

SOUTH AFRICA: CONTESTED TRANSITIONS

Using Class Newsgroups at Stanford

1. **What are newsgroups?** Newsgroups are electronic bulletin boards where messages can be posted via email or other electronic tools such as Netscape, to permit exchange of information and discussion on a particular subject.
2. **How do they work?** Items are posted to a newsgroup just like e-mail messages. The difference is that newsgroup postings are not delivered to anyone's electronic mail account, but instead can be read by anyone with a newsreader (software that allows newsgroups to be accessed for reading and posting).
3. **What are newsreaders and how do I use them?** Newsreader software is available in many forms. The most commonly used software for accessing newsgroups at Stanford is **Netscape**, which in addition to being a world wide web browser also includes a newsreader as well as email software. Internet Explorer can also read newsgroups; in recent versions it does so by invoking Outlook or Outlook Express. Anyone with a Leland account at Stanford can also use either the **trn** or **tin** newsreaders by entering one or the other of those commands from the logon prompt. Many find the tin program more user-friendly, while others like the features of trn. Additionally it is possible to read and post to newsgroups from within the **Pine** email program (type "pine" at the Leland logon prompt). There are other possibilities.
4. **How do I read and post to newsgroups?** Detailed procedures depend on the newsreader software you are using (see below for guides for Netscape and Internet Explorer). The basic steps are similar:
 - a. Make sure your newsreader knows who you are (login name; actual name; email address).
 - b. Tell the newsreader where to look for Stanford newsgroups: **nntp.stanford.edu**.
 - c. Download the list of Stanford newsgroups
 - d. In that list, find the course in which you are interested (in the form su.class.XXX).
 - e. Subscribe to that course newsgroup so that the newsreader regularly checks for new messages to that newsgroup.
 - f. Read messages and post to the newsgroup. Note that you can post messages to the newsgroup using ordinary email.
5. **How do I work with newsgroups within Netscape?** (What follows is a somewhat generic explanation, since the exact details have varied among the different versions of Netscape. The specific details are from Netscape v4.7.) Screen 1 below is the main newsgroup window in Netscape v4.7.

To start:

From the Netscape menu (top bar), under Communicator choose Newsgroups. (In earlier versions, the initial menu choice was Windows and the option was Netscape News.)

If you get an "Error: you have no permission to talk" message, go to Edit.Options.Preferences and choose Newsgroup Servers. (In earlier versions, the route was Options.Mail and News Preferences.Server.) Make sure that the news server is designated as "**nntp.stanford.edu**" rather than simply "news" or anything else. You should also check Identity to be sure that your own name and email account are listed there, rather than

someone else's. That matters because whoever is listed in this area will appear as the author of whatever postings are sent to a newsgroup.

Listing newsgroups:

The left-hand pane of the Netscape Newsgroup window will show the newsgroup server(s) you have specified and the newsgroups to which you have subscribed. If the newsgroup you want is not listed, then you will have to subscribe to it. How this is done varies slightly depending on which version of Netscape you have, and whether it is on a Macintosh or PC.

Adding and subscribing to a newsgroup:

Right click on the newsgroup server (**nntp.stanford.edu**). (In earlier versions, the path was File.Add Newsgroup.) Select "Subscribe to newsgroups." That will open a window that lists available newsgroups [Screen 2 below]. Follow the trail to "su and then to "su.class" and then to "history48q." (Usually, for Stanford courses, the needed newsgroup begins with "su.class" followed by the course number: "su.class.history48q" [without the quotation marks]. Selecting the newsgroup should add it to the list of newsgroups displayed.

That will display the newsgroup, but there is another important step. You must **subscribe** to the displayed newsgroup that you have added in order for it to appear on the list each time Netscape Newsgroups is checked and for Netscape to update the contents. On the Mac, you need to click in the column to the right of the newsgroup name that has a colored check mark at the top. When you see a check mark appear in this column beside the newly-added newsgroup, that group is subscribed . . . but only on the computer you are using at the time. In Netscape v4.7, when you highlight the newsgroup you seek, Subscribe is an option to the right of the newsgroup list. In other versions of Netscape for Windows, the process is similar to that for the Mac, while in still others, a right-button mouse click on the newsgroup name will cause a short menu to appear, which will include a Subscribe option that you can then click.

Posting to a newsgroup:

The simplest way to post to a newsgroup is to send ordinary email addressed to the newsgroup (that is, the name of the newsgroup followed by its server):

su.class.history48q@nntp.stanford.edu

You can also post from within the newsreader software. In Netscape 4.7, Ctrl-R permits you to respond to the message you are reading. Right-clicking on the highlighted message leads to a long list of options, including responding to the newsgroup, responding to whoever posted the message you are reading, and more. Alternatively, you can simply select New Msg or Reply, which will then open a window that enables you to post a message.

Once you have sent your message, it may appear instantly, or it may take longer. If you do not see it for a while, be patient! Many people repeat messages, thinking the first try has failed, with the result that the same message is posted repeatedly, much to everyone's frustration. Also, note that once a message has been posted to a newsgroup, normally it cannot be deleted. Be sure you put what you wanted there! Note, too, that while Stanford class newsgroups are restricted to the Stanford community, you should regard them as public as you consider what to post.

Threading Replies:

One advantage of newsgroups over email is that discussions can be threaded. Threading simply means that replies to a message can be made to appear alongside the original. In

most versions of Netscape, threading appears as indentations of replies to a higher level (earlier) message. There can be multiple replies to any message, so that if there have been replies to a new posting and then there have been replies to the first series of replies, there can be several levels of indentation in the message list window, reflecting the structure of the discussion around the original posting. To post a threaded reply (rather than a new posting), select (highlight) the message to which you wish to reply. Then, right-click and select Reply to Newsgroup.

6. **How do I work with newsgroups using *Internet Explorer*?** (What follows is a somewhat generic explanation, since the exact details have varied among the different versions of Internet Explorer. The specific details are from Internet Explorer and Outlook Express v6.0). Detailed instructions for configuring Outlook Express are available at: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/itss/ess/pc/docs/oe/oe_news.html.

To start:

From the Internet Explorer menu (top bar), under Tools choose Mail and News and then Read News. That will launch Outlook Express.

Specifying Stanford Newsgroups:

From the Outlook Express menu (top bar), under Tools choose Accounts and then News. Then, select Add and News. You will then be asked for your name, email address, and news server name (nntp.stanford.edu). When you click Finish, you will be asked if you wish to download the newsgroups for that account, that is, the Stanford Newsgroups. Yes.

Listing newsgroups:

The left-hand pane of the Outlook Express will show the newsgroup server(s) you have specified and the newsgroups to which you have subscribed. If the specific newsgroup you want is not listed, then you will have to subscribe to it. How this is done varies slightly depending on which version of Outlook Express you have.

Adding and subscribing to a newsgroup:

Click on Outlook Express in the left pane. That will bring up some choices in the right pane. Click on Subscribe to Newsgroups. That will open a new window. In the left pane of the new window, you should see "Stanford Newsgroups." In the right pane scroll down until you come to newsgroups that begin su.class. Keep going until you come to the class you seek (su.class.history48q). Select (highlight) that class and click on Subscribe. Then click on OK. That will close that window and return you to the Outlook Express main window. In the left pane you should find a heading "Stanford Newsgroups" and under that the class newsgroup to which you have just subscribed.

Posting to a newsgroup:

The simplest way to post to a newsgroup is to send ordinary email addressed to the newsgroup (that is, the name of the newsgroup followed by its server):

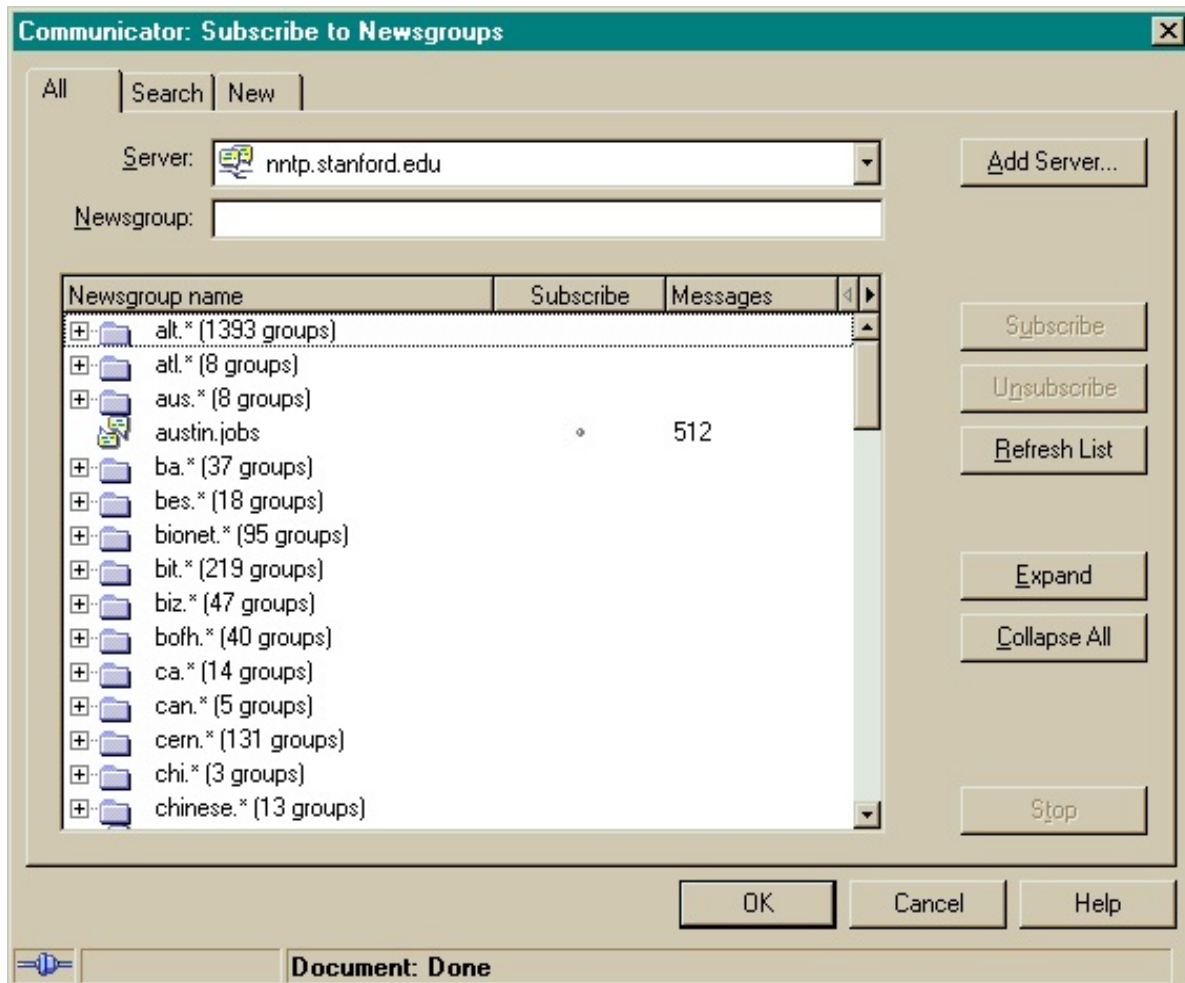
su.class.history48q@nntp.stanford.edu

You can also post from within the newsreader software. When you read a posted message, you can use the news toolbar to Reply Group. Alternatively, you can simply select Reply Group or New Post from the main news toolbar. To be sure that your replies are threaded

(associated with the message to which you are responding), select (highlight) the message and then right click and select Reply to Group.

Once you have sent your message, it may appear instantly, or it may take longer. If you do not see it for a while, be patient! Many people repeat messages, thinking the first try has failed, with the result that the same message is posted repeatedly, much to everyone's frustration. Also, note that once a message has been posted to a newsgroup, normally it cannot be deleted. Be sure you put what you wanted there! Note, too, that while Stanford class newsgroups are restricted to the Stanford community, you should regard them as public as you consider what to post.

Screen 1:



Screen 2:

