Forums

What is the purpose of this tool?

This tool will allow you and other site participants to engage in the free expression and exchange of similar and different ideas. *Rude or improper conduct will not be tolerated in the discussion forums.*

How do you access this tool?

To access the Forums tool, click **Forums** in the tools menu on the left side of the screen.

Useful Tips...

- You can receive email notifications that your post (or thread) has been replied to by selecting the **Watch** feature in the Forums tool. This will become especially useful during peer review activities in class.
How does this tool work?

Navigating the Breadcrumb Trail

Before you begin using the Forums tool, it is important to understand how to navigate your way around. Figure 1.0 below is labeled to display the different layers of the breadcrumb trail.

Fig. 1.0

- **Tool**: This forum is being hosted under the Forum’s tool in SmartSite.
- **Forum**: This is the title of the forum you are participating in.
- **Thread**: A single conversation that contains a collection of posts.
- **Topic**: A message that was posted inside the thread as a reply, question, an answer etc.

Posting Threads

You will be participating in forum discussions in this class. But have no fear! Forum discussions can be fun and helpful to your learning experience in this course.

1. The process typically begins with your instructor assigning you to a specific thread. For example, your instructor may tell you that you will be participating in Group 2’s discussion in the forum discussion for the Literacy Narrative.

2. Select the appropriate thread you have been assigned to. This will bring you to a new page where you can begin the discussion. Clicking on Post a new thread will allow you to post a message inside the discussion thread.
3. When making a new post, you must have both a **title** and **content** to post (whether it is in the form of an attachment, and or typed in the text box).

4. Once you have finished entering your content, then click **Post Message**.

   Selecting **Cancel** will discard the post you are currently working on.

**Replying to Threads**

Sometimes, replying to threads can be confusing. One part that can be particularly confusing is choosing what part of the thread to reply to.

1. The best way to avoid this confusion is to read the **Replying to**: box. This section will display the message or thread you are replying to.

   The image to your right indicates where you can find this box. If you read the text within the box, it says that a message is being composed for the post titled **Topic**.
2. Another way to determine what post you are replying to is checking the **Reply Title field**. The **Reply Title** will typically default to **Re: (post you are replying to)**. You can always change the title to better suit your needs if you wish. Sometimes, **entering in your own title helps you clarify what your message post is in reply to**.

   In the image to the right, you can see that a reply is being written for a post titled **Topic**.

3. Once you know what thread or message you are replying to, you may begin the process of entering a reply.

   The first step is to locate the message you wish to reply to.

4. Next, click **Reply**. This action can be found at the far right side of the post.

5. You will be brought to a new page where you can **type** your reply message and or **attach a file** as a reply.

   Click **Post Message** to submit your message.
Marking messages as read

There are two ways that you can tell if a message has not yet been read:

1. The first way is to look to see if you see **New!** on the left hand side of a forum thread. The second is to see if there is an unopened envelope icon on the right side of the post.

The image to your right shows you where you can find both of these.

2. After you have read a message, you should **mark it as read**. Doing this is as simple as clicking on the envelope icon.

3. Clicking on the envelop icon will remove the icon and change the status of the message to **read**.

Using the Watch Feature

You can configure the settings in this feature to send you email notifications whenever someone contributes to a forum you are participating in.

Below are a short set of instructions that will guide you through using this feature.

1. First, locate and click on **Watch**. The action will be at the top left side of the window, and it will only be displayed if you are on the Forums home page.
2. Select the type of notification you wish to receive. If you do not wish to be notified then select **No notification**.

3. Click **Save**. Your settings will be saved.

   *You also always have the option to change your settings in the future if you wish to do so.*