

# Discussion Board

## Guidelines

HIST 416/516; x-list with CJUS 416/516  
Online, spring 2024

**Learning Objectives:** Develop the skill of posing meaningful, evaluative discussion questions. Analyze the methodological approaches of assigned texts about the border by addressing peers' questions with evidence from course materials and outside sources.



### The Assignment:

For each discussion assignment, you will:

- Pose one open-ended discussion question that directly relates to, and perhaps makes specific reference to, the assigned readings AND that addresses a methodological concern.
  - Be sure to contextualize your questions. Simply asking “what is the author’s thesis?” is not sufficient for this exercise.
- Respond in detail to at least two of your peers’ questions using specific evidence from the reading.

See Course Schedule for Discussion due dates. The lowest score will be dropped.

### The Context:

Along with our work on Twitter and our Blog Posts on Medium, we will work together to examine the methods and interpretations of our authors on the discussion board in Canvas. The purpose of the discussions will be to focus specifically on the methods that the author used to evaluate the history and issues discussed in their book. Methodological issues include, and are not limited to:

- Argument (thesis statement(s); main evaluative points)
- Research process (consultation and evaluation of archival sources, oral histories, artifacts, journalism, etc.)
  - Read the footnotes 😊
- Interpretive process (how does the author understand and make an argument based on research materials?). How does the author:
  - place source materials in context
  - critique the creation and purpose of sources




- compile and organize data from the sources (digital methods?)
- connect source materials to argument (commentary and interpretation)

Why focus on methodology? At the upper-division and graduate levels, the study of History, Political Science, and Criminal Justice require us to evaluate and critique the ways that our fields produce new knowledge so that we can then add to the existing body of work. One of my main struggles as I finished my undergraduate degree and transitioned to grad school was to identify authors' processes and methods for making arguments. These assignments are designed to hone those skills in all of us.

Please take a few minutes to read Shira Lurie's [GradHacker post at Inside Higher Ed](#) about how to read a book for argument and methodology (and how to do so in two hours or less!). Reading in this way means that we don't read every single word in the book, and we don't necessarily read the book in order from front to back.

## Scoring Rubric:

Each individual Discussion assignment is scored on a 15–point scale. In all, the Discussion assignments are worth 24% of the semester grade.

Discussion Rubric, 416   					
Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Reading Question Question is open-ended, evaluative and/or analytical, and focuses on the methodological issues mentioned in the prompt	5 pts Proficient	4 pts Satisfactory	3 pts Needs Improvement	0 pts Incomplete	5 pts
First Response Post Post directly addresses the question and includes specific, cited evidence from assigned readings	5 pts Proficient	4 pts Satisfactory	3 pts Needs Improvement	0 pts Incomplete	5 pts
Second Response Post Post directly addresses the question and includes specific, cited evidence from assigned readings	5 pts Proficient	4 pts Satisfactory	3 pts Needs Improvement	0 pts Incomplete	5 pts
Total Points: 15					