

Discussion Paper Guidelines SOC 585

This class deals with complex ideas that require regular and thorough **completion of reading** and **engagement with ideas**. To ensure that you do the reading, you are required to complete **discussion papers on course readings, to be posted in the homework vaults of the IS page for the class**.

Guidelines for discussion papers are as follows:

- They should be a minimum of 300 words in length (and aren't expected to exceed 500 words).
- They are due usually by **Sunday** before the class, **but don't hesitate to send your paper even if it is late**.
- These writings can be quite informal, but thoughtless or cursory thought pieces will not receive credit. They must be **in your own words**, and must respond to the **readings**.
- The writings must include:
 - The **main argument of each text**, preferably summarized in 2-3 sentences
 - At least one, but preferably several, **discussion questions**, which you can present in class to guide our joint exploration of the topic(s) for the session. (e.g. when reading on transnationalism we should not simply ask "what is transnationalism" but, rather, "why does the author believe that transnationalism is different from any other form of migration?" It must be a question that allows us to enter into a discussion on the text, not just some clarification question. Often such question can contain a critique of the text.)
 - Your choice of the **best quote** from each text
 - **Links** with something you have recently seen in the media, your surroundings.
- These writings will be graded 1-5 points, according to the guidelines below. This is to provide you with some idea about how I expect you to engage with the readings.

(5 points): An excellent paper. You clearly understand and engage with the readings and focus on major points/arguments from them. You are able to cohesively tie the readings together (if there is more than one). You make sophisticated connections from the readings to the real world. This is reserved for truly excellent responses that provide thoughtful discussion questions.

(3-4 points): A good paper. You make a good attempt to engage with and understand the readings, to tie them together and to address major arguments, or points of interest. You may also make good connections from the readings to the real world. But your analysis remains more of a surface reading/summary and you may have forgotten to provide discussion questions.

(1-2): A weak paper. You seem to have done some of the reading but do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the major points/arguments. There may be some factual errors/misunderstandings that could have been avoided from more focused reading. You don't really engage with the reading or provide discussion questions.