

Discussion Board Guidelines

Due: every other Thursday, Weeks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 13

1/21: Quammen, Chap. 1 and *Year of the Flood*, pp. 1-192

2/4: Quammen, Chap 3 and *Future Home of the Living God*, pp. 3-119

2/18: Quammen, Chap. 4 and *Station Eleven*, pp. 3-164

3/11: Quammen, Chap. 5 and *American War*, pp. 3-211

3/25: Quammen, Chap. 6 and *Zone One*, pp. 3-128

4/8: Quammen, Chap 9 and *The Gone World*, pp. 1-173

Discussion boards will respond to a chapter from David Quammen's *Spillover* with reflections on how the chapter links in some way to themes in the assigned novels. These are meant to be short, informal, and exploratory writing opportunities as opposed to the blogs that will respond more fully to the novels once we've finished reading and discussing them. Your discussion boards will only need to refer to that week's assigned pages for the novel. In other words, discussion boards are due the first week that we discuss each novel and so I would not expect you to reference anything beyond that week's assigned reading. I mainly want to see you make connections between Quammen's scientific case studies of virus outbreaks and zoonotic diseases and how those link to the novels. I have paired the assigned Quammen chapters with each of the novels in a way that makes sense; however, connections might not be immediately apparent without some analytical work on your part. The purpose of these brief reflections is to get you to think through an interdisciplinary lens or framework, exploring how science and science fiction or apocalyptic novels can work in dialogue with each other. I highly recommend listening to the corresponding *Spillover* podcast episode before writing your discussion board post.

There are no strict formatting guidelines or formal expectations for how you approach the discussion boards. For example, you might summarize a key idea or example from Quammen and then explain where or how that connects to something in the novel. Perhaps there's something you read in Quammen or heard in the podcast that reminded you of current events (with Covid-19) and the way that pandemics, or apocalyptic fears of pandemics, are represented in the novels. How do the novels engage with real-world science or social aspects of pandemics, such as globalization, climate change, wildlife habitats or species, the boundaries between humans and nonhumans, the threat of zoonotic diseases due to human ecological and cultural practices? Quammen and the novels touch on all of these themes and more. I basically want to see you provide some brief insights or observations of how fictional representations can speak to real-world events and how increasing threats of viruses inform fictional themes.

Discussion board posts should be about 150-200 words and will be assessed according to the same criteria as your participation grade: credit, partial credit, or no credit. Your final grade (worth 10%) will be the average of points earned. The forums can be found by clicking on the Communications tab in Pilot and then Discussions. Please make sure you type your answers into the forum text box and not as a separate Word attachment. You should also be sure to provide a title for your post. Peer responses on discussion board posts are not required but will receive extra credit points (5 points each added to final adjusted grade).