises. (Yes, you get to use this resource for your take-home exercises!). However, it will only be as good a resource to you if your discussions follow the elements presented in this Guide. Therefore, it is important that your discussions are concise, thoughtful, and relevant to the weekly topic. It is also important that they are referenced properly (see the section below on “How to Reference a Source”). Students will be graded on their entries to the bulletin board. The grading rubric is provided below and in the course requirements section on this web site.

This guide is designed to help you understand the structure and use of the bulletin board. Each of the following topics will be covered:

- Gaining Access to the Discussion Board
- Folders on the Discussion Board
- Postings on the Cases
- Grading of the Postings
- Academic Honesty
- Citing Sources on the Discussion Board

Gaining Access to the Discussion Board
To access the class discussion board, you should go to the course home page http://courses.dce.harvard.edu/~envre105/ and click on the “Discussion Board” link. This will take you to a website that has been created to support discussions for Ext. 21808 “Strategies for Environmental Management.” You must then login by clicking the “Log In” link in the upper right hand corner. You will be prompted to provide the first 8 digits of your Harvard ID (you should have received a Harvard ID when you registered for the course – it is usually 9 digits in length). You will also have to type in your last name. If you are having problems logging on the discussion board, please contact Kevin Horner horner@fas.harvard.edu

Folders on the Discussion Board
You will notice that there is a folder for each week in the course listed on the discussion board. You should click on the folder that you wish to enter. There may be more than
one folder in each week. For example, in the week of January 31 – Feb 6, 2006, there are
two folders – one for introductions of the students and one for the discussion of the case
for that week. In this case, the Instructor is discussing the case as an example for what
you will be doing in subsequent weeks. However, you are certainly free to join in. You
will not be graded on your submissions to the discussion board during the first week.
Rather this is an opportunity for you to become familiar with the technology and work
out any kinks.

Once you enter a folder, you can add a discussion at this point by clicking on “add
discussion.” A textbox should appear into which you enter your discussions. It is always
a good idea to write your discussions before hand in Word so that you can just cut/paste
into the textbox. This will also allow you to keep a permanent record of your entries.

If you add a discussion without opening the correct folder, your information will be
stored elsewhere and you will break the “string” of the discussion. It is important to be
consistent when posting. Kevin Horner will contact you with suggestions if your
discussion has been misplaced.

Postings on the Cases
The discussion board is where you will discuss the cases each week. You are required to
post on the discussion board each week unless you have made prior arrangements with
the Instructor. The primary purpose of the discussion is to seek to apply the narrative
reading points and your research of the topic to the case. This is how you will learn the
subject matter in a case method course and develop some skills to use the information in
your own career. You are encouraged to monitor the contents of the discussion board and
make several postings each week using a designated FOLDER within the weekly folder
found on the discussion board. You should use the “add discussion” bar to create
discussions (called “threads”) for each case. You should not write an essay on the case
and should always limit your discussion to one page or less. The primary discussion
information will be posted throughout the week on the discussion board. Your final
postings should generally be completed by Sunday evening so that the topic can be
summarized in a discussion on Monday evening.

Grading of the Postings
Your participation on the discussion board will be monitored and graded in each of the
following three categories:

- Discussion of the case
- Responses to other students
- Risk taking

Participation on the discussion board is part of your overall course grade. You can
receive up to 15 points each week. No late submissions will be graded without prior
permission from the teaching assistants.
The grading rubric is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>SUPERIOR EFFORT (5 points)</th>
<th>GOOD TO VERY GOOD (4 points)</th>
<th>ADEQUATE (3 points)</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY (1 point)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the case</td>
<td>Student responds to the case with thoughtful ideas, clearly communicates his or her ideas or opinions, and poses additional questions that deepen the discussion.</td>
<td>Student responds to the case with thoughtful ideas and clearly communicates his or her ideas or opinions.</td>
<td>Student responds to the case in a way that does not clearly indicate deep thought or original ideas or opinions.</td>
<td>Student responds to the case but misses the main idea of the case discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to other students</td>
<td>Student responds to many other students in a way that advances their thinking about case lessons and course pedagogy, makes connections, and builds on others' ideas.</td>
<td>Student responds to two other students in a way that advances their thinking about case lessons and course pedagogy.</td>
<td>Student responds to other students in a way that does not clearly indicate careful thinking or advance the thinking of others.</td>
<td>Student responds to other students, but misses the main idea of the case discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Student takes risks by sharing what he or she does not know, in addition to ideas and opinions. Student asks questions, responds to suggestions, and actively supports the other students.</td>
<td>Student takes risks by sharing what he or she does not know, in addition to ideas and opinions.</td>
<td>Student takes a few risks in the online discussion, but is not consistently involved.</td>
<td>Student responds to other ideas only when he or she has the “right” answers.</td>
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**Academic Honesty**

Due in part to the ease with which students may download material from the Internet, the Harvard Extension School has seen a disheartening number of plagiarism cases referred to its Administrative Board for review. Despite written warnings from the Dean of Student each year and postings in the course responsibilities sections, we are concerned that students are not fully aware of the consequences of presenting someone else’s work as their own, whether they download material from the Internet, copy passages from a book, or collaborate on writing the paper – each without proper acknowledgement of the source(s).

The responsibility for learning the rules governing the proper use of sources lies with the individual student. In registering for this course, students agree to abide by the policies printed in the Harvard Extension School catalogue, which contains brief descriptions of plagiarism, cheating, and computer network abuse. The teaching staff in this course...
recommends that you become familiar with the Harvard Guide – *Writing with Sources*. It has been prepared by the Harvard Expository Writing Program. This document is available online at [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources). We suggest that you either bookmark this site for your frequent use or you print out a copy of this valuable guide and use it whenever you post to the discussion board.

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty by the Administrative Board face a range of sanctions, including probation, required withdrawal from a course, suspension from the Extension School for one or more terms, and required withdrawal from an Extension School degree or certificate program. It is just not worth it to violate this policy! Nor is it necessary if you follow proper citation rules! Contact any member of the teaching staff if you have questions on how to properly cite materials on the course bulletin board.

**Citing Sources on the Discussion Board**

It is expected that you will use external sources in your discussions. There are many ways of citing resources; however, we expect you to use the following format to facilitate the posting of your material to the discussion board. The information provided is based upon the Gordon Harvey’s “*Writing with Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students*.” You can find this document located at [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources/). If you are unfamiliar with using references, we highly recommend that you go to this website and read or browse the full guide as it contains many useful examples and easy to follow descriptions.

**Basic Principles Behind Using A Source:**

1. Sources should be used as concisely as possible and only to support your own ideas or thoughts.
2. It is critical that your reader can distinguish between your thoughts and the material from a source.
3. Your source(s) must be clearly related to your discussion.

**When to Cite:**

1. When you use information or an idea that is not your own in the form of a quote, a summary or a paraphrase.
2. You present factual information you have found in a source.
3. When ever you use a direct quote.
4. Whenever you summarize, paraphrase, or otherwise use any ideas or thoughts that have been arrived at by another person.
5. Whenever you mention another person’s work that isn’t common knowledge.
6. If you are in doubt whether or not you should cite a reference, cite it.

**When Not to Cite:**

1. When dealing with common knowledge, i.e. the knowledge is available from numerous sources and doesn’t reflect an individual’s interpretation (i.e. dates, distances, common phrases, etc.)
2. When referring to ideas that have grown out of a conversation either with a friend, teaching assistant or professor (unless you are taking credit for their ideas without the addition of any of your own thoughts).

**Using A Quote:**

1. Quote only what you need to make your point.
2. Your paragraph or sentence should flow smoothly around the quote.
3. Carefully announce the upcoming quote in the proceeding sentence.
4. Punctuation is important in a quote.
   a. Commas should only be placed before quotes if grammatically required.
   b. The quote should be contained within quotation marks.
   c. A period or comma following the quote should be contained within the quotation marks.

If you quote more than five lines, you should indent the passage and the proceeding line should be written so that it ends with a colon mark. The sentence following the quotation text block should explain your rational for including the text.

In this course, you will be expected to use the American Psychological Association (APA) Guide for all of your citations. If you are a candidate for the ALM Degree in Environmental Management or have plans to get your ALM degree, you will need to prepare a thesis using the APA Guide. All the other courses in the Environmental Management program at the Harvard Extension School are requiring that you use the APA Guide for reference citations (or will soon be requiring this). A handy reference for you to use is the **Pocket Guide to APA Style** by Robert Perrin (Houghton Mifflin Company 2004). This is a required textbook in the Proseminar (ENVR E-200) course. A number of web sites also provide information on citing sources with the APA Style:

- APA Style Essentials  
- Researching and Documenting Sources  
  [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html)