

Instructions

Readings are assigned for most class meetings, which you are expected to have read and thought about *before* we meet. This allows us to discuss the texts rather than merely review their contents. Hence, you must do more than merely peruse the readings: you must endeavor to understand what they are trying to convey.

To assist you in this process, I will also provide reading questions. These questions highlight the concepts that will frame our class discussions. They also help you check your understanding of the main claims from the readings, while having you consider about how all this material applies to your own experiences. **(All the readings and the reading questions will be posted on the course website.** Let me know if you are having any difficulties finding or viewing them!)

For our first class meeting, the **required reading** is a very short piece by Michel de Montaigne that provides an outline of a very common form of reasoning. So look it over carefully and come to class with any questions about it!

Meanwhile, I have also included an **optional reading** from Amy Gallo. I will provide such readings throughout the whole course. Optional readings are just that. While I may discuss them during class, you are not required to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Both these articles provide you a nice opportunity to practice the type of reading you will be doing for this class with the help of the reading questions. In particular, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand from these readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

It is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern, since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

de Montaigne, M. (2017). One man's profit is another man's loss. In J. Bennett (Ed. & Trans.), *Essays, book I* (p. 42). Early Modern Texts. https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/montaigne1580book1_1.pdf (Original work from 1580)

Optional: Gallo, A. (2018, January 4). Why we should be disagreeing more at work. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2018/01/why-we-should-be-disagreeing-more-at-work>

Questions

1. Does Michel de Montaigne seem to agree or disagree with the saying that "one man's profit is another man's loss"? What reasons does he give to defend his position?
2. Do you agree or disagree with him? Why or why not?
3. According to Amy Gallo, how do most people tend to deal with conflict at work? Why do people seem to favor that kind of approach?
4. What sort of positive outcomes does Gallo consider for adopting a more proactive approach to handling workplace conflicts?
5. Based on what she says, how exactly should a person handle conflicts at work in order to achieve those more positive outcomes?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.