

## COLLABORATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Use the appropriate forum under the “Discussions” menu item for questions on collaboration.

### I. Overview – Deadlines

Group members will work collaboratively on all group-designated assignments using the Discussion Board dedicated to each Work Group (“Work Groups” menu item).

I will enter each module assignment as a new forum containing two threads per assignment question, one for the working draft of the group's answer (“drafting” thread) and one for the final version to be submitted by the assignment deadline (“submission” thread).

Observe the “start” and “end” deadlines posted with each assignment. The final end-deadline for each module will be by 12:30am on Fridays (*i.e.* late-night Thursdays), in time for the module's wrap-up meeting on (most) Friday afternoons.

### II. Purpose of the group assignments

Group assignments are aimed at helping you

- a) clarify your thoughts and strengthen your answers/arguments through discussions with your peers,
- b) identify potential errors prior to submitting the assignment,
- c) take advantage of your peers' strengths while they take advantage of yours, and
- d) take advantage of the instructor's feedback during the assignment-drafting process, before submitting the version that will be graded.

### III. Collaboration method

There are several ways to go about collaborating. We will use the following method:

One member per group must make the initial post by the “start” deadline to the “drafting” assignment thread. Initial posts can (and should) be quite rough drafts of response to the assignment questions.

After the initial post, all group members (including those making the initial post) work together to edit and develop this first draft into its final form. Developing the first draft involves commenting on it and on subsequent posts, agreeing/disagreeing with points raised and articulating the reasons for the reaction, enhancing them with additional information and clarifications, suggesting alternatives, fine-tuning their presentation, etc.

One group member must submit the final response to the “submission” thread by the “end” deadline. Use the Work Group's email feature to communicate within your group, warn others of delays, claim the lead for a final submission, etc.

#### IV. Posting instructions

- a) Each assignment question will be entered by me as a separate discussion thread/post.
- b) To view a post, click on its title.
- c) To comment/reply on a post, hit the “Reply” button, located on the subject line.
- d) The various posts will, by default, be organized so that the degree of indentation in the list of posts indicates where in the message structure each post belongs.
- e) Read all posts.
- f) Read your own posts before and after posting. If you’ve make an error you can correct it by clicking on the “Modify” button to the right of your post.
- g) To progressively fine-tune the final draft, copy the post to which you are responding and paste it into your response for editing.
- h) Continue working on the assignment question drafts, within the drafting threads, until a consensus has been reached by all members for the final versions, to be posted on the submission threads.

#### V. Suggestions for effective and efficient collaboration

- a) Be prepared to support your arguments and receive respectful criticism.
- b) Be respectful of your fellow group members and their ideas but do not be afraid to approach them critically.
- c) Clearly state what points you agree/disagree with and why.
- d) Always remember that the objective is not to push your opinions to others but to submit the most complete, best supported, and most convincing possible response(s) your group can produce within the deadline.

#### VI. The instructor’s role

I will be monitoring all discussion threads daily to

- a) get an idea of each member's contribution to the final submission,
- b) give feedback and direction as needed, and
- c) help resolve potential deadlocks.

I will be grading the version submitted to the “submission thread” as well as the drafting process. There will be no “group” grade. Each group member will receive their own individual grade.

#### VII. Extra credit (5%)

As an incentive to all groups to improve their collaborative work, the group with a combination of a) highest group average grade and b) lowest deviation (i.e. lowest grade-variability among group members) throughout the workshop will receive a 5% extra credit. This is not to reward individual performance on assignments (the weekly grade is designed for this) but the quality of collaborative work.