DISCUSSION BOARD ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

Welcome to the discussion boards for Visualizing Japan (1850s – 1930s): Westernization, Protest, Modernity! The boards offer you a chance to discuss the content of this course with your fellow learners and your teaching fellow. To ensure that the discussion is positive and constructive, it is important that we all abide by a set of common standards of etiquette. These standards are explained below. Please read through them to learn more about proper and acceptable use of the discussion boards.

Content

* In your posts, discuss this course and this course only. Restrict your discussion to issues that arise directly from or are directly related to the material under study.
* Draw directly from the course materials. Whenever possible, refer directly to a specific page of a specific document or a specific moment in a specific video. Ground your discussion in the lectures and reading materials.
* Ask questions. If there is anything you want to understand more deeply, ask freely. Questions indicate that you are thinking about the course material deeply, not that you have failed to understand it.
* Answer questions. Take the questions and comments of your fellow learners seriously. Think about the issues they raise. And offer your own thoughts to propose your own solutions to the problems they pose.
* Engage in a discussion. Respond directly to the comments of other learners and pose questions of your own. Avoid turning the discussion forum into a collection of discrete and unrelated posts.

Tone and style

* Use English and only English. If you employ Japanese terms, include parenthetical English translations.
* Express your thoughts in complete and formal English. Use capital letters, punctuation, complete sentences, and, to the best of your ability, accurate spelling and grammar.
* Strive for clarity. Your aim should be to make other discussants understand what you are trying to say.
* Be concise. Use as many words and only as many words as you need to express your thoughts.
* Be respectful. Feel free to disagree with the viewpoints of other discussants, but do so in a constructive and positive manner.
* Accept feedback and criticism. Welcome disagreement as a sign that others take your ideas seriously.
* Refrain from personal insults. Maintain an analytical and scholarly tone in your writing. Some aspects of this course are inherently controversial, and they can inflame strong emotions. Remember that this is an academic forum, and while we do not wish to deny the emotional dimensions of studying history, our responsibility is to think through historical questions soberly and critically. Strive to reflect this analytical method in your writing.

Academic ethics

* Everything you post in the discussion forums must be your work and your work only. You must explicitly cite your sources if you use ideas, text, or images that are not your own. Whether you are quoting directly from other sources or simply borrowing their ideas, you must always indicate when you are drawing from the work of others. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice.
* Any content that the course administrators deem malicious in nature or insulting toward people of a certain ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or other identity will be removed immediately. The forum administrators reserve the right to determine what is and is not acceptable content.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*What is the purpose of the discussion boards?*

The discussion boards are an opportunity for you to engage in conversation on what you are studying in this course. They provide you with a chance to express your own questions and comments about the course material and also to learn from your peers and from your teaching fellow by reading about their thoughts.

*What should I write about in my discussion board posts?*

Any questions, comments, or criticisms that arise directly from the course material are open to discussion in the forum. Feel free to ask about or comment on anything you think is important or interesting in the course, but refrain from discussing irrelevant or tangential topics.

*Who can participate in the discussion forum?*

Anyone who is registered for the course can participate in the discussion forums.

*When should I participate in the forum? When can I post comments and questions?*

You may post to the forum at whatever time you wish during the duration of the course.

*How frequently should I post to the boards?*

You can post as frequently or infrequently as you like. The frequency of posts is at the discretion of each learner. Try not to monopolize the discussion board, but strive to spark new discussions and contribute to existing discussions.

*Who reads the discussion boards?*

The course teaching fellow actively reads and monitors the discussion boards, and he or she will frequently comment on or intervene in the dialogue. You, as the learner, should also strive to read the questions and comments of your peers.

*Is participation in the discussion forum mandatory?*

No. We encourage but do not require participation in the discussion forum.

*What do I do if I encounter offensive or insulting comments in the discussion?*

Flag the comment as offensive or email the teaching fellows. The course administrators will look closely at the post and decide to deal with it.

*Why has a comment I posted been modified or deleted?*

The course administrators actively monitor the discussion boards. They will modify or delete posts that are offensive, irrelevant, or academically dishonest as well as any inappropriate they deem inappropriate for any reason.

*I found a comment offensive and alerted the course administrators, but it has not been deleted. Why not?*

The course administrators reserve the right to determine what is and is not acceptable use of the discussion boards. Some content that might be interpreted as offensive by some may fall within the appropriate academic free speech.

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