

In any course, the **Discussion Board** represents an incredibly important area of engagement for students and faculty. At its best, the forum is an engaging and active space where students offer their views on key course concepts and test those views with rigorous responses to their peers. It also offers faculty the opportunity to encourage deeper levels of critical thinking through robust commentary that can sometimes develop into a sustained dialogue – in the specific forum, and throughout the class!

With these points in mind, we have provided some exemplary model discussion responses. Note that the annotated student responses are actual responses by students – we've just added specific references to key areas.

### Week Five Discussion 2: Film Analysis and Its Applications

#### [Student Post]

I gave this discussion board post assignment much thought, and didn't want to go with a modern film that I had already discussed, or a film that another one of my classmates chose. **[This shows the student's attention to individuality in the context of the class]** I decided to go with Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1947). It's so easy to discount this film due to its popularity during the Christmas holiday season; however, it applies to any time of year if you think about it. The premise of this film (what would have happened had I never been born?) resonates deep within the human psyche. I think we've all wondered if our loved ones would have been better off without us at some point in time. This film illustrates that if just one person is missing from the tightly woven fabric of our lives, then it can have a huge impact on us all. This film also teaches us to take joy in the little things, and not get so wrapped up in material possessions & money. It's the things that cost nothing, like the kiss on a cheek from a child or a smile from a spouse, that mean everything. **[Here, the student does a great job summarizing the intention and effect of this film]**

In his article for *The Huffington Post*, Mark Redmond put it beautifully when he said, “*It’s a Wonderful Life* is counter-cultural, because it’s a film about doing what is right in life, even if it isn’t glamorous or adventurous or exciting or wealth-producing. It’s a film about loyalty to family and friends, even when money and other temptations are dangled before your eyes. It’s a film about putting your whole heart and soul into whatever task is before you, even if you can’t see the immediate results” (2011). **[Here, the student incorporates outside research]** I agree completely what he has to say about this film being counter-cultural in that it goes against the grain. In such a greed-driven society where aspiration is a virtue, we can be blinded by the glitz and glamour of prosperity and lose touch with what’s really important in life. *It’s a Wonderful Life* instills family values, morality, and genuine human emotion into its viewers. It is a lasting life lesson that transcends societal or cultural stigmas and our modern caste system. We could all learn a valuable lesson in humanity from this beautiful film.

#### References:

- Goodykoontz, B. & Jacobs, C. P. (2014). *Film: From watching to seeing* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint Education, Inc.
- Redmond, M. (2011). *Why ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ is such an important film for parents and kids*. Retrieved from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-redmond/why-its-a-wonderful-life-\\_1\\_b\\_1161938.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-redmond/why-its-a-wonderful-life-_1_b_1161938.html)