

## CS 492/CS 692 S20 Piazza FAQs (draft)

Details on using Piazza for our Online Discussions and RPEs

- 1) The primary rule is NOT to post unless explicitly invited to do so by the moderator. Who will be invited to post will be determined on the basis of Polls being conducted DURING the designated class time. Moderators will be online during the class time, will initiate discussion, orchestrate responses from students, and close the class at the end of the timeslot.
- 2) Students are urged to be online during the designated timeslot but will not be penalized if unable to. Each class has a Folder on Piazza: the date of the class for Topic-of-the-Week and the RPE# for RPEs. Those who did not participate synchronously need to: Locate the appropriate folder, Select New Post, **Identify yourself** in your New Post Summary line (e.g. From Mike T), and then type in your post, then signing off.  
  
( ( Note that all students in each section will have a unique identifier of first name, initial of lastname (more or less -- we may need a Plan B if more than one student has the same label). We will send email to all students in advance of the term to learn preferred first names ) )
- 2b) Students who participate asynchronously are each just leaving one Post, not engaging in an online threaded discussion. (They do not need to be invited to do so by a moderator; indeed, after the designated class time there will be no moderator on the newsgroup). These posts will be viewed by the moderator at the cutoff time for the date in question, to record and assess class participation.
- 3) For the synchronous delivery, the moderator will be posting important comments in Notes and will be conducting Polls. These Polls will be CLOSED a short while after they are launched; the intention is for students to respond promptly. Those who have been unable to respond will always be provided with another chance to do so before the class shuts down. The polls help to register everyone's attendance for the day.
- 3b) When students are invited to provide a Comment they should provide their **name in the Summary** header (e.g. From Robin C) and either add their message as a Follow up to the Note which invites them to respond or simply add a New Post. Again the main rule is that anyone not invited to Respond should remain silent. In order to post you set the Summary, type in the text, select the right Folder and then hit the big Orange button at the bottom to Post.
- 4) For the Role Playing Exercises, there will be two teams of "presenters" each time. In addition to posting position papers before the RPE (and joint communiques afterwards), the RPE teams will be judged according to their skill in responding to questions from the class. We have organized that this year as: i) a required synopsis of position, on the newsgroup at the start of class time ii) a period of responding to questions from the audience (moderated by the TA so that audience members must be INVITED to post, before posting) iii) a final reflection/summary of the team's conclusions. The TA moderators will also randomly decide whether Team A presents before Team B or vice versa.
- 4a) For audience members, the ideal is for students to be online during the class time, but anyone who is unable to can simply visit the Folder for the RPE later that same day to register attendance or to post a question. Questions should be very brief: about 1 sentence long. Registering attendance for asynchronous students is achieved by adding a New Post with Summary text of your First name, Last initial and content saying: I am here but have no questions to ask.
- 4b) For RPE presenters, at least one team member should be designated as responsible for viewing questions posted that day after classtime, to respond to a SET of them, together, briefly. We will ask you do that by Midnight the following day. At least one team member should be designated as responsible for viewing questions posted during classtime, to respond to them. All team members must participate in some way: one could simply be the one providing the summary (in classtime) and/or the synopsis.
- 4c) For RPEs it is also important for Summary lines of posts to both identify the poster AND the RPE team being asked (e.g. From Robin C for Team A). Each post will be in its RPE folder (e.g. RPE3) so no need to indicate the RPE# as well.
- 5) We reserve the right to manage the question asking in RPEs with a smaller number of dedicated question-askers, each time, due to the larger class size. If the TAs opt to do this, they will explain before class. All remaining students will still have time to post their question at the end of the classtime or after class ends.
- 6) As important reminders: Each Post must be provided with respect to **a particular Folder** -- select before Posting -- should be either the Date for Topic-of-the-Week or the RPE# for the RPEs. Students will need to **refresh with some frequency** in order to view the posts of other Students in the class. The choices we are using in Piazza for our Discussion should not allow you to overwrite/remove the text provided by another student but if you ever find yourself in this position: resist the temptation to do so!
- 7) Note as well that there will be other folders in our Piazza newsgroup for various announcements, broadcasts and such. The Prof. Cohen folder is one to which students do not post. We will make you aware of the purpose of these Folders during Class Announcements.
- 8) Another important point is that Posts should be brief, on the order of 2 or 3 sentences, each time you have something to say. This both saves you typing and also helps us all in reading your post. You are welcome to just cut and paste text (prepared ahead of class) into the box; still restrict yourself to a modest number of words. Students who post asynchronously can bundle comments on two distinct topics into ONE post, that will then be somewhat longer.