

Discussion Questions

Each week, I would like you all to post a minimum of **three productive discussion questions** to the forum entitled “Discussion Questions,” which can be found in the “Discussions” tab of our course’s Brightspace page.*

MAKE THIS DISCUSSIONS TAB MARGARET

Your questions may pertain to any of the texts read during the week, and they will be due by 8:00 AM on Fridays. The submission of these questions will count towards your overall participation grade. **HOURLY BEFORE CLASS**

What do I mean by a “productive discussion question?”

A *productive* question is open-ended enough to generate a few minutes' discussion.

- “What is the relationship between medieval runes and the Old English language?”
- “I didn't understand this passage of the reading; can we interpret it together in class?”

Not-so-productive questions are either simple yes/no questions or questions with definitive, Google-able answers.

- “What year was Chaucer born?”
- “When did the Norman Invasion take place?”

Not-so-productive questions like the two above are important for the purposes of clarification; but because the answers can be found on Wikipedia, I'd prefer to use our time in Recitation to discuss questions relating to interpretation.

This being said, if you are genuinely curious about something, but you are afraid that I may deem your question “not-so-productive,” please do not hesitate to share! Sometimes the questions that appear “simple” can actually be quite productive.

- “Was Chaucer a rapist?”
- “Why do depictions of baby Jesus look so terrifying in medieval art?”

The answers to these questions are actually subjects of great debate!

Here are some ways that you might consider discussion questions:

Ask yourself:

- What interests you about this particular passage?
- What stands out or confuses you?
- How do you think this passage relates to the overarching theme of the text?

- When we consider the historical, political, social, and/or cultural contexts of the work, what new meanings are opened up?