

## Before Seminar — Reading and Writing

Each time we mention the word “seminar” in the syllabus, that’s a signal for you that a particular reading is “due” that day – you need to finish or at least try to finish, the assigned piece in order to discuss it with your colleagues in class.

If you are pressed for time, make sure you “skim” to the end to get a grasp of the whole, and then delve into the parts that interest you most. If skimming is necessary often, please go to the writing center or academic advising to get help with managing your time. Reading on your own is one of the most important parts of an Evergreen education and repeatedly coming to seminar unprepared is the kind of work that will get you an unfavorable evaluation.

We also ask you to write a paper on some aspect of the readings that you find to be significant.

- 1) We want you to select some part of the book, or some characteristic of the whole book that intrigues you and also perhaps challenges or confuses or annoys or inspires you. Take us to the topic by finding a good quote from the book or by summarizing its essence in 3-4 lines.
- 2) Then explain what is important about it. It could be the part that finally showed you something about a core program theme. It could remind you about some aspect of your own life which you suspect others share. It could link you back to some other reading we’ve already done. It might prompt you to think about some contemporary political or health care or family life concern now under public debate.
- 3) Then tell us what the author is saying that is so useful in relation to the topic, why you are confused by what the author is saying, what made a comprehension breakthrough possible, or why you disagree with the author.
- 4) Your opinion is valid, and personal experience can be a helpful starting point or link to the material. However, your writing should be focused on the content of the material. Take an analytical, synthetic approach. Be critical, but not merely negative. Discussing why you did or didn’t like the book or paper is not enough.

*“Respond to the reading” means write about the book or article you have read.*

Your task in this piece of writing is to engage in a learning/thinking process that will expand and allow you to make contributions to seminar, or even to start the seminar conversation off. You are not required to have all the answers.

However, once this quarter, we will schedule you to write a paper after seminar synthesizing the discussion and making visible the questions/concerns and comments that were left unfinished.

On October 4, please bring three printed copies of your writing to class, ready to share with two colleagues and your faculty.

After Oct 4, whenever a seminar is listed in the schedule, please post your response paper to Moodle by 5pm the night before.