

# Counselling Courses Module

## Discussion Forum Guidelines

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**This is where most of the counsellor training takes place!**

- *Participate biweekly in the graded online discussion forums – here you can demonstrate that you understand the concepts and constructs, and that you will be able to apply them as a counsellor*
- *Discussing the posted topics, critiquing suggested theories, and evaluating the implications for counselling practice, will greatly contribute to your development as a Christian counsellor*
- *Here you can interact with the lecturer, respond to the comments made by other students, pose questions, and clarify your own emerging understanding of Christian counselling*
- *The forums quickly become a place of fellowship where counselling students find support and encouragement.*



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# 1. Short Tutorial – How to ...

## Open the Discussion Forum

Click on “Modules” and select the Module Page where the discussion links will be. Select and click on the Forum Discussion link you want to open.

Read the Instructions and take note of the Forum Discussion Topic(s). You can scroll down and read the post of fellow students, but first post your own reflection by clicking on reply.

## Reply to Discussion Topic(s)

To reply to the posted topic(s), click on the **Reply** field just below the topic(s) posted by the lecturer (*please do not post your own reflection nested into a student's post – only post your comments on the students post, in their postings*).

Write your response in the Rich Content Editor (1). You can add links, photos, equations, and/or media. You can also attach files [2]. Once you finish, click the Post Reply button [3].

*Your reply will be posted at the bottom of the discussion reply thread. The border of your post will flash indicating it has been newly posted. The unread icon will remain until it is marked as read.*

## Reply to Student's Comments

Now, read through the reflections of other students and take note of the lecturer's feedback.

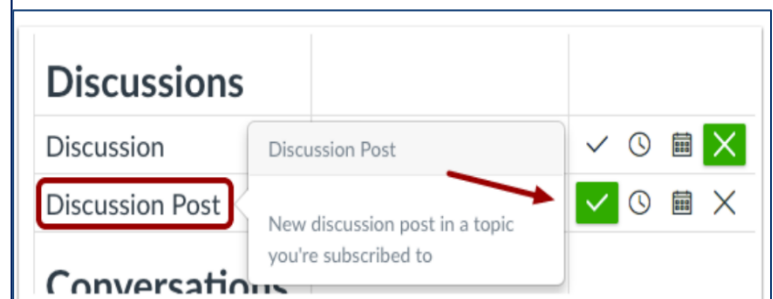
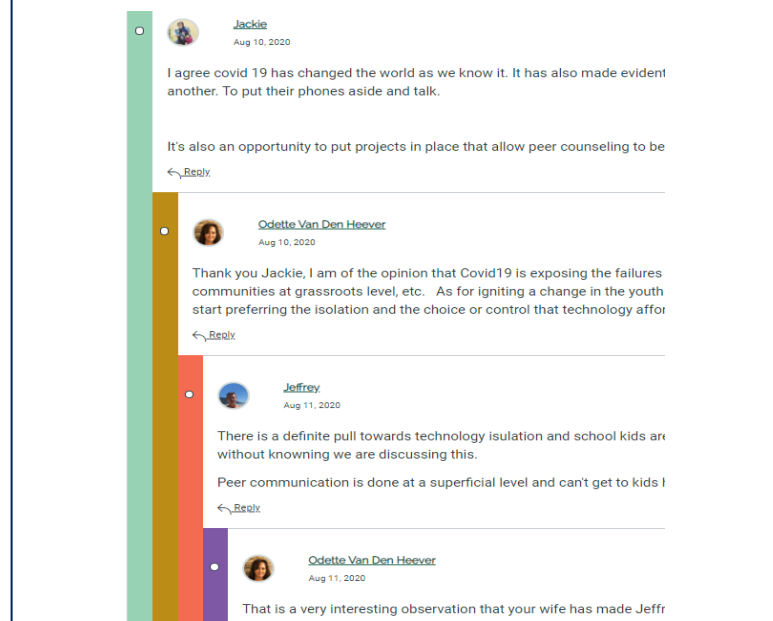
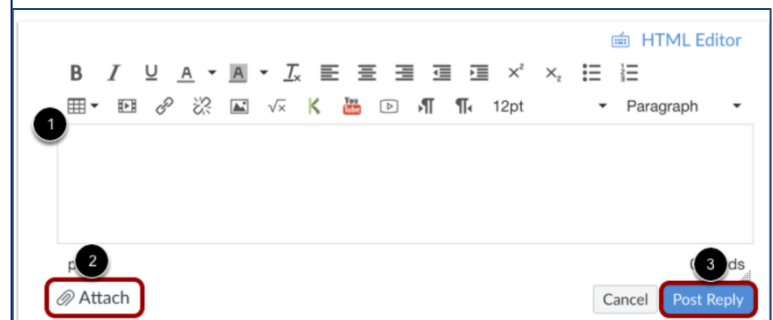
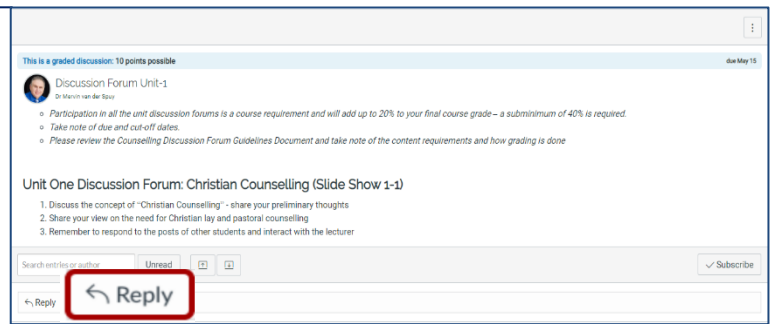
- reply to comments already posted by other students by clicking in the reply field below their post.

## Subscribe and set Notifications

Make sure you are subscribed to all Discussion Forums and set your Notifications Preferences to receive email notifications.

## Discussion Groups

Depending on the number of students, discussion groups could be created. You will only be able to post in your allocated group.



## 2. Content & Composition of Forum Reflections

- The Discussion Forums provides you an opportunity to demonstrate that you have listened to the lectures and did all the readings, that you've assimilated the knowledge, that you can discuss the concepts and constructs, and that you can succinctly express an opinion on the presented topic.
- Your posts must indicate that you understand the concepts and constructs, that you can evaluate it from different perspectives, and that you can formulate (and substantiate) your own understanding.
- In addition to insightful understanding of the topics, you must indicate good self-awareness and self-insight – this is an important aspect in counsellor training, *but remember, this is an open forum – do not over-share*.
- Start thinking and commenting as a “professional counsellor in training”, and not as a student doing the minimum to get a passing grade.
- Although discussions are not as formal as assignments and a strict academic writing style is not required, reflections must be grammatically correct. This is a good opportunity to practice your academic writing skills and making sure you are using the correct APA in-text citations.
- A bibliography is **not** required in forums, but as a courtesy to other students, cite important sources or links to material, and reference those sources which are not part of the required reading for the course.
- You must respond to some of the comments made by other student-counsellors and interact with them when applicable. Be supportive, but also do not be afraid to challenge their thinking, submitting differing viewpoints, or asking them for a clarification.
- As Christian counsellors & theologians, we do not get defensive and we are open to discussing differing viewpoints – even when we have strong opinions of our own – we learn from each other.
- Interact with the course instructor by reading the lecturer's feedback to your reflections and to other students. Post questions or reflect on the feedback received from the lecturer. Again, be teachable and keep an open mind, but do not be afraid to converse with the instructor. Your viewpoints will be respected, even when they are challenged.

### *Be Succinct and Concise in your Reflections*

- Do **not** just copy and post the copious notes you made while listening to the lecture or your summary of the material. Specifically respond to the posted questions in the topics.
- **Suggested guideline:** For one topic with no sub-questions *ca* 250 words should suffice. If the topic contains more than one sub-question, *ca* 150 words per sub-question should suffice.
- Rambling reflections will be penalized by deducting points.



### 3. Grading and Feedback

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- Participating in the discussion forums is a course requirement - it will make up 20% of your final grade for the module (*a subminimum of 40% required and you must participate in all forums*).
- Every posted reflection will be read by the lecturer and graded. If applicable **personal feedback** will be given in the speed-grader on Canvas (only you will see this feedback).
- **General Feedback** will be given in the forum if and when the lecturer wants to emphasize a point, challenge a comment, correct factual statements, or pose a question for all the students. You are invited to respond to it.
- Your forum grade will be classified as follows:
  - 40-50%      Posting one short comment
  - 60-70%      More in-depth and evaluative comments showing insight and application
  - 75%-80%      Excellent, insightful, well formulated, and succinctly written comments, plus meaningful responses to other student's postings (this could justify a distinction)
- For expediency, a rubric is not used in the speedgrader for discussion forums, but the criteria ("rubric") linked to Learning Outcomes applied in the grading of reflections are:
  - **Content**  
Demonstrates in-depth understanding of topic. Correct insight and interpretation of concepts/constructs. Clear articulation and well-structured argumentation. Engages constructively and critically with subject.
  - **Writing**  
Post is professionally written and grammatically correct. Clearly and concisely expressed. Not repetitive, ambiguous, verbose, or vague. Reflections must be succinct - no rambling musings. If used, citations and bibliography must be correct APA format.
  - **Personalization**  
Demonstrates ability to assimilate, integrate, and apply subject material to personal belief-system, life experiences, and environmental context. Expresses opinion with critical self-insight and self-awareness.
- Your responses, interaction with, and support of other students will be considered in grading your overall contributions to the discussion forum.
- The total mark for Discussion Forums will be calculated as an average of all the grades received – please note that if you do not participate, a 0% fail grade is allocated.
- Without posting to the discussion forums within two weeks of the due date in each unit, you will not be able get the 40% subminimum and will not be allowed to submit your assignment or take the exam.
- In extenuating circumstances, a student can be excused from a discussion forum.

### 4. Submission Policy: Due Dates & Cut-Off Dates

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Biweekly due dates are strictly enforced, but you will have a two-week "grace" period until the cut-off date. We recognize that part-time students need some flexibility - we therefore accommodate you by leaving the quiz and forum open for a two-week grace period after the due date, but late submissions will be penalized with -1% per day. If you do not complete the quiz or post in the forum by the cut-off date, you will not get a second bite at the apple. It is therefore imperative that you complete the coursework for every module in the allotted two-weeks.

**Please Take Note of Due Dates and Cut-Off Dates**