**Gov 50.08 Online Participation Guidelines and Expectations**

**Spring 2019**

**Professor Powers**

1. First, here is a reminder of what the syllabus says about course participation and engagement:

***Participation/Engagement (12%)***: This course is designed around the expectation that students come prepared to ask questions and react to material from the readings and lecture. In other words, I expect students to be active participants in the learning process. Therefore, 12% of the final grade will be based on in-class participation. **While you must be present to participate in class** (and you cannot make-up work that we complete in class, e.g., individual or group writing, after an unexcused absence), **merely attending class does not constitute participation.**

In grading participation & engagement, I am looking for evidence that you have completed the reading and are engaging intellectually with the course material. Participation can include thoughtful questions and comments during our course meetings, in-class writing activities and discussions, offering examples, making connections between topics, critiquing arguments, discussing news or other articles that illustrate course concepts, presenting arguments grounded in course material… and more.

1. I would like all students to feel confident and comfortable participating in class – including in a large group discussion. I recognize that this can be challenging, especially early in a term, and the Canvas discussion board is available as an alternative outlet for critical reflection and engagement. For those who are comfortable speaking in class, you might nevertheless choose to post to the Canvas discussion board because a) you want to practice your writing and analysis or b) because you will miss a class (illness, sports travel) and you want to take the time to write in order to cement some of the concepts and theories.
2. For each class meeting, there will be an open discussion board where you can post a critical reflection based on one or more of the reading assignments. You should think of this as an opportunity to engage with the material and contribute ideas to the class discussion that will take place the following day. To ensure that your ideas can aid our class discussion, you should post your reflection by **midnight the night prior to the class**.
3. I don’t plan to post specific questions, though the questions on the syllabus for each class meeting are a useful guide to what we will cover in class.

If there are no specific questions to answer, what should you write about? The most thoughtful posts – and those which will be most helpful for you to practice your analytical skills – will present one or more **clear and concise arguments.** Things to consider: What did you find puzzling or debatable about the readings – and why? What critiques can you offer, or how might other IR scholars disagree with the argument or theories? What kind of evidence would contradict the argument? You might critique the argument, evidence, the question itself, or all three – and offer a concrete suggestion for what would make it more convincing.

Other ways to engage/analyze the readings: highlight points of agreement or disagreement across the reading, discuss the implications of a set of findings, suggest new questions for future research, develop similarities or contrasts with research found in readings from previous topics or other courses you have taken, or apply the theories to a contemporary case or current event that interests you. **You should not simply summarize the material.**

**5.** If you have questions, you should come by my office hours or send me an email.