

Introducing the Discussion Redesign (updated April, 2024)

Canvas has introduced a new redesign of its online discussions which it calls the “Discussion Redesign.” The redesign will be fully implemented by USF Tech Support on May 6, 2024, so that all faculty and students may adapt to it at the beginning of the summer term rather than on July 20th, which is the Canvas-set “enforcement” date.

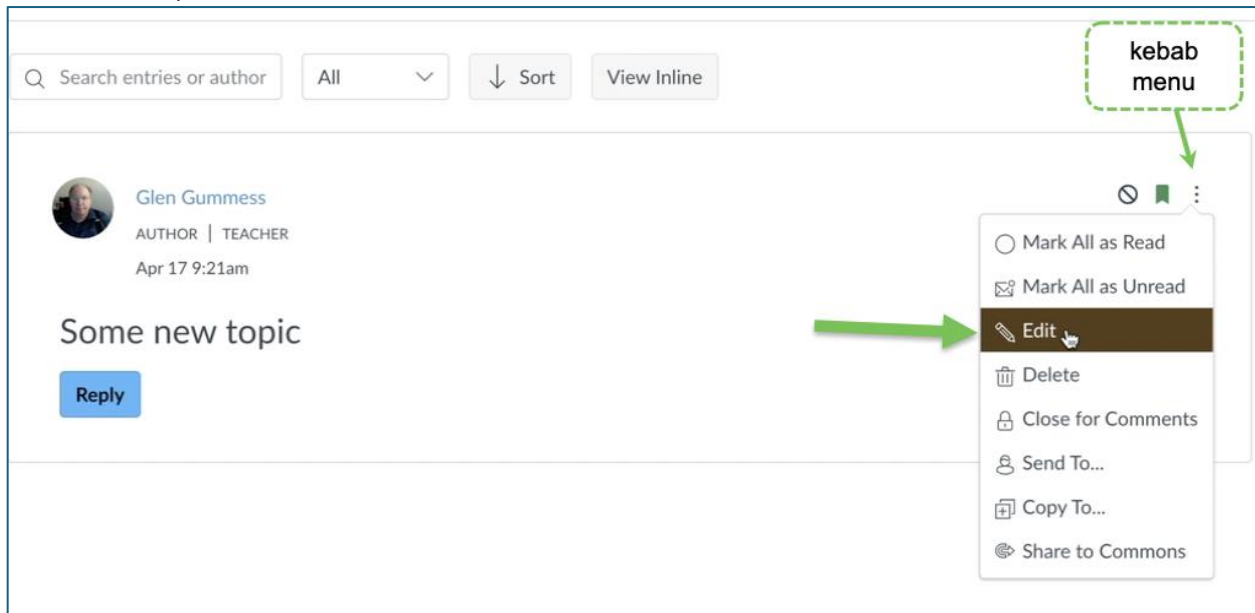
This introductory document aims to familiarize you with the new controls and navigational features of the discussion redesign. It is believed here that when a user becomes familiar with software controls, it becomes easier to learn and adapt to the software. That all depends of course on whether the user controls are easy to understand and interpret (Wong, 2023), something that is probably unique to the individual user. We hope to make that experience as easy as possible.

The intended audience for this instruction is current Canvas users who write Discussion topics and facilitate asynchronous discussions.

Begin a Discussion

You create a discussion topic in the same manner that you always have. You may initiate the discussion in the Discussions area of the course or from a course module.

The result of creating a new discussion is shown below. Click on the “kebab” menu (three vertical dots) to find the Edit command.



From there, the only change in the editing of the discussion’s redesign is the option to make all or part of the responses anonymous. Set up the discussion as you usually do.

Acknowledgments to College of Education staff for their assistance in creating this document. Thank you so much!

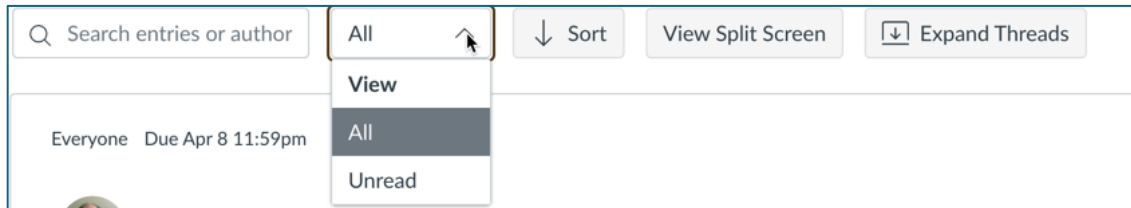
Basic user controls in the experience of using the discussion redesign

What follows is an introduction and explanation of the controls you will be using.

The first visibly different change is to the Reply button.

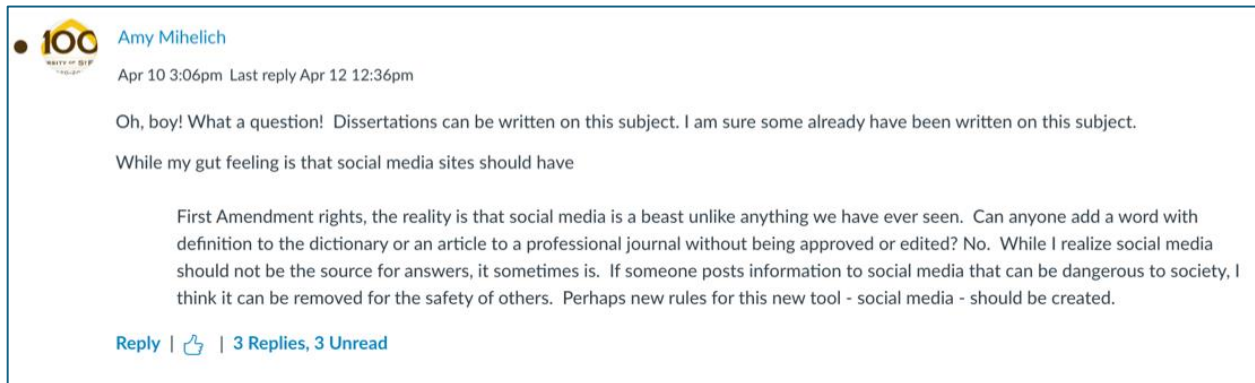


At the top of the Discussion you will view the following controls that will be introduced in this document. The first, “View All (or) Unread”, allows you to isolate discussion threads that are unread (not individually unread messages by themselves).



The “Sort” button allows you to sort the messages from oldest to newest, or newest to oldest.

As you browse the discussion, you will see the discussion topic followed by students’ replies. **By default, only the top-level students' replies are shown, with links to further replies.** An example is shown:



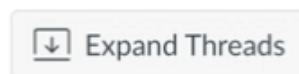
When you select the replies, they appear below the top-level reply in a smaller font size. This constitutes a discussion “thread” consisting of the top-level replies and ensuing students’ replies, as demonstrated on the next page.

Acknowledgments to College of Education staff for their assistance in creating this document. Thank you so much!

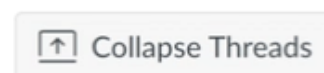
Introducing the Discussion Redesign (updated April, 2024)

The screenshot shows a discussion thread on a platform. At the top, a post by Amy Mihelich is highlighted with a green arrow pointing to it, with the text "top level reply begins a thread". Below this, there are two replies from Glen Gummess. A green box with the text "others' replies that are part of the thread." has red dashed arrows pointing to each of these replies. The thread also shows a "3 Replies, 3 Unread" indicator and "Reply" buttons for each post.

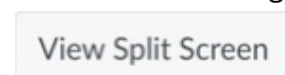
As we return to the top of the discussion, note the options. First, you can **expand each thread** so that both the top-level and the secondary-level replies are all seen at once (much as shown in the image above).



The button is a toggle. When you expand the threads, you can go back to the original top-level-only view by clicking Collapse threads.



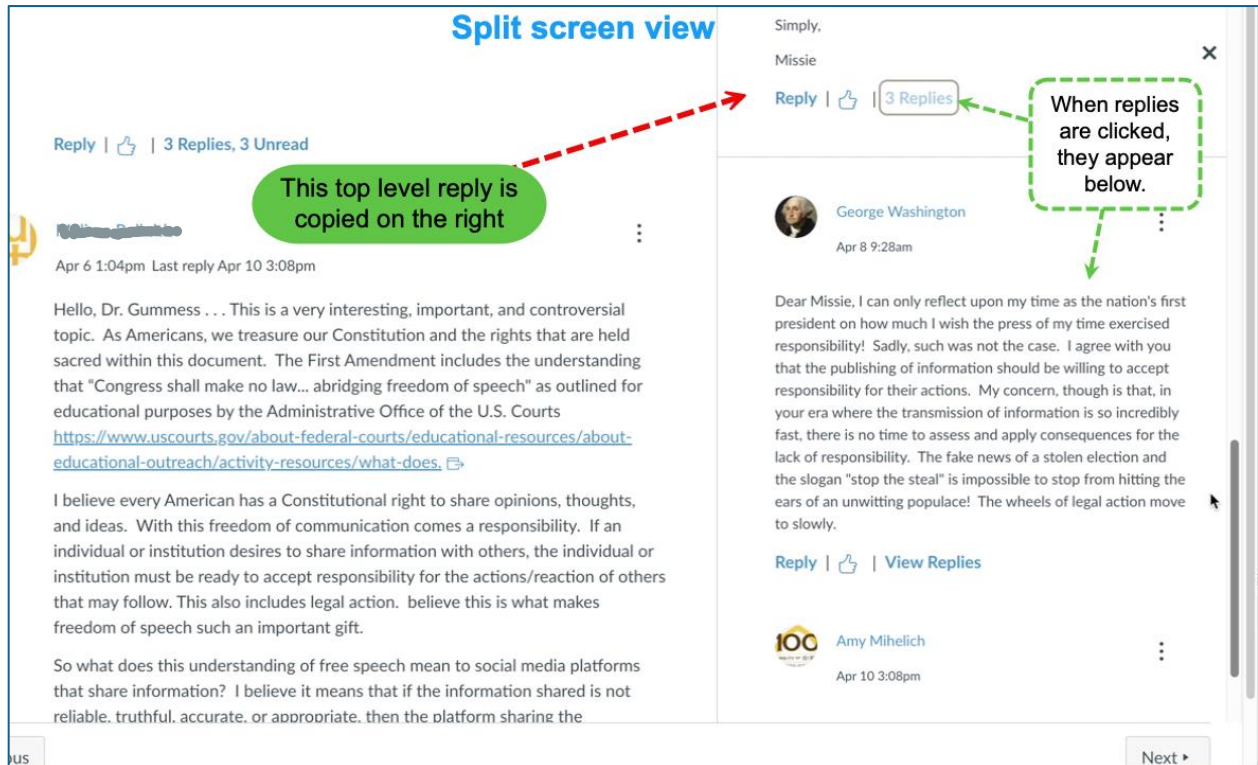
As the discussion builds, the number of replies and secondary replies can lead to a long discussion that you will have to scroll through, which may be tedious. You can opt to use the split screen view to reduce the amount of scrolling. Choose "View Split Screen."



Acknowledgments to College of Education staff for their assistance in creating this document. Thank you so much!

Introducing the Discussion Redesign (updated April, 2024)

At first, you will notice no change. But as you select a reply, you will see a new pane appear on the right, headed by the top-level reply you selected (the beginning of the thread), followed by other students' replies that you will scroll down to read. An example is shown in the image below.



To end the split screen view, choose the toggle “View Inline”

View Inline

Moving forward, your choices will build on these strategies depending on the size and complexity of the discussion.

Reference:

Wong, E. (2023, December 28). *Shneiderman's Eight Golden Rules Will Help You Design Better Interfaces*. The Interaction Design Foundation. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/shneiderman-s-eight-golden-rules-will-help-you-design-better-interfaces>

Acknowledgments to College of Education staff for their assistance in creating this document. Thank you so much!