

## A Sampling of Discussion Forum Questions Used by Durham Tech Instructors

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### **ACA-122 (Kerry Cantwell, via Gabby McCutchen):**

The video in this week's lesson describes challenges that students face when trying to balance college with caring for family members. Many of you have children and/or other family members that you take care of in addition to going to college (and working). Use the questions below to write your post.

- How does caring for family members impact your time and stress management?
- Which of the students in the video can you relate to? Why?
- Describe a strategy that works well for you in balancing your studies with family responsibilities.
- What advice would you give to a new Durham Tech student who has to care for family while attending college?

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### **ANT-210 (Liz Penton):**

WITHOUT REPEATING another student's choice, pick one primate species, and tell the class three really interesting facts about it. You may use one of the web links embedded in the folder notes for Weeks 3 & 4 (on Gelada Baboons, Duke Primate Center, etc, or an equally scholarly web link). Share with us specific information that stood out to you as you took notes or looked around in these sites. Get us interested in the wonders of the variety of primates in the world. You could focus on something about diet, or reproduction, or an environmental fact. Create a short essay of a paragraph or two.

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### **ANT-210 (Liz Penton):**

Each student will choose A DIFFERENT fossil to 1) identify by species name, and 2) describe what elements identify the fossil as belonging to that species AND why that makes the fossil significant to the study of human evolution. Choose from the Human Origins Phylogeny or other resources:

[http://www.mnh.si.edu/anthro/humanorigins/ha/a\\_tree.html](http://www.mnh.si.edu/anthro/humanorigins/ha/a_tree.html)

You can include a picture or link in your response. Make sure to read all the postings ahead of you to make sure you do NOT repeat someone else's choice. You can talk about craniums, jaws, teeth, or any other bones or joints from any hominine fossil all the way up to Homo sapiens. Get us interested!

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### **BIO-271 (Dorothy Wood):**

A couple's decision to conceive a child knowing that both sides of the family carry a gene for a lifethreatening disease must be devastating. There are so many decisions to be made throughout the whole process; whether to be screened themselves, whether to go ahead with a pregnancy knowing the risks, whether to have the fetus screened and if a positive test is identified, what then? We have the technology to screen fertilized eggs for genetic diseases and subsequently only implant the 'good' eggs. At what point do we say 'enough' and let Mother Nature do her job? Or should we take complete advantage of the technology we have developed and avoid bringing babies into the world with inevitable defects?

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**BUS-153 (Wayne Durkee):**

Two weeks ago Maria Shriver delivered the "Shriver Report" to President Obama. The report focuses on the pay gap between men and women. The report can be found at this link:

<http://shriverreport.org/special-report/a-womans-nation-pushes-back-from-the-brink/>

If you were an HR manager and an employee came to you, expressing concern about pay inequities in your organization, what are some of the first actions you would take? What might be some questions you would ask or consider?

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**CIS-110 (Charlene West):**

Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook Web site (page 93 in your textbook) and review the detailed information about the career you are about to enter. Did you learn anything new about the field? What characteristics listed match with your current interests and character traits? What is the current outlook for growth in the field? Is the salary range what you expected? Do you need to pursue an advanced degree to move up in the field?

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**CTR-120 (Melissa Ockert):**

In lectures this week, we discuss the steps for designing a good protocol. The third step of designing a good protocol is "Ensuring generalizable results." This means designing trial(s) so that we can use our results to make inferences about the general, overall target population. In other words, if our clinical trial data show that our product is effective for depression, we can make a statement of efficacy about the subjects that participated. However, we endeavor to design our study in such a way that we are able to make a broad statement that any patient with depression will improve on our product.

Let's discuss how we can ensure generalizable results in our study. In terms of subject selection and study design (specifically eligibility criteria), how might we design our study to ensure that our data can be used to make this "larger" generalizable statement. I am simply interested in your thought processes here. Your answers are likely to be general and that is fine. You must respond to me and two classmates.

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**ENG-111 (Kerry Cantwell):**

Relate Plato's cave scenario in "The Allegory of the Cave" to something going on in the world today.

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**ENG-112 (Kerry Cantwell):**

Locate an ad either on Craig's List (under "For Sale") or on e-Bay in which an individual, not a store, is trying to sell an item. Explain the claims and proof provided in the ad. Does the author create common ground with his or her audience? Ultimately, determine the effectiveness of the ad. Your post should be at least ten full sentences.

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**ENG-261 (Tracy Mancini):**

Love and death -- two universal preoccupations of humans -- are the topics of our readings for Week 2. Please write at least 100 words for each of the following prompts. Write in complete sentences and using sound grammar and capitalization. This is, after all, an English course! You are welcome to write more, but not less. (I will count words.) Then reply to at least one of your classmates with a 100-word response to some part of his or her post. Please write substantive posts.

1. As you read the Egyptian lyrics and Hebrew Song of Songs, try to look for the similarities and differences in the metaphors or images used to describe human love. Describe in detail one striking similarity or difference you identified between the two poems (use quotes, page numbers, and line numbers to indicate your sources).
2. As you read, allow your mind to make associations with contemporary love songs or poems you know. Make a detailed connection between at least one poem and a contemporary poem or song.
3. What do the verses from The Book of the Dead tell you about the values or concerns of Egyptians in 2nd millennium BCE?

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**HUM-110 (Karen McPhaul, via Bonnie Tilson):**

If you had to choose one key concept (term or phrase) from the textbook (any chapter) to describe Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times*, what would it be? Put the term or phrase in the subject line of your post. Then, in a paragraph of at least 8 sentences, explain your answer. Your answer should provide specific examples from the film and relate those to concepts from the textbook. Remember to reply substantively to two classmates.

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**HUM-110 (Karen McPhaul):**

Choose any sentence or passage from the article *Not So Fast* (<http://tinyurl.com/wsj-notsofast>) that you found particularly interesting, and copy/paste it into your discussion post. (As always, be sure to enclose the copied text in quotation marks!) In a well-developed paragraph of at least 8 sentences (not including the quote), tell us why you chose it, if you agree or disagree with it and why, and how it relates to your views on technology and society. Remember to reply substantively to at least two classmates' posts.

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**PHI-215 (Bonnie Tilson):**

Interview at least 2 people (anyone you want to talk with) by phone, email or in person and ask them the following questions:

1. What is philosophy? How would you define it?
2. What are the three most important questions our society should be asking today?

Explain (in complete and grammatically correct sentences) what you understand philosophy to be and how your understanding is similar to or different from what you learned in your interviews. Don't just state that your ideas are similar to or different from those of your interviewees; explain how and why your ideas are similar or different. Write two paragraphs with at least 5-8 sentences in each paragraph. Think philosophically! After posting your answer, be sure to respond to one of your classmate's postings.

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**PHI-215 (Bonnie Tilson):**

After you have read the assigned readings and notes, go to the Forum and start a conversation. For this assignment post an answer to ONE of the following questions and respond to one of your classmate's postings. Both your initial posting and your response must include references from the readings that explain why you answer the questions the way you do.

1. What two or three traditions, celebrations or experiences do we have in the Western world that give us anything close to the kind of experience Lama Deer is talking about in his vision quest? How are our experiences in any way like his? What do we learn from those traditions, celebrations or experiences? Refer to ideas in the reading to explain your answer.
2. How might the understanding of Satori alter our understanding of the world and how we live our lives? How might an experience of Satori benefit us in our daily lives? Refer to ideas in the reading to explain your answer.
3. Write a Haiku for Western philosophy and discuss the Haiku by explaining why you think the Haiku represents Western philosophical ideas/perspectives.

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**REL-110 (Tracy Mancini):**

For this week's forum, please read the newspaper or a weekly news magazine (like *TIME* or *U.S. News & World Report*) and find an article that has something to do with one of the world religions we have studied this semester. Add a new conversation to the discussion board, offering complete source information (MLA works cited format) and a brief summary (eight to ten sentences) of the article. Please include in your summary a sentence or two of your own that explain the relevance of the article to our course. Your article/news item **MUST BE UNIQUE** to the list! That is, if someone has already written about a particular news item, you cannot cover another story about the same item. Then respond substantively to a classmate in three or four sentences.

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**SPA-111 (Lindsey Carpenter):**

*"Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going." – Rita Mae Brown*

What is culture? Why is it important when learning a language? Can you think of any examples in English when culture might play a key role in communication?

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**SPA-111 (Lindsey Carpenter):**

Language teachers often get complaints that what is learned in the classroom is not "real" or not the way the language is actually spoken. Search the internet, or use your previous knowledge, for a way to say "hello" or "how are you" that is NOT given in the textbook. Is it formal or informal/ from a certain region? Then, respond to the following question: Why do you think there may be a disconnect between the Spanish you learn in SPA 111 and what you might hear at a restaurant or a soccer game? In what ways can students work to bridge this gap?

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**WEB-110 (Becky Roehrs):**

Orientation Discussion:

1. Have you taken an online course before? If so, what is the most important tip you can give a student new to online classes? (What do you wish someone had told you?) If you haven't taken an online class before, what is a question you have about online classes? (What are you most concerned about -- you have to come up with something to get credit for this answer.)
2. What are you most interested in learning about in this class? Why?

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**Two-Week Forum Technique (Used in ENG-113 by Perry Cumbie, with idea from Jonathan Cook):**

To manage the task of evaluating a large number of lengthy forum posts in a writing-intensive course, Perry Cumbie uses a technique he calls the "two-week forum." He has found that this technique can help students engage deeply with course material, allowing them "time to absorb and re-read if necessary." And it solves the problem of students waiting until the last minute to post, which can make it hard for students to respond to each other and lessen the chances for meaningful interactions.

Here's how Perry describes the "two-week forum" technique:

"The first week students read the assigned stories and post a response; the second week the students respond to the work of their classmates from the first week. I give preliminary grades for their first week post and then make adjustments (up, down, or leave as is) based on their second week post. In the grade comments each week I offer general feedback and specific feedback, giving them an opportunity to respond to that feedback in the second week. To get the same amount of material in, I assign twice the readings for the initial week. They don't seem to notice. In the second week, I encourage the students to be working on their major paper assignment for each month, since their work in the forum is not as intense in the second week."

Here's an abridged example of prompts from his ENG-113 class:

**WEEK 1:**

Your single posting for week one will consist of three parts:

- **Part 1:** Answers to Questions. You will answer any two questions below for "A&P" by John Updike 552-556, "Superman and Me" by Sherman Alexie 4-6, or "Daughter of Invention" by Julia Alvarez 1018. Your choice, any two questions from the same story or one question from one story and another question from a different story. In your answers, give the name of the story and re-state the questions you are answering before giving your responses.
- **Part 2:** Paragraph Response. Choose one of this week's assigned readings and write a one paragraph 200-word response explaining what you think the point or theme of the story may be. Support your statement of theme with some evidence from the story.
- **Part 3:** Question for Classmates. Pose a question about the story for your classmates to answer during the second week.

*(see next page for the follow-up Week 2 prompt)*

**WEEK 2:**

- Choose 3 of your classmates' postings from week 1 to respond to. In other words, you'll make 3 separate responses, one to each of three students. If someone has already responded to a student, look for another student who has had no responses and respond to that student.
- In each response, answer each student's question that he or she posed in part 3 of their posting last week: "Question for Classmates." You may compose your answer directly in the text box or copy/paste your response from your word processor into the text box. Do not attach a file as that slows down the reading and evaluating process. Aim for your answer to be about 200 words. Please include their question in your response to make it easy for your classmates and instructor.