Great Net-spectations: Guidelines for Commu-net-cating Online ☺

1) **Be Committed**
   - *Post messages with substance and which add to the discussion.* (Posting just "I agree" or "I disagree" without stating why does not add substance.) Engage the topic; respond to others; help us all learn!
   - *Write only after you have thought about what to write.* You may want to compose your post(s) in another document so you can edit them and then paste them into the discussion.
   - *Check in frequently.* Read posts several times a week, comment on new threads. Our classroom is online and you need to learn from *each other*. Commit yourself to teach and to learn throughout the course.

2) **Be Courteous**
   - *Respect others at all times*; even if you disagree or don't understand.
   - *Don't post in anger.* Avoid ALL CAPS BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE YELLING (it's impolite to yell). It's ok to occasionally put ONE word in caps for emphasis (just don't yell).
   - *Word your post with the same kindness you would speak face to face.* You are communicating with a human being, not a computer.

3) **Be Clear**
   - *Write so others can understand you.* Problems with spelling, grammar and punctuation can make that hard to do. Informal writing is fine, but remember: UR not texting!
   - *Write at least as well as you speak.* It's ok to write in your own voice, but it may help to read your post out loud before you send it to be sure it makes sense.
   - *Write specifically.* If referencing a previous post, cite the person and cite the part of the post which you are addressing.

4) **Be Concise**
   - *Say enough to articulate what you mean, and no more.* Readers often skip anything longer than three paragraphs (less than 250 words).
   - *Look for ways to reduce the number of words in your post.* Eliminate anything redundant ~~or repetitive~~, or anything which ~~muddies the waters of thought or simply~~ makes things less clear.
   - *Don't overload your post.* If your post is getting long, perhaps you are trying to cover too much. Divide it into more than one post.

5) **Be Courageous**
   - *Please disagree, thank you.* A respectful disagreement can advance our learning and deepen our understanding of one another.
   - *Don't disagree without adding something to the discussion.* Ask a question, raise a concern, or present an opposing position, respectfully.
   - *Criticize ideas, but never people.* Discuss what was written, not the person who wrote it or even how it was written, unless to help clarify the idea(s).

6) **Be Cautious**
   - *Err on the side of courtesy when tempted to use humor or sarcasm.* Tone of voice does not exist for online posts, so attempts at humor often evoke unintended emotions. Emoticons can help, but limit their use: :) happy; :(sad; ;) wink; :o surprise; :/ perplexed or confused
   - *Avoid language that could be construed as insensitive or inflammatory.* Be sensitive to the age, race, gender, culture, background, and personal history of your readers.
   - *If in doubt, leave it out.* Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing.

7) **Be Careful**
   - *Proofread all posts before you send them.* Often a moment of care can prevent a year of ruffled feelings.
   - *Double check your intended meaning with the words you have written.* Make sure you really are saying what it is that you think you're saying.
   - *Be sure you are addressing the issues that pertain to the posted discussion.* Avoid chasing tangents or pushing personal agendas.