

NCLC 102 Global Networks & Communities: Food and Sovereignty
Fall Semester 2010

Writings on Readings

Writing on Reading is an assignment to write about the assigned readings in preparation for a seminar discussion. You will do this for four of the Monday seminars. The assignments ask you to think on paper and to write in order to learn. You are asked to:

- grapple with ideas
- be specific
- use textual evidence
- give examples
- work on answering the question “Why?”

The writing helps you process what you have read and gain new insights. Writing before class prepares you for active participation in seminar discussions.

You may sometimes be asked to draw from your writing during seminar discussion or to share it with your study group. Accordingly, you should think of your study group and your seminar leader as the audience for your writing. After you write a draft, you should read over what you have written to make sure you have communicated your ideas as clearly as possible. While NCLC 102 encourages you to take risks as a thinker and writer, the course does not require you to write about very personal subjects, which you may not wish to share in a seminar.

We have selected five distinct formats for each of your Writing on Reading assignments. Your seminar instructor may offer further advice—or restrictions. In formal papers, such as the Food Book chapters, you must cite sources of information and include a bibliography. In these writing on readings, however, you may cite more informally. For example you may simply use the author and page numbers to cite specific references to the readings.

Each of these writings is due as hard copy at the start of class. Since an essential reason for these writings is to enhance class discussion on the day the assignment is due, **we will not accept late papers.**

We have provided some questions as prompts to stimulate your thinking. You should NOT attempt to answer EVERY question; rather, you should use the questions to reflect on the reading(s) and construct a coherent and well supported reflective response.

1) Analysis of ideas with considered personal response for November 1st readings (40 points, 500 words).

Consider key ideas and themes in each assigned text. Identify what you think is the writer’s main point. Is it stated (explicitly or implicitly) in the text? What do you know about the writer’s perspective? What seems important, complex, or problematic? Why? What knowledge, experiences, or values shape your response? What else does the reading connect to (other readings or your Food Book research, for example)? Which NCC competencies does this reading relate to in your opinion? Why? What themes do you find most important? How do the ideas of your reading and discussions fit together and why? As you consider these ideas, create a thoughtful discussion question for the seminar based on the readings.

2) Compare and contrast November 8th readings (40 points, 500 words).

Analyze the assigned readings by comparing and contrasting main points, ideas, evidence, values, style of language, etc. In particular, examine how each author structures his or her ideas and argument. What can you tell about the purpose of each piece of writing and how do these purposes compare or contrast? How does each of the writers use evidence in his writing? Cite examples. Which reading do you find most compelling? Why? Which one connects more to the course readings, class discussion, NCC competencies and your Food Book? How? Cite examples. As you consider these ideas, create a thoughtful discussion question for the seminar based on the readings.

3) Prep Page for Pollan on November 15th (20 points, 250 words).

The purpose of your writing the PrepPage is to help you to address and understand the content of a reading. In addition, your work on the PrepPage may be used facilitate class discussions. Answer the following prompts:

1. **Key Ideas:** Give a brief description of several key/essential/illuminating ideas in the reading.
2. **Content Questions:** List several specific questions (if you have any) about material in the reading. These could be something confusing, problematic, or puzzling that needs clarification.
3. **Seminar Question:** This is a broad question that could be used to start a discussion. You could also simply state an observation you have made on which you would like others to comment.
4. **Competency:** Chose one of our competencies and explain how you relate it to this PrepPage. You may have improved in the competency or you may have an interesting reflection to offer concerning it.

4) Argument/rhetorical analysis of November 29th reading (40 points, 500 words).

Analyze the argument each reading makes. What is the argument (explicit or implicit)? How does the writer make it? Does the writer use evidence effectively to support the argument? Why or why not? Speculate about what audience s/he is trying to reach: what clues in the reading lead you to that opinion? Are you part of that audience? Why (or why not) is the writer effective in reaching the intended audience? What seems to be the “rhetorical situation”—that is, what seems to have prompted this writing? How does the author attempt to persuade or appeal to readers? What do you notice about the style of the writing (for example, what kinds of metaphors does s/he use)? What does the writing tell you about the author’s values? Discuss what values shape the argument this writing makes. As you consider these ideas, create a thoughtful discussion question for the seminar based on the readings.

Additional help with these and all writing assignments is available through the NCC Online Writing Guide at <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/> and at the Writing Center (information in your syllabus).