**Regularity of RSI Contact:**

It is assumed that for online classes, as for onsite classes, students and the instructor will be in the virtual classroom every week and instruction will occur. To this end, in all Social Sciences courses there will be an RSI assignment every week of the course with the following exceptions: there may be two weeks without an RSI assignment in a 16 week course or one week in an 8 week course. RSI assignments must be of sufficient point value so as to strongly encourage student participation. An “RSI assignment” is defined as a graded assignment which provides the opportunity for the student to have substantive interactions with the instructor.

**Types of RSI Assignments:**

Discussion forums should be at the heart of every Social Sciences course. To this end, there must be discussion forums which involve substantive instruction for at least twelve (12) weeks of a 16 week course and at least six (6) weeks of an eight week course. As noted above, the value assigned to these discussion forums should be of sufficient weight to strongly encourage student participation. In practice this means that the value of the discussion forums as a whole should be significant enough so that a student would be unlikely to pass the class without having participated. Other types of appropriate RSI assignments might be projects, papers or reports which provide the opportunity to provide substantive feedback to the student.

**Volume and Type of Instructor Interaction:**

Instructors are expected to provide substantive interactions on discussion forums through regular posts. For each weekly discussion forum the instructor will make a number of substantive posts equivalent to 25% of the total number of students participating in the discussion forum **OR** the instructor will provide substantive feedback to 100% of students who participate in the discussion forum through the Speedgrader tool. Substantive posts or feedback will relate to course content rather than the mechanics of the course (such as when assignments are due, what is the word count, etc.). Generally speaking, if the response could be made by someone who is not a discipline expert, it probably isn’t substantive. If it draws upon your knowledge as a discipline expert, it probably is substantive. Some forms of substantive responses might include:

* Answering a student question relating to content
* Correcting a student error in fact or theory related to content
* Asking following up questions to redirect the conversation to areas that haven’t been covered or to more deeply explore a topic.
* Providing additional information or explanation which helps further student understanding of the content.

For weeks where there is not a discussion forum, the instructor will provide an RSI assignment of equal or greater weight. The instructor will provide substantive feedback to 100% of the students who complete the assignment in a timely manner, typically within a week of the assignment due date. This feedback may be offered through a grading rubric if it is sufficiently detailed to provide feedback related to content rather than mechanics (in other words, a rubric which provides feedback on whether the assignment was turned in on time, whether it was of the sufficient length, etc. would not be considered to be substantive).