

Introduction to Political Philosophy

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This is a three semester credit hours course. As such, you should expect to do as much work for this course as you would for a full-length course. That means, among other things, you should not take more than three courses if you wish to get as much out of them as you can.

Course: Online — OL2

Email: ojf@kvasaheim.com

Course description

The purpose of this course is to give you a broad background in relevant philosophies of the relationships between Man and the State. In this course, we will explore such diverse philosophical positions as Liberalism, Conservatism, Communism, and Universalism. While the course appears, at first glance, to follow a chronological order, it is more of a chronological order of the initial formations of the thoughts, and not of the philosophers. Thus, Bentham and Rawls will be studied in the same week, as will Locke and Smith.

Course Objectives

1. To identify the major philosophers throughout history.
2. To elaborate on their contributions to the story of Western Political Philosophy.
3. To analyze the beliefs of certain political philosophers and identify commonalities with previous political philosophers.
4. To synthesize various political philosophers within the same school to get a deeper understanding of that school.
5. To evaluate the various theories of government in light of the United States.
6. To develop a research paper and a slide presentation detailing the life, times, and beliefs of a specific political philosopher.

Requirements:

In addition to participating frequently online, students are expected to deport themselves as professionals. This means that all readings, extensive though they may be, are read and digested; questions about the materials are formulated; and extensions to the topics to be covered are considered. There are frequent written assignments, online discussions, a research paper and presentation — all designed to give you a broad overview of Western political philosophy. There is also an examination.

In addition...

In addition to the above, you are expected to write as a professional — both in your assignments *and in the discussion for a online*. The grade you earn in the course will be based, in part, on the following unwritten rules, which are assumed by *all* courses at this level. First, all writing must follow the rules of Standard American English. Do not ignore the rules of the language. Additionally, all writing must follow academic style. This means you should use neither contractions nor colloquialisms. Should your paper have too many simple errors, expect me to send it back *without a grade*.

As words have meaning, and as words have both a denotation and a connotation, you must use definitions relevant to the course, thus general-purpose references are not appropriate.

Cite definitions.

Cite information.

There *is* a class of information known as ‘common knowledge.’ Common knowledge does not need to be cited to avoid plagiarism charges. However, be careful: common knowledge is often *incorrect*, as it is often based on incomplete analyses of events, and is often ‘common’ from a *non-Political Science* standpoint. The rule of thumb is that if the item is important to your argument, you should cite it using at least two *independent* sources. This reduces bias in your information. What is ‘common knowledge’? If the person serving you your Big Mac knows the fact, consider it ‘common knowledge’.

Closely follow the directions provided. If there is an ambiguity caused by the language, ask for clarification. If there is a vagueness in the requirements, that vagueness is probably intentional; it allows you the latitude to explore the topic in your own direction. It also allows me to test what *you* think is important.

Format your paper as described in the course’s style sheet. There is a reason for the style sheet: it trains you to write in a specified format. It also emphasizes that different (sub-) disciplines have different prevailing styles.

If you make an assertion, you need to support it with unassailable logic and unassailable sources. Such sources do not include random people on the street, nor do they include politicians

giving their own analysis of the event. Moreover, such sources do not include your parents or your dog (even if it *is* a Golden Retriever). Such sources, however, *do* include academics who are scholars of the class material and who have published in appropriate academic journals. Such sources are *peer-reviewed*. Newspapers are inherently biased in their analyses of events. Non-peer-reviewed sources have had no one — except the author — edit (and approve) the piece. Sources from non-academic publishers do not have to pass the scrutiny of academic publishers.

The general rule is to write everything you think you need to write and nothing more. Writing more is not necessarily a good thing, neither is writing less. Consider this a test as well. Your writing tells me what *you* think is important, which is something I also evaluate. Avoid unnecessary words — especially adverbs and adjectives. Do not use metaphors. Do not use colloquialisms. Do not use contractions. Every word in the English language has a reason for existing and has a definite meaning, which includes not only its denotation but its connotation. Think about what you write and the words you choose. Words have power in that they represent meaning to people.

I can only grade what I read.

Realize that there is a difference between *ade*, *aid*, and *aide*; *your*, *yore*, and *you're*; *to*, *too*, and *two*; *its* and *it's*; *apart* and *a part*; *number* and *amount*; *less* and *fewer*; *Soviet* and *Russian*; and *British* and *English*. Get a dictionary of the English language and be best friends with it. Become best friends with Strunk and White.

Class Policies and Expectations

Taking Notes

Note taking is an essential part of any college course. Not only does the physical act of taking notes reinforce the material in question (it is not merely read and heard, but physically reproduced), it creates a record essential to preparation for quizzes and exams. This is as true in the physical classroom as it is for an online course like this — especially in a course like this.

Late Assignments

If an assignment is done late, it loses intrinsic value to you. If an assignment is handed in late, it also loses grade value. Assignments are due as stated for the assignment. If you email a paper late, the highest grade you can get is 50%. If the paper is more than 14 days past due, it receives no credit. If the assignment is turned in later than the last lecture day, it also receives no credit.

Conduct

At all times, all students are expected to be attentive to the rules and each other, to take part in class discussions, and above all else to be courteous and sensitive towards their fellow students.

We may deal with emotionally charged subject material with in this course (ethical, religious, political, etc.); such material requires maturity and openness to views which may conflict with one's own. This does not mean that you have to agree with anyone else. It does mean that you must understand their position, their arguments, and their assumptions about life.

Furthermore, this does not mean that any and every view is equally correct. Sometimes, you *will* be wrong. Such is life. However, most of the measures of 'correctness' and 'incorrectness' are based on your ability to make a reasoned argument based on facts. If you can do that, then we will both be happy.

Writing

Your grade depends upon how well you write. All assignments need to follow the style sheet for this class. All writings reflect *you* and *your ability* (thus, plagiarism is strongly punished). Make sure you are satisfied with your finished product.

As a side note, there is a fundamental difference between speaking extemporaneously and writing. Writing allows you to edit your words until they truly reflect your intentions. Speaking extemporaneously does not offer such luxuries. As such, your grades for Political Science courses should come from what you write; it gives a much richer indication of your ability and your knowledge.

Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, contact the Director of the Office of Disability Accommodations. Also, as soon as is reasonable, inform me of their response.

Cheating, Plagiarism, & Academic Dishonesty

Any instance of cheating, plagiarism, and/or academic dishonesty will at least result in an automatic failure of the course (if not expulsion from the university) and will be dealt with according to those rules outlined in the university handbook.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is both theft and cheating. It is the use of the intellectual property (words and/or ideas) or the product of someone else without giving appropriate credit. This includes (but is not limited to) not citing a quotation, not citing the underlying source of a paraphrase, and not placing quotation marks around a quotation. Such undocumented use of another's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is an extremely serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in the course and dismissal from the University.

Failure to cite sources of information is serious. Do not do it. In my seven years teaching college-level students, I have failed 14 for *minor* instances of plagiarism (two from UMUC) and have removed four from the university—all four were seniors. One of the four lost a position at a lobbying firm in DC because of the plagiarism.

Please note that there is no discrepancy between this section and the section above regarding class requirements (the ‘unwritten rules’). Many things are ‘common knowledge.’ Failing to cite such items is not plagiarism. It may be, however, poor style.

Grades

Grades will be posted to the WebTycho website at intervals throughout the semester. Your final letter grade will be based on the standard percentage scale: 90/80/70/60. I do not round. I do not change the grades at the end of the semester — either to your benefit or to your detriment.

You are responsible for tracking your grades and ensuring that what I have posted is correct. If you disagree with a posted value, you have 7 days from the date I hand back the assignment to contest the grade. Beyond that point, no adjustments will be made.

The exception for this rule is the final examination. The grade for the final examination will be made available at least 48 hours prior to when I post your final grades. You have those 48 hours to contest your final examination grade.

Evaluation

Your grade is calculated using the following point values for the following grade entities. The point values are the points I will grade out of for the assignment. The percent is the weight that assignment has on your final grade

Written assignments:

Module 2	September 25	20	2%
Module 3	October 2	20	2%
Module 4	October 9	20	2%
Module 7	October 30	20	2%
Module 10	November 20	20	2%

Other:

Critique	November 21	100	10%
Research Paper	December 6	100	25%
Research Presentation	December 6	100	20%
Final Examination	December 6	100	25%
Class Participation	December 6	100	10%
Plagiarism Assignment	September 19	Pass/Fail	P / F

Assignments

Paper and presentation

Selection: Each student will select one of the political philosophers mentioned in the course and have it approved by the professor via email. Approval will not be granted unless the request is sent to the professor at ojf@kvasaheim.com with the subject line 'GVPT101 lastname Philosopher', with lastname being replaced with *your last name*.

Research: Once that philosopher is chosen and approved, the student will research him, determining the answers to (at least) the following questions:

1. What was his life like?
2. What historical events were going on in the world during his lifetime?
3. How did these affect his view on the relationship between Man and the State?
4. Who did he base his philosophy upon, either in agreement with or in opposition to?
5. What were the major tenets of his philosophy?
6. How did the intellectuals react to his philosophy?
7. What aspects of his philosophy do you find most compelling?

Write: Now that you have done the research, write a 10+ page report on what you have learned. Make sure it follows correct grammar and style. Make sure that it is well cited and referenced. Make sure it is logically structured. You need to include at least 10 references.

Research Presentation

Create a PowerPoint (or similar) presentation demonstrating what you have discovered. The presentation needs to have citations. It also needs to be professional in all aspects. Be thorough.

Rough drafts : Both the paper and the slide show need to be emailed to the professor on or before November 13, 2010. I will then email both to a student (or two) so that they can *critique it*. You will receive the critiques on or about November 22, 2010.

Final draft : Now that you have the critiques (and suggests for improvement),make your paper and presentation better. The final due date for both the paper and the slide show is December 6, 2010.

Critique

For the critique of the course project, each student will be assigned to critique one project done by another student in the course. The critique needs to be 1–2 pages in length. It needs to mention both good and bad points. For the bad points mentioned, suggestions need to be offered to change the bad points to good points. The critique is due by November 21, 2010.

Various written assignments

In addition to these large assignments, there are a few smaller writing assignments designed to get you to grapple with the political philosophers and philosophies. These need to be between two and three pages in length (not including the required reference list).

Plagiarism prevention activity

To help students avoid problems with plagiarism, UMUC's Effective Writing Center offers advice and tutoring services, self-study tutorials, and other tools to support your educational success. A particularly useful tool is the self-study module, "How to Avoid Plagiarism," which can be found by following the Writing Resources link under Course Content on the left-hand menu in your WebTycho classroom, or by visiting the Effective Writing Center online at http://www.umuc.edu/prog/ugp/ewp_writingcenter/wc_selfhelp.html .

Since the fall 2002 semester, the GVPT program requires each student in every GVPT course to successfully complete the "How to Avoid Plagiarism" tutorial. Your first required assignment is to review this tutorial and to complete the self-examination at the end. When you successfully finish it, an online certificate of completion will appear. Email that certificate to your instructor at ojf@kvasaheim.com before the end of the second week of classes or your instructor will stop accepting your assignments until you do.

Course Outline

If you have any questions about the requirements, do not hesitate to email the professor at ojf@kvasaheim.com and ask before it is too late.

Module 0: An introduction to political theory

September 5 – 11, 2010

Module 1: The city-state

September 12 – 18, 2010

Works:

Plato: *The Republic*

Aristotle: *Politics*

Philosophers:

The Sophists

Socrates

Plato

Aristotle

The Cynics

Module 2: Universitas hominum

September 19 – 25, 2010

Works:

Augustine: *City of God*

Aquinas: *Summa Theologica*

Philosophers:

Augustine

Thomas of Aquinas

Module 3: The renaissance and modernity

September 26 – October 2, 2010

Works:

Marsiglio: *Defensor pacis*

Machiavelli: *The Prince*

Philosophers:

Marsiglio of Padua
Niccolò Machiavelli

Module 4: The contractarians

October 3 – 9, 2010

Works:

Golding: *Lord of the Flies*
Hobbes: *The Leviathan*
Locke: *Two Treatises of Government*
Rousseau: *Man as Citizen*
Rousseau: *The General Will*

Philosophers:

Thomas Hobbes
John Locke
Jean Jacques Rousseau

Module 5: Liberalism

October 10 – 16, 2010

Works:

Locke: *Two Treatises of Government*
Montesquieu: *Spirit of the Laws*
Smith: *Wealth of Nations*
Jefferson: *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*

Philosophers:

John Locke
Montesquieu
Adam Smith
Thomas Jefferson

Module 6: Conservatism

October 17 – 23, 2010

Works:

Hume: *Reason, Fact, and Value*

Burke: *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Adams: *Thoughts on Government*

Goldwater: *Conscience of a Conservative*

Philosophers:

David Hume

Edmund Burke

John Adams

Barry Goldwater

Module 7: The dialectic and nationalism

October 24 – 30, 2010

Works:

Hegel: *The Spirit of a Nation*

Hegel: *Philosophy of Right*

Philosopher:

Georg Hegel

Module 8: Communism and communalism

October 31 – November 6, 2010

Works:

Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*

Lenin: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*

Stalin: *The Problems with Leninism*

Mao: *Quotations from Chairman Mao*

Philosophers:

Karl Marx

Vladimir Lenin

Josef Stalin

Mao Tse-tung

Module 9: Fascism

November 7 – 13, 2010

Works:

Ambris: *The Manifesto of the Fasci of Combat*

Mussolini: *The Doctrine of Fascism*

Hitler: *Mein Kampf*

Philosophers:

Friedrich Nietzsche

Alceste De Ambris

Benito Mussolini

Adolf Hitler

Module 10: Utilitarianism

November 14 – 20, 2010

Works:

Bentham: *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*

J. S. Mill: *On Liberty*

J. S. Mill: *Utilitarianism*

Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

Philosophers:

Jeremy Bentham

John Stuart Mill

John Rawls

Module 11: Theories of democracy

November 21 – 27, 2010

Works:

Aristotle: *Politics*

Jefferson: *The Declaration of Independence*

Jefferson: *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*

Habermas: *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

Philosophers:

Thomas Jefferson

Jürgen Habermas

End Matter

Changes and Supremacy

I reserve the right to alter anything on this document. Should it become necessary to change the syllabus, an announcement in class will be made that the new syllabus is posted on the WebTycho site. In the event of a discrepancy between this printed syllabus and WebTycho's syllabus, WebTycho takes precedence.

The following is held in all courses in the GVPT department.

GVPT Program Goals and UMUC Cross-Curricular Initiatives

This course has been designed to meet not only the specific course goals but also the educational goals of the GVPT program as well as the UMUC cross-curricular initiatives. These objectives include:

- increasing your knowledge of information technologies and their uses
- enhancing your information literacy by offering models of critical analysis and appreciation
- improving your effective-writing skills
- broadening your historical and international perspective on human events

To meet these goals, the readings for this class have been carefully selected and the assignments carefully designed. Your successful completion of this course will indicate that you have demonstrated increased skills and knowledge in each of the above areas, as appropriate in a university class.

Advice for Student Success

As a general guideline, the assumption among teachers in higher education is that courses earning three credit hours require a minimum of three hours in the classroom each week and a minimum of six additional hours in preparation for weekly classroom participation. **Courses with heavy reading assignments and papers often require more time.** You should allow for those requirements in planning your study schedule. Courses such as this one also have higher expectations about the quality and quantity of student contributions, and grading standards are appropriately stringent. Please always remember that the course is tied to an academic calendar, with weekly required activities, clear due dates for assignments, and an end to the semester. UMUC classes are not individual-study or self-paced classes: you are expected to participate in class discussions, regardless of class format, and to interact with your instructor and classmates in a timely manner.

Lower-level classes (numbered 100 through 299) provide the foundations for more advanced study, and provide you with the basic critical skills and discipline-specific knowledge needed to succeed in your studies. In order to do well in your studies, it is recommended that certain classes, such as ENGL 101 and LIBS 150, be taken as early in your course work as possible, and certainly within the first 15 credit hours, as required by UMUC. Additional intensive-writing classes are required of all students, and successful completion of those required classes will prove tremendously helpful in your GVPT course work.

Upper-level classes (numbered 300 through 499) are recommended for advanced students who already possess a sufficient background both in critical skills and historical studies. You will discover that these classes have substantially higher expectations, not simply in the quantity of reading, writing, and participation required, but equally important in the quality of critical analysis and research sophistication exhibited in your work. Although very few GVPT classes have official prerequisites, the assumption your instructors must work under is that students in advanced classes are aware of these requirements and have taken the necessary steps to meet them and thus ensure success. You should take a moment to honestly ask yourself if you have developed the necessary skills and possess the background knowledge that will enable you to successfully complete an upper-level class. If you are in need of guidance, please do not hesitate to contact your advisor or your instructor.

If you have enrolled in a distance-education class on WebTycho, this course may be the first online course experience for you. A certain amount of uncertainty and frustration is to be expected as you learn to use the technology during the first weeks. It is important you recognize that this online asynchronous classroom retains many of the requirements of the traditional classroom—such as lectures, class discussions, assignments, and required readings—while offering you greater control over your time as well as access to all the instructional resources available through the World Wide Web.

If your time is limited, you need to be very self-disciplined as a class member. Be prepared to visit the online classroom three times each week and to complete each of the activities assigned by your instructor. During your preparation time outside the classroom, study the readings carefully and engage in any additional research or writing activities assigned. And of course, avoid the temptation to procrastinate: not preparing for or attending class each week—or postponing that research project!—will almost certainly lead to unnecessary stress later and probably be reflected in your final grade.

Although online courses do retain many of the same schedules and requirements of classroom-based courses, there are some important differences. In asynchronous courses such as UMUC's WebTycho classes, class members may literally be scattered around the world, and instructors and students are not simultaneously logged on. The class discussions deserve your particular attention because you will have the time to contribute in a thoughtful and reflective manner.

Your instructor will log in regularly to respond to e-mail and to grade submitted assignments as well as to upload course materials. He or she will inform you of the planned schedule for the semester and if any changes are necessary. Instructors are not available—either face to face or online—24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please remember that your instructor will need time to read and grade assignments before returning them to you. Please be patient, and any questions you might ask will be answered and your work graded.

Departmental Statement on Submission of Original Work

All work submitted must be written for this course during the term in which the course is being completed. Work from other courses or from other academic or non-academic settings, past or present, is not acceptable and will result in immediate failure for that assignment. No opportunities for resubmission or revision will be granted.

When assignments involve research, students may make reference to work originally submitted for other courses or other settings. If students wish to submit extensively revised or expanded work previously submitted in this or another course, they must obtain the approval of the class instructor in advance.

Plagiarism Prevention Assignment

Throughout every level of education in the United States there is increasing concern about standards of academic honesty and the rise in instances of plagiarism. The news media regularly report on these issues, and in several highly publicized cases, the failure to adhere closely to professional standards of documentation, citation, and ethics has embarrassed even some very respected scholars and widely published authors.

Teachers realize that, in most cases, incidents of plagiarism by students are accidental and may be attributable to insufficient training. Regardless, academic honesty is governed by clear policies that your teachers must uphold. Even inadvertent errors can lead to severe penalties. Please review the university's policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, which can be found in the Academic Policies section of your syllabus and in the Undergraduate Catalogue. Carefully review the definitions, procedures, and penalties set forth. Be aware that faculty are required to report incidents of possible plagiarism or academic dishonesty and that the sanctions that may be imposed can seriously affect your efforts to complete your education.

To help students avoid these problems, UMUC's Effective Writing Center offers advice and tutoring services, self-study tutorials, and other tools to support your educational success. A particularly useful tool is the self-study module, "How to Avoid Plagiarism," which can be found by following the Writing Resources link under Course Content on the left-hand menu in your WebTycho classroom, or by visiting the Effective Writing Center online at

http://www.umuc.edu/prog/ugp/ewp_writingcenter/wc_selfhelp.html.

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After you have completed the “How to Avoid Plagiarism” tutorial and successfully taken the post-test, please be sure to submit a copy of your certificate to your instructor. To do this, follow the steps below.

1. Highlight all of the text in the certificate window with your cursor.
2. While the text is highlighted, right click and scroll down to “Copy” (or hold down the “Ctrl” key and press “C”).
3. Use a common word-processing program (Microsoft Word is preferred), or other program that allows you to paste the copied certificate and then save it in .doc, .txt, or .rtf format. Save your certificate to your desktop or to an easily found folder on your computer.
4. Go to your assignment folder in your WebTycho classroom or to the WebTycho site that supplements your face-to-face class and follow the directions for submitting your certificate.

You must submit the certificate by the end of week two of your course. Your teacher will not grade any other submitted coursework without the posting of the certificate in the designated area. One point will be added to your final grade to acknowledge your successful completion of this assignment.

By working with you, the UMUC faculty wants to help you achieve academic success and excellence. If you have any questions about proper citation formats or doubts about when it is appropriate to document your information, your teacher and the staff of the Effective Writing Center are available to assist you.

Departmental Grading Standards

Students and faculty recognize that the grade the instructor gives is a professional judgment of the quality of the student’s submitted work and that grades are based on shared assumptions and expectations. At the most basic level, we expect that assignments will be submitted to the instructor on time. Submitted assignments are to be clearly focused and organized, with a discernible thesis statement. Generalizations and conclusions are to be adequately supported and, when appropriate, research documentation is to be well integrated and effectively presented. A formal writing style is required, along with proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

It is important that students and faculty have shared expectations regarding the criteria for assignment grades. The following broad definitions are based on the suggestions of the UMUC Information Literacy and Writing Assessment Task Force and offer general criteria for grading. While these rubrics were written as guidelines for the grading of formal research essays, the same basic criteria will be used for the grading of essay examinations and other written assignments.

The grade of A reflects excellence. The A paper offers a well-focused and organized discussion appropriate to the instructor's assignment, reflects critical use of relevant materials, and demonstrates effective and formal writing requirements. Research papers must demonstrate outstanding efforts to identify varied pertinent sources, to employ those materials critically in the text of the papers, and to provide error-free citations of those resources.

The grade of B represents an effort beyond satisfactory and indicates the paper was completed in an appropriate and competent manner and, in general, demonstrates a strong attempt at original and critical analysis, writing, and research. The B paper may contain a number of minor errors of grammar or citation, and its thesis or its conclusions may be undeveloped or too weakly supported.

The grade of C indicates that the paper was done in a satisfactory or appropriate fashion and represents the average work expected for university courses. The presentation is organized around a central idea with arguments supported by relevant examples. The paper is structured into correctly written paragraphs and sentences. Although fulfilling the assignment, the C paper may exhibit one or more weaknesses including, but not limited to, errors of punctuation and grammar, imprecise or incorrect word use, inaccurate or uncritical use of materials, occasional inconsistency of organization or development, and lack of direct relevance of the selected research materials to the topic.

The grade of D indicates that the paper may have a poorly defined topic or thesis, lack clear focus or organization, and contain unsupported generalizations or conclusions. Research support is inadequate, not clearly relevant, or improperly documented. A less-than-minimal research effort is evident. The paper may also suffer from numerous or major formal writing errors.

The grade of F indicates that the paper is not clearly relevant to the assignment and that its topic and thesis are poorly focused or defined. The paper may display inadequate organization or development, unsupported generalizations, and nonstandard formal features (including language usage, sentence structure, paragraphing, and so on). Research support is absent, inadequate, or irrelevant to the assignment.

Guidelines for Online Etiquette

- It is important to always be polite and professional, whether agreeing or disagreeing with colleagues.
- Remember NOT to write anything you would not want to see publicly printed; computer messages are NOT absolutely PRIVATE.

- Since any E-mail message that you write can be (and may be) forwarded to others, students should not disclose trade secrets or company-confidential information as part of this course.
- Do not forward personal notes or messages to others unless you have obtained permission from the author.
- In the conferencing format, students will be responding to the entire class (public domain). If that is not what is intended, students should use E-mail to address one/several students or the instructor (private domain).
- Since there are no body language cues in the online environment, students should be cautious when using BOLD typeface (which gets attention—is it the type you want?), when using words or phrases that can stereotype people, when responding to ideas with which one feels strongly. Professionalism at all times is critical.
- Be sure to give citations for quoted materials or others' ideas, just as one would in hard copy.
- Since all communications are written, it is best to keep comments limited--one screen is usually sufficient for online attention spans.
- Be sure to re-read messages before sending, and edit as necessary.

What Is the EWC?

The Effective Writing Center (EWC) provides online services and resources for helping you to improve your writing.

How Do I Use the EWC?

- You can submit any piece of writing to the EWC for feedback by a trained, experienced writing advisor.
- You can e-mail writing-related questions to writingcenter@umuc.edu.
- You can use the How to Avoid Plagiarism self-study module, developed by the EWC and the Center for the Virtual University. This module will help you manage research resources responsibly and correctly in your writing assignments. After completing the module, you can take a quiz to check your mastery of the material.
- You can read UMUC's Online Guide to Writing and Research, which provides information on all aspects of researching and writing many kinds of course assignments.
- You can complete additional self-study modules, in which you will learn about aspects of research and writing, and you can practice what you learn.