

How Perusall Works

I use *Perusall* in my classes for two reasons. **First**, it can help you understand the required content faster and with greater comprehension. When you are reading or watching video content, you can ask your question or make your comment immediately as you read or watch. If your comment or question is related to what you are reading, you will highlight the section about which you are asking or commenting. A classmate or I will respond to your comment or question. You are asking in real time and we are responding in real time – just not necessarily at the *same time*.

Second, it is forced collaboration between you and your classmates specifically related to content assigned in the class. Yes, I said forced, because you must complete the Perusall assignment during a specific week of the class. You will be discussing SPECIFIC content in the materials you are reading. To achieve this goal, you will be collaboratively annotating the readings with others in your class. The help you'll get and provide your classmates (even if you don't know anyone personally) will get you past any questions quickly and make the process more fun.

Types of Perusall Assignments

Podcast Interviews: You will have 6 podcast interviews that you will review and discuss in Perusall. The videos are in our class Perusall page. You will watch them during the assigned week and comment on them with your classmates. The great part about this is that the aging practice professional being interviewed is also in the Perusall page for our class. So, you can ask the person I interviewed your own questions right in Perusall. They will be present during the week the video is scheduled, and available to answer your questions. It's as close to having you be there as we can get.

Reading Assignments: You also have 4 Perusall reading discussions. That means you will be talking about a particular reading (or a section of a reading) with each other and with me. You can start a new annotation thread in *Perusall* by highlighting text, asking a question, or posting a comment; you can also add a reply or comment to an existing thread. Each thread is like a chat with one or more members of your class. Your **goals** in annotating each reading assignment are *to stimulate discussion by posting good questions or comments* and *to help others by answering their questions*. I will also be adding instructions to the reading discussions, helping to direct your conversations.

Research shows that by annotating thoughtfully, you'll learn more and get better grades, so here's what "annotating thoughtfully" means: Effective annotations *deeply engage points in the readings, stimulate discussion, offer informative questions or comments, and help others by addressing their questions or confusions*. To help you connect with classmates, you can "mention" a classmate in a comment or question to have them notified by email (they'll also see a notification immediately if online), and you'll also be notified when your classmates respond to your questions. You mention them by using @their name.

For each assignment we will evaluate the annotations **you submit on time** (see below). Based on the overall body of your annotations, you will receive a score for each assignment as follows. Your Perusall assignments are worth 30% of your total grade and you have 6 of them.

- 5 = Demonstrates exceptionally thoughtful and thorough reading of the **entire** assignment
- Makes high quality comments throughout the document/video

- Engages with the assignment and fellow students through comments and responses
- 4 = Demonstrates thoughtful and thorough reading of most of the assignment
Makes quality comments through most of the document/video
Somewhat engaged with the assignment and fellow students
- 3 = Demonstrates some reading of part of the assignment
Makes comments through most of the document/video
Limited engagement with the assignment and fellow students
- 2 = Demonstrates superficial reading of most of the assignment
Makes just one or two comments through a small portion of the document/video
Minimal engagement with the assignment and fellow students
- 1 = Demonstrates superficial reading of the assignment OR thoughtful reading of part of the assignment
Makes only one comment through some of the document/video
Virtually little or no engagement with the assignment and fellow students
- 0 = Demonstrates superficial reading of part of the assignment
Makes no comments through some of the document/video
No engagement with the assignment and fellow students

How many annotations do I need to enter?

When we look at your annotations, we want them to reflect the effort you put in your study of the text. It is unlikely that that effort will be reflected by just a few thoughtful annotations per assignment. Conversely, 30 per assignment is probably too many unless a number of them are superficial or short comments or questions (which is fine because it is OK to chat with your peers). Somewhere in between these two extremes is about right, and thoughtful questions or comments that stimulate discussion or thoughtful and helpful answers to other students' questions will earn you a higher score for the assignment. Note, also, that to lay the foundation for understanding the in-class activities, you must familiarize yourself with each assignment *in its entirety*. Failing to annotate the entire assignment will result in a lower score.

My intention with these discussions is to encourage conversation. These assignments are called "discussions" for a reason. Rather than abstract comments in a discussion board, Perusall directs your conversations to the material you are reading and watching. Even though we are not in a classroom, Perusall allows us to have conversations about the material, as well as give you a chance to ask your questions. We all participate, your classmates and me.

What does "on time" mean?

The due dates for your assignments are in the syllabus, the assignment grid and in the related modules in iCollege. The Perusall discussion will only allow you to contribute until the assignment is due. The idea here is to talk with each other. For this to work, you must engage in conversation during the week of the assignment. Each assignment lasts a full week and ends at midnight the Saturday of that week.