Overview:
Craft a response—in written or oral (video) format that reflects thought and care—to each of the provided prompts and post your response to the Canvas discussion board. Then, respond to at least two of your peers’ posts. There will usually be 1 blog entry due per week over the course of the semester. See pp. 3-4 for due dates and prompts.

Objectives:
• Reflect upon each of the readings or course topics in a focused, intentional manner
• Facilitate deeper understanding of the course readings and themes
• Practice your written and oral communication skills
• Generate ideas for further exploration, particularly potential ideas for the final project
• Identify questions and discussion points for in-class discussions
• Participate in a thoughtful and respectful online community

Instructions for Writing or Recording and Posting your Response to the Prompt:
Written Blog format (You must choose this option at least once!)
• Responses should reflect thought and care, recognizing that they are for an audience of your peers and your instructor. Write them in a word processing program first so you can revise for content, style, and length, then post to Canvas.
• Responses should be one well-formed paragraph, 250-300 words in length, or what would translate to approximately ¾ to 1 typed, double-spaced, word-processed page with 1-inch margins using 12-point font.
• Write in grammatically correct, fluid prose.
• Please write with a clear purpose (i.e. thesis!) and avoid making sweeping general statements. Use specifics to support any claims you make.
• You can also pose pointed questions after you’ve responded to the prompt.
• If you use an outside source for some reason, any reason, cite it.
• Responses uploaded to Canvas should be in .doc, .docx, .rtf, .pdf, or .txt format.

Recorded Vlog format (You must choose this option at least once!)
• Responses should still reflect thought and care, recognizing that they are for an audience of your peers and your instructor. Here, you will record your responses using the video function in Canvas (the icon that look like a piece of old-fashioned film). Write your response first so you can revise for content, style, and length. Then practice it before posting the video to Canvas.
• Your video should be at least 1 minute long but no more than 2 minutes. That is about how long it would take you to read ¾ to 1 page of writing, but DON’T READ! Use notecards and look at the camera! Speak coherently, don’t rush, don’t ramble unnecessarily, and don’t simply read text. Using The Lizzie Bennet Diaries as a model, you can use props, but if you do, don’t rely so heavily on them that they distract the viewer.
Instructions for Responding to Your Peers’ Posts:

- You should thoughtfully respond to at least two (but you can respond to more than two!) of the posted blog or vlog entries.
- Every posted entry should have at least two responses. So, if no one has responded to anything yet when you log on, respond to whatever entries strike you. If there are already responses to some but not others, choose the ones that don’t yet have responses. The idea is that everyone should have at least two responses from peers. There is no limit to the number of response posts you write, so if you find that the assignment parameters require you to respond to two entries that didn’t strike you as much as two others that already have responses, go ahead and write four responses.
- You can respond in writing or via video. Respond respectfully and thoughtfully, addressing your comments to the ideas presented rather than the bloggers or vloggers themselves. No trolling allowed!

Grading Criteria for Posts:

- This is meant to be a venue to encourage critical thinking, so the grading will largely be about effort, thought, and care. Evaluative considerations include:
- Did you produce something for each prompt that thoughtfully addresses the prompt without simply rehashing what we said in class or appearing to have been dashed off right before it was due? Creativity and experimentation are encouraged.
- Did you articulate a clear purpose or focus, usually in the form of a specific thesis that demonstrates your understanding of the issue, text, etc. being addressed? Is your response presented in an organized manner, appropriate to its form (written or spoken), purpose, and style? Responses should be substantial, and not simply yes or no. If you agree or disagree, explain why, Use concrete examples to support your stance.
- Do you make use of specific textual references from the novel(s), using quotations and paraphrase when appropriate or otherwise draw clear connections to our reading and discussions?
- Is your writing or speech clear, concise, and engaging (this covers things like spelling, punctuation, diction, and proofreading for writing; diction, pacing, articulation, and eye contact for videos).

Criteria for Responses to Peers’ Posts:

- Write in a spirit of helpfulness and kindness.
- Consider yourselves part of an intellectual community and thus take all ideas seriously.
- If you disagree, do so professionally and constructively—don’t post any comments you wouldn’t want to see made on your own posts.
- Point out grammar & spelling issues in private notes, for writer’s assistance.
- Be specific and substantive. An “ain’t that the truth” or “you crushed it” won’t cut it: why is this post so great—what points are valid, what specifically do you take issue with and why, etc.
- Note that writing ten responses to peers’ posts won’t necessarily earn you a 5. The idea here is that you want to strive for substance and quality in the responses you write, which is why you only need to write 2.
The Numbers:
Each time you post, you will get earn between 1 and 5 points. Your 2 (or more) responses to your peers’ posts will also earn you up to 5 points. Thus every post adds up to ten points, and the ten posts together add up to 100 points that comprise 25% of your final grade.

Here’s a rubric:
- 5: Fully completed work. A thoughtful entry that very clearly evidences time and care. You’ve got some inspiring stuff here that goes above and beyond! It’s super creative! It’s really smart! If this were a full numerical grade it would be a 100. For responses: You’ve completed at least 2 and they are very thoughtful (in both senses of the word), respectful, intelligent, and substantive.
- 4: Fully completed work. A thoughtful entry that evidences time and care. You are getting the job done. If you want to strive for the realm of the 5, try to stretch your mind a bit more, develop your ideas more, or come up with something more original. If this were a full numerical grade it would be an 80. For responses: You’ve completed at least 2 and they are thoughtful (in both senses of the word), respectful, smart, and make some good points or provide some specific feedback.
- 3: Some of this may be good, but the work is incomplete, or sloppy, or in some other way lame or slapdash. The numerical grade equivalent is a 60. For responses: You’ve completed only 1 or the 2 you’ve posted are anemic or in some other way inappropriate.
- 2 or 1: For posts and responses that are really lacking in some way and would translate into a 40 or 20 in the world of numerical grades. So, yeah, we’re not going to see these too often.
- Zero: You didn’t do anything.

Due Dates and Prompts:
These will be due mostly in the first half to two thirds of the semester and again at the very end so that towards the end of the term we can focus on our final projects. Prompts will be partially driven by class discussion and thus subject to change, but here are drafts of questions as they stand now:

- What is “the greater good” and how might we look for it in novels that seem to focus on individual desires? (you can use as a starting point for discussion of your own hopes for learning in this class and at Xavier). Posts Due Tuesday 1/13 by 9:00 am, responses due Wednesday 1/14 by 9:00 am.
- Find one example of irony in Pride and Prejudice that we have not yet discussed and explain how and why you think Austen uses it. Posts Due Tuesday 1/20 by 9:00 am, responses due Wednesday 1/21 by 9:00 am.
- Choose one historical annotation in the Interactive P&P that we have not discussed in class and explain how it has helped you to better understand the novel. Posts Due Sunday 1/25 5:00 pm, responses due Monday 1/26 9:00 am.
- What makes a good adaptation and why? Posts Due Sunday 2/1 5:00 pm, responses due Monday 2/2 9:00 am.
- After having read her brother’s posthumous “Biographical Notice” and a few of her letters to her sister, how would you characterize Jane Austen the person? What are the consistencies and discrepancies between the letters and the biography and what accounts for the latter in particular? How do the biography and the letters change or confirm your sense of who Austen was before our
class began? **Posts Due Sunday 2/8 5:00 pm, responses due Monday 2/9 9:00 am.**

- Ah, finally a post about characters! Pick one of these three prompts:
  1) Influential Austen scholar Claudia L. Johnson has argued that Henry is not a foil to John Thorpe—he is also a bully of a sort. Could Henry Tilney be considered a bully? Why or why not? How does this question about Henry’s character reflect larger concerns about the greater good in English society at the end of the eighteenth century?
  2) Consider General Tilney’s position in the British social, economic, and political power structure. What are his values and how could they be said to affect not only the happiness of his children but also the greater good?  
  3) Is Catherine Morland an exemplar of “imbecility in females” (76)? Why or why not? How does the intellectual ability an/or educational status of women affect the greater good in this novel?

**Posts Due Sunday 2/15 5:00 pm, responses due Monday 2/16 9:00 am.**

- Is Emma Woodhouse a good person? Why or why not? What are her values? Consider her position relative to the entirety of Highbury society as well as her relationships with various individuals within the novel. **Posts Due Thursday 3/12 by 9:00 am, responses due Friday 3/13 by 9:00 am.**

- Write ONE post for your entire final project group pitching your ideas for your final project. Respond to at least two other GROUP’S pitches. There will be five groups of three total. Be prepared to present an oral pitch in class on Wednesday, 3/25. **Posts Due Sunday 3/22 5:00 am, responses due Monday 3/23 9:00 am.**

- Consider the ways in which Christine Shih, Phyllis Bottomer, and the Guatemalan women in Amy Smith’s Austen reading group apply Austen’s novels to their own lives and work. This is not the same thing as explaining their interpretations of the novels, though they are related. Instead, concentrate on how these women have come to know themselves and others through their reading. How could Austen be said to have helped them discover their vocations? How does the cultural position of the reader affect interpretation? Consider that cultural position can include factors such as race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and/or physical ability, and age. **Posts Due Thursday 4/23 by 9:00 am, responses due Friday 4/24 by 9:00 am.**

- Consider the questions we have been discussing relevant to finding one’s vocation: 1) What am I good at? 2) What brings me joy? 3) What does the world need me to do? 4) How am I going to pay for it? Perhaps using Shih, Bottomer, and Amy Smith’s colleagues in Guatemala as models, consider how Jane Austen’s writing might help you to articulate your own vocation. Use specific examples in your response. If this seems like a stretch to you, articulate why you cannot see Austen’s work as being helpful in this way. Use specific examples in your response. **Posts Due Sunday 4/25 5:00 pm, responses due Monday 4/27 9:00 am.**