

Guidelines for Extra Credit:

The extra credit assignments should be treated much the same as a reading response (same format and length) and it is still a critical essay about the assigned activity (see below, from reading response guidelines). Since the extra credit activities are not necessarily directly related to class, you *must also include concepts or theories from class discussion/readings*. Due dates for the extra credit assignments are posted on the website. These must be *hard copy* to me the day that they are due in class.

Reading Response guidelines:

They should be 1-1.5 pages, single-spaced—this is an exercise in quality over quantity. All reading responses should cite using APA or Chicago style. You are not required to include outside sources, but you are welcome to if you find it helpful. There are links to other writing resources posted on the class website. These guidelines were adapted from UW-Madison's Writer's Handbook.

If you are emailing the response to me, please write "Reading Response #1 (or #2, or #3)" in the subject line.

This is a discussion essay; it is not a summary. The point of the reading response is twofold:

- 1) Help you engage and understand the readings
- 2) Give you experience writing critique

For full credit you must write a clear essay, with topic sentence/thesis, an argument with supportive statements, and an intro and conclusion. You should pick out a few key points, and focus on them (see below). An essay that is a string of quotations will not be awarded full credit. Pick the quotations you want to use, paraphrase as much as you can, and use only what you must (still cite!) Essentially, the essay is your perspective on the author's idea. Be careful to avoid vague space fillers like "I really liked this reading." Critical essays are most useful for analyzing academic articles/books. However, quite a bit of the readings in this class are from textbooks that might be hard to critique—you are still welcome to respond to these. There are two acceptable approaches; pick one that suits your needs:

A) A general learning-based response should still be an essay. Focus in on what you learned from the reading (e.g. thesis: "This reading was an excellent introduction to the concept of *discourse*; followed by supporting evidence about why it was a good introduction in the next few paragraphs). Your topic could include new vocabulary, a new theory you've never engaged before, or a critique of the usefulness of the reading (maybe you didn't learn anything!) Any statement that you make must include evidence from the reading to support it. Be careful not to summarize the whole reading. Be

sure to include lingering questions or concerns that you have in the concluding remarks. Try to situate the reading into that week's discussion topic.

B) For the academic article, there are two main parts to the critical essay:

1. A *brief* summary of the main argument or topic (1-3 sentences).

Tips:

- If you can sum up the main argument in a succinct way, then you likely will remember it.
- This requires you to *analyze* the readings...pick out what is important, leave out what is not important to the main topic.

2. An evaluation of the ideas in the reading from *your* perspective.

Some ways to evaluate an article:

- Does the author fulfill the goal that they set out to do?
- How does the author's points relate to other topics we've covered in class? (You might consider the time period/date in which the author was writing, for example)
- What kind of evidence does the author present? Is it convincing?
- Is the overall argument effective? Does it leave any gaps or lingering questions?
- Does the author make assumptions or convey personal prejudice?