

Guide for writing a “journal blog” or “reflective blog”

What is a reflective blog and why should you use one?

(Adapted from Professor Wayne Iwaoka, the University of Hawaii at Manoa and UMaine’s SMS 491/EDW 472/SMS416).

The blog is used in this class as a modern replacement to the more traditional journal. It is an instrument for practicing writing and thinking. Unlike your typical class notes in which you “passively” record data/information given to you by an instructor your blog should reflect upon lessons you have learned-- a personal record of your educational experience in the class.

Maintaining a blog serves several purposes:

- A means of communication, conversation (e.g., between material and yourself, yourself and instructors).
- Provides regular feedback between you and instructors and helps to match expectations.
- Platform for synthesis of new knowledge and ideas.
- Helps to develop critical thinking.
- Helps to elicit topics of interest, challenging topics that need improvement, etc.
- Help to clarify troublesome concepts.

The purpose of the blog is for you to self reflect about your own learning.

How to set up a blog?

You can set a blog with many different companies. Below we provide instruction on how to do it with Google blogger.

Note: If you already have one or more other blogs, please set up a new one for this course.

1. Because Google blogger requires a google mail account, use your official UMaine email account. **Note:** an account in the form of xxx.yyy@maine.edu is a gmail account.
2. Go to www.blogger.com and enter your Gmail address and password as required
3. Follow the instructions: (a) click: *Create Your Blog* and follow the instructions. (b) for this blog please insert at a minimum your last name into the title of the blog example: *Pam Smith’s Musings* (c) your blog url address can be anything not already claimed (d) click on *Start Blogging* and *Publish* your first blog when ready.

To keep your blog private go to *Settings*. Several questions will appear on the page.

- Under *Privacy*, change the setting for “Add blog to our listing” from “yes” to “no”
- Under *Privacy*, change the setting for “Let search engines find your blog” from “yes” to “no”
- Under *Permissions/Blog Authors*, allow the managing course instructor to view and comment on your blog by adding him as an author (use: harlan.onsrud@maine.edu).
- Under *Permissions/Blog Readers*, choose “Private - only blog authors”. This will permit only the managing course instructor to read and comment on your blog.

For help setting up: go to <http://help.blogger.com/>

Blog Grading Rubrics:

Expectation: In responding to blog assignments, be concise yet thoughtful. In some instances a several paragraph response to a question may be appropriate. However, a hundred-word response will often be adequate. Late blog submissions result in lowering of half a grade per day

1. Reflections on Assigned Readings or Videos

Grade	Performance
A (4)	Student reflection, position, or perspective is imaginative and takes into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of the perspective are acknowledged and others' points of view are recognized or synthesized within the reflection.
B (3)	Student reflection, position, or perspective is well stated and takes into account the complexities of an issue.
C (2)	Student reflection, position, or perspective is well stated.
D (1)	Student reflection, position, or perspective is simplistic and obvious.

2. Reflections on Course Experience Questions

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Performance</i>
A (4)	Student reflections are thoughtful, responsive in addressing all parts of the question, well written, and any critiques/criticisms are constructive.
B (3)	Student reflections are well written and adequately address all parts of the question.
C (2)	Student reflections adequately address some parts of the question.
D (1)	Student reflections are simplistic, obvious or non-responsive.